



Her Majesty's
Inspectorate of
Probation

An inspection of probation services in:
Swansea Neath Port Talbot PDU
Probation Service – Wales region

HM Inspectorate of Probation, January 2022

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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 the Swansea Neath Port Talbot inspection started on 25 October 2021.

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Foreword

This is the first Probation Delivery Unit (PDU) inspection under our new probation inspection methodology, introduced following the merging of Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) and the National Probation Service (NPS) into a single unified probation service in June this year. Our new methodology has been revised to be compatible with the new organisational model and involves a greater and more explicit link between our ratings for the leadership and management of the service and what we find in our inspection of individual cases; poorer ratings for the latter will now limit the ratings we can apply to the former.

In Wales the unification of the sentence management elements of the NPS and CRC services occurred in December 2019 and so there has been longer for the new model to be embedded. However, within three months of unification in Wales, services were affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, limiting both access to offices and face-to-face contact with people on probation. In Swansea Neath Port Talbot PDU, the impact of the pandemic was further compounded by the discovery of asbestos in the central probation office in April 2021 from where virtually all services were delivered, which meant that this location was no longer fit for purpose.

The impact of both these events cannot be underestimated. It has meant that staff and managers have been forced to provide a significantly more limited service since March 2020. It is to the credit of, in particular, the PDU lead and her deputy that they have kept the show on the road and ensured that alternative premises have been available. The continued development of partnership work with a range of service providers and stakeholders is testimony to this, as is the introduction of a number of new initiatives.

Nevertheless, despite these efforts, the quality of work that we found undertaken with people on probation was weak and this has inevitably impacted on the ratings we were able to give for leadership and management standards. Across all elements of case supervision there were shortfalls, particularly in relation to work designed to manage the potential risks to others posed by people on probation. While we recognise that the current restrictions do impact on the nature and frequency of contact, we expect that work relating to risk and safety should be prioritised. But we saw limited examples of staff doing that.

Notably, there were some substantial differences between the cases relating to those on community orders and those on post-release prison licence. Consistently more of the latter were judged to be sufficient, and this in many ways masked the sometimes woeful insufficiencies in community order cases. Furthermore, we also found that fewer cases assessed as a medium risk of harm were judged to be sufficient, compared with low- and high-risk cases. As over half of all cases in the PDU are assessed as medium risk, this has a significant impact on our ratings. The PDU would do well to explore these differences further in order to better focus their efforts.

The PDU, as with all probation services across England and Wales, has struggled with their delivery of accredited programmes and of unpaid work. More than a third of unpaid work orders still had outstanding hours to complete at the 12-month point and three quarters of accredited programme requirements had yet to commence, (though the picture was slightly better for sex offender programmes). While some regions have begun to recover delivery of interventions to pre-pandemic levels Swansea Neath Port Talbot PDU continues to struggle, not from a lack of effort, but due to the limited availability of delivery space and attendant Covid-19 restrictions.

While a push to reduce backlogs is to be encouraged, it is imperative that alternatives to these programmes are appropriately constituted and quality assured.

While the PDU and senior managers will be disappointed with the results of this inspection, I hope and believe they will receive the assistance they need from the regional team in Wales to continue their recovery from the pandemic and improve the quality of their work with people on probation. I wish them luck with their endeavour.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Justin Russell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Justin Russell
Chief Inspector of Probation

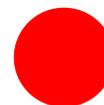
Ratings

Swansea Neath Port Talbot PDU

Score **4/27**

Overall rating

Inadequate



1. Organisational delivery

1.1 Leadership

Requires improvement



1.2 Staff

Requires improvement



1.3 Services

Inadequate



1.4 Information and facilities

Requires improvement



2. Court work and case supervision

2.1 Court work

Requires improvement



2.2 Assessment

Inadequate



2.3 Planning

Inadequate



2.4 Implementation and delivery

Inadequate



2.5 Reviewing

Inadequate



Recommendations

As a result of our inspection findings we have made a number of recommendations that we believe, if implemented, will have a positive impact on the quality of probation services.¹

Swansea Neath Port Talbot PDU should:

1. improve the quality of work to assess, plan for, manage and review risk of harm
2. improve the effectiveness of quality assurance and management oversight of all casework
3. ensure that the interventions necessary to improve desistance and reduce reoffending and risk of harm are provided in all cases
4. ensure staff with responsibility for case management oversight have the skills, knowledge and time to undertake the work effectively
5. explore the reasons for better casework in those cases on post-release licence and use this learning to improve effectiveness elsewhere
6. explore the reasons for worse casework in those cases assessed as medium risk of harm, compared with those assessed as low or high/very high risk of harm, and use this learning to improve the quality of work delivered for medium-risk cases.

Probation Service – Wales region should:

7. ensure that performance monitoring has a far greater focus on the effectiveness of provision.

HM Prison and Probation Service should:

8. ensure that staffing levels are swiftly determined for the PDU and region
9. resolve the current shortfall in accredited programme delivery and ensure that the delivery of interventions offered as an alternative are effectively quality assured.

¹ Progress against previous inspection recommendations for the relevant CRC or NPS division are included in annexe one.

Background

Swansea Neath Port Talbot PDU

Swansea Neath Port Talbot PDU is one of six PDUs within the Wales region of The Probation Service, the others being North Wales PDU, Dyfed Powys PDU, Cwm Taf Morgannwg PDU, Cardiff and Vale PDU and Gwent PDU.

Swansea Neath Port Talbot PDU covers two local authority areas, Swansea and Neath Port Talbot, and includes one public sector prison (HMP Swansea). It falls within the South Wales police force area.

As of November 2021, Swansea Neath Port Talbot PDU's total caseload was 1,900, which included 977 people on community sentences, 525 individuals being supervised post release from prison and 398 still in custody.²

Swansea Neath Port Talbot PDU has a range of stakeholder and partnership arrangements. Principle among these are the:

- South Wales Criminal Justice & Integrated Offender Management Board
- South Wales Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements Strategic Board
- West Glamorgan Safeguarding Board
- Swansea and Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board.

Through these, a series of sub-groups are formed, including the: Safer Swansea and Neath Port Talbot Community Safety Partnership; Quality Practice Management Group; Swansea Youth Justice Management Board; and Swansea Neath Port Talbot Integrated Offender Management Steering Group.

Since June, the Wales probation region has commissioned four organisations to deliver additional support services. The Nelson Trust provides services for women. The Forward Trust offers accommodation support and, while they do not provide accommodation themselves, they work directly with those that do. They also work within HMP Swansea. St Giles Wise group partnership provides wellbeing support to people on probation and Maximus delivers employment training and education. The case sample drawn on for this inspection partly covered a period when the Swansea Neath Port Talbot PDU was still operating under a red-level exceptional delivery model (EDM), thus restricting the amount of contact offered to people on probation, particularly face to face. The EDMs were in place following the Covid-19 pandemic which required probation services to consider delivery in accordance with public health and government guidance. This also impacted on the delivery of both unpaid work and accredited programmes. The situation in Swansea Neath Port Talbot was compounded further by limited office access due to the discovery, in April 2021, of asbestos in the central Swansea office.

² Information from the workload management tool (justice.gov.uk)

1. Organisational delivery



The impact on Swansea Neath Port Talbot Probation Delivery Unit (PDU) of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the closure of the PDU's central office at West Glamorgan House, Swansea in April 2021 when asbestos was discovered, has been substantial. Nevertheless, strategic work, the development of partnerships and engagement with services supporting its work with people on probation is a significant strength. The implementation of a number of initiatives to improve this work demonstrates a strong commitment to delivering a high-quality and personalised service.

Despite such positive strategic work across the PDU, this has not translated into practice, particularly around issues relating to keeping other people safe. In our case review across all four elements of assessment, planning, implementation and reviewing, fewer than half of cases were deemed to have had a sufficient focus on safety. As a consequence, we have rated Leadership as 'Requires improvement'.

Although caseloads for staff are not excessively high, fewer than half the staff we interviewed or who completed our survey felt workloads were manageable. For many, the complexities of, in particular, medium-risk cases created additional pressure. This was reinforced by our case review data which suggested that medium-risk cases were consistently managed less well than those assessed as either low or high risk of serious harm. It is evident that neither training nor quality assurance is impacting sufficiently well and, as a consequence, we have rated the Staff standard as 'Requires improvement'.

Nearly all staff in our survey say that the limited availability of office space to see people on probation impacts their ability to engage effectively. This is outside the control of either the PDU managers or regional staff. We have rated Information and Facilities as 'Requires improvement'.

Limited office space has, undoubtedly, impacted on the delivery of services, and in particular, both accredited programmes and unpaid work. Despite substantial efforts to keep these running and to aid recovery, both are experiencing substantial backlogs. Despite the introduction of Centralised Operational Resettlement Referral and Evaluation (CORRE) and a substantial directory of available services, we found that in only a minority of cases was the implementation and delivery of services sufficient to address desistance or the safety of others. Nevertheless, this does not explain why issues around keeping people safe, undertaking appropriate checks and implementing necessary activity is too often ineffectual.

Therefore, we have little option but to rate Services as 'Inadequate'.

Strengths:

- Senior managers have a high profile within the PDU and are committed to improving services.
- The management of the evacuation of West Glamorgan House and subsequent use of alternative accommodation was well managed.
- There are excellent strategic relationships with partner agencies, and the organisation is active in both influencing and driving initiatives to bring about improvements in provision.
- A majority of staff feel that the PDU prioritises quality and promotes openness.
- Specialist teams, integrated offender management, women's services and the short-term sentence team are well integrated with partner agencies and enjoy generally positive engagement.

Areas for improvement:

- The PDU needs to understand the reason why training has not had a greater impact on service delivery so that it can improve performance.
- Quality assurance and staff development require greater and more consistent input from middle managers, and the organisation needs to explore how oversight of case supervision can improve, especially in relation to work to keep other people safe.
- The PDU should explore the differences between how community order cases and post-release licence cases are managed.
- The regional senior leadership team should escalate concerns about staffing and facilities to the national leads in response to the issues raised during this inspection.

1.1. Leadership



The leadership of the PDU enables delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all people on probation.

Requires improvement

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

Does the vision and strategy of the PDU leadership team drive effectively the delivery of high-quality services for all people on probation?

While the PDU lead and deputy have a high profile, are well thought of by staff and have strong relationships with local partners, the last 20 months have been challenging and their overall vision is not translating into high-quality supervision by frontline practitioners. Less than half of the cases we inspected were of sufficient

quality and as a result four out of five of our casework standards were rated as 'Inadequate'.

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has been compounded by the closure, in April 2021, of West Glamorgan House, the PDU's central office in Swansea, due to the discovery of asbestos. As an inevitable consequence, the strategic focus has been on keeping the service running.

There are close links between the PDU and the wider region, primarily through the Wales probation service business plan. There is consistency between the regional strategy and the local delivery plan. The Swansea Neath Port Talbot PDU delivery plan 2021 outlines its strategic priorities as 'enabling people to be their best, transforming through partnership, being an open learning culture and modernising our estates and technology'. Despite the impact of the pandemic and current office closure, it is evident that progress has continued to be made against these priorities.

Integral to the effective implementation of this strategic vision are the relationships with partners and stakeholders across the delivery unit. Stakeholders and partner agencies consistently speak of the strength of relationships they have with the PDU. Primary forums through which such partnerships manifest include the South Wales Criminal Justice and Integrated Offender Management Board, the Swansea and Neath Port Talbot Public Service Board and the West Glamorgan Safeguarding Board.

It is evident that the PDU has significant influence across the area, with a number of initiatives including: the recent commissioning of housing services through The Forward Trust which is now directly driving the Regional Homelessness Prevention Taskforce; involvement in the co-designing of project ADDER (addiction, diversion, disruption, enforcement and recovery) in Swansea Bay; and the development of integrated offender management (IOM) approaches in the Swansea Neath Port Talbot area in line with IOM Refresh.

The PDU's people plan brings together regional strategy and local delivery to create an implementation approach that speaks to practitioners' experience and responds to their needs. In our practitioner survey, 77 per cent said the organisation prioritises quality and adherence to evidence most of the time or always. Also, 65 per cent said that the PDU's culture promotes openness, constructive challenge, and ideas.

There are effective relationships between the PDU's senior managers and sentencers. Sentencers spoken to during the inspection spoke of positive relationships with staff in courts and clear lines of communication and accountability with managers. In our sentencers survey 82 per cent of respondents said that relationships with the courts are very well established, maintained and used effectively by The Probation Service to deliver effective provision to people on probation.

The Swansea Neath Port Talbot PDU's Equality and Diversity Action Plan is reasonably comprehensive, focuses specifically on the diverse needs of people on probation, and includes initial objectives centred on issues identified in HM Inspectorate of Probation's recent *Race equality in probation: the experiences of black, Asian and minority ethnic probation service users and staff* thematic inspection (March 2021). Nevertheless, there remains more work to be done to both reflect the diversity of the community within the staffing profile of the service and to provide support for the range of needs presented by people on probation.

There are a number of initiatives being undertaken by the PDU to improve services and outcomes for people on probation. This includes commissioning a pilot service in the Swansea Neath Port Talbot area to evaluate and provide initial support for

people on probation with neurodiversity needs, due to start in March 2022. Work is also underway, including financial support, for a local agency specialising in work with black, Asian and minority ethnic ex-offenders in Swansea and the surrounding areas. Two further pilots include: a pre-sentence pilot at Swansea magistrates court, which is one of 15 courts across the country involved in evaluating an alternative delivery model designed to improve the range of sentencing options available for sentencers; and a 12-month project providing in-court psychology assessment at the pre-sentence report stage to provide proposals for mental health treatment requirements which do not meet the clinical threshold required by the community mental health team.

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

The management of alternative premises across the PDU as a consequence of the asbestos found at West Glamorgan House has been managed well and reflects the quality of relationships with partner agencies. This has however impacted on the progress of services towards national standards and caused frustration to staff.

In 2020 the Covid-19 pandemic impacted the service when it was only three months into its transition to a unified service. The unconnected closure of West Glamorgan House, from where nearly all services to people on probation were provided and where management and administrative support was based, provided an enormous logistical challenge. It is a testimony to the tenacity of managers and staff that the sourcing of alternative accommodation was achieved (with attendant contingencies) within one working day. It is also a reflection on the quality of relationships with partner agencies that this was achieved so quickly.

At the time of the inspection, the PDU was operating to version 12 of the exceptional delivery model, meaning that there is far more remote, usually via telephone, contact with those on probation than would normally be the case, with a gradual move to national standards. Plans for provision in a range of alternative sites are regularly reviewed, as are related risks; for instance, for face-to-face contact with high-risk offenders who are largely seen at the approved premises, Quay House, in Swansea as well as at the Dyfodol substance misuse sites. Plans for the phased return to West Glamorgan House and contingencies for any setbacks to the schedule are monitored regularly through the senior management group, including the fact that Wales remains under greater Covid-19 restrictions than is the case in England.

The range of alternative premises presently in use further reflects the range of partnership arrangements the service has and the quality of relationships with stakeholders. This includes co-working in the Dyfodol premises in both Swansea and Neath, the Include community hub in Swansea and the civic building in Swansea, owned and administered by Swansea Council. Accredited programmes are also now delivered at the YMCA building in Swansea.

Regular staff briefings and information sharing with staff in the regularly updated delivery model (last updated September 2021) keep staff aware of contingency planning and arrangements for the use of alternative accommodation. However, in our practitioner survey, only just over half (53 per cent) of respondents said that change was implemented and communicated effectively. This reflected staff frustration with the current arrangements.

Does the PDU ensure the delivery model meets effectively the needs of all people on probation?

The needs of people on probation are not being met by the PDU. Despite services being managed across a number of teams, including those specialising in some aspects of provision, ineffective casework undermines the delivery model.

The delivery plan and people plan in Swansea Neath Port Talbot PDU reflect the regional model, incorporate a number of pan-Wales initiatives and include some local projects. Local, PDU-specific initiatives are implemented or are being developed under the auspices of the region, for example the neurodiversity pilot.

Service provision across the PDU is divided into six teams, including a number of specialisms – IOM, women, and the short-term sentenced team (STST). All three specialist teams are linked to wider initiatives across the region but also reflect local idiosyncrasies and the needs of people on probation. As an example, the STST (introduced in June 2021) has established close links with HM Prison (HMP) Swansea and incorporates a pre-release in-reach service and also reflects the overall objectives of the early-adoption model across Wales.

The introduction of the CORRE team earlier this year (April/May) to support practitioners in identifying and delivering interventions appears to be a positive initiative and practitioners in our focus group were universally positive about its availability and knowledgeable about its use. Other recent initiatives, including the introduction of the touchpoints model and the delivery of non-sex offender accredited programmes through the interventions team, appear to be well understood.

At the time of the inspection there was little specific work undertaken to seek the views of people on probation or to consult them over the provision of services for them. This was reflected in the views we received from a number of people on probation who attended a focus group and/or completed a survey. Plans to progress this work at the point when the service amalgamated in December 2019 were put on hold following the Fishmongers Hall and Streatham killings in London and were then overtaken by the Covid-19 pandemic. Plans to progress work have been resurrected recently and expressions of interest are being sought to develop a representative forum. Despite the relatively early nature of this work, 56 per cent of respondents to our practitioner survey said the views of people on probation were sought, analysed and used to review and improve the effectiveness of services, most of the time or always.

Given the level of strategic management, quality of partnership working and implementation of new initiatives, it was disappointing that this was let down by the paucity of effective casework and, in particular, work that focused on keeping other people safe, as shown by our domain two results.

1.2. Staff



Staff are enabled to deliver a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all people on probation.

Requires improvement

Data in this and subsequent sections is largely provided by the organisation. It is provided with caveats regarding its reliability, although it has been verified using internal workforce planning records.

Caseload and workload data

Average caseload per probation officer (PO) (full-time equivalent (FTE)) ³	32.53
Average caseload per probation services officer (PSO) (FTE)	37.46
Percentage of PO grade with caseload greater than local workload management tool target PO	27%
Percentage of PSO grade with caseload greater than local workload management tool target PSO	20%
Proportion of staff in this PDU describing workload as unmanageable ⁴	58.8%

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

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

Although average caseloads across the PDU are not excessive, fewer than half the staff we surveyed said their workloads were manageable and a large majority of those we surveyed said staffing levels were insufficient. Despite the lack of an agreed staffing level for the PDU, managers are trying to respond to the pressures staff experience.

There is currently no agreed staffing level for either the region or the PDU, which is set within the national probation workforce programme team. It is anticipated that this will be resolved by March 2022, but as a consequence, it is difficult to be confident about required staffing levels across the region. Nevertheless, indications are that presently the PDU has more staff, both POs and senior probation officers (SPOs), in post in sentence management than current staffing levels identify.

Average caseloads regionally are 28.09 for a PO and 40.76 for a PSO. In Swansea Neath Port Talbot PDU these levels are 32.53 and 37.46. In our practitioner survey 81 per cent said they had a caseload no higher than 40. In our interviews with practitioners responsible for the cases we evaluated as part of our casework review, 53 per cent said they had caseloads up to 40, with a further 39 per cent saying their caseloads were between 40 and 50. This was similarly reflected in the practitioner focus group sessions we conducted.

Despite this, across the PDU 27 per cent of POs have workloads over the workload management tool target of 110 per cent; for PSOs the level is 20 per cent. Although high, they compare favourably with the regional levels of 44 and 27 per cent.

³ Data supplied by The Probation Service.

⁴ HM Inspectorate of Probation inspection data.

Only 41 per cent of respondents in our practitioner survey felt their workload was manageable. This was the view of 48 per cent of the 38 practitioners we interviewed as part of the casework inspection. Indications from survey, interview and focus groups are that staff believe that the complexities of the cases they are responsible for are what creates the pressure. This appears to be particularly true in the generic casework teams and for staff responsible for primarily medium-risk cases. Our casework inspection indicates that the medium-risk cases, which account for 63 per cent⁵ of the current PDU caseload in the community, are those less likely to meet our criteria for sufficiency, especially in relation to the management of risk and keeping others safe. It is worth noting that two practitioners who had recently joined the PDU from probation regions in England both felt that, relative to their previous experience, casework in Swansea Neath Port Talbot PDU was very manageable.

Across the PDU the current vacancy rate is 18 per cent, with the greatest impact on administrative staff and PSOs, primarily because of promotion and progression to Professional Qualification in Probation (PQiP) roles. Sickness levels are relatively high across the PDU, with rates impacting primarily on POs. This could be indicative of the pressure staff currently feel in managing their cases, compounded by the present limitations of office access. Absence review meetings are held within the PDU on a monthly basis involving the deputy head, line managers and human resources. The causes of absences and return-to-work arrangements are regularly reviewed, including that of long-term absence at PO grade, although there is no identifiable pattern. In our survey, 83 per cent of practitioners believe that staffing levels are not sufficient.

Despite the acknowledged weaknesses of the workload management tool and the reliability of data regarding staffing levels, there is close management and monitoring of workloads, with some (regional) variations included to reflect analysed needs. As an example, although the national model does not include a weighting for staff specialising in work with women, a 10 per cent allowance has been included in Wales. A similar weighting is also afforded those in the STST.

Although administrative staff are presently under additional pressure due to working in alternative premises to West Glamorgan House, those spoken to during the inspection indicated that their caseloads were pressured but manageable and anticipated improvements once they return to the main office.

SPOs are presently responsible for between 12 and 18 staff. Those spoken to said that their workloads were broadly manageable, although compounded by the current work arrangements. It is worth noting that under the pandemic, formal performance monitoring is not in place and reporting to national standards has been relaxed, with formal quality assurance not taking place. Where managers acknowledged difficulties in their own workloads, they also spoke of considerable support from the PDU lead and deputy lead managers. We are encouraged that, in acknowledgement of some of the pressures placed on middle managers, a seventh team is being created within the PDU in November.

⁵ See footnote 2.

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

Characteristics of inspected cases⁶

Proportion of caseload who are female	10%
Proportion of inspected cases who are black, Asian or minority ethnic	5%
Proportion of inspected cases with a disability	58%

Effective training and development is not reflected in the quality of case supervision. Most staff believe they have the skills and knowledge to manage the cases they are responsible for, and that there is an organisational culture of learning and continuous improvement but despite appropriate training this is not consistently reflected in the quality of casework.

The workforce of Swansea Neath Port Talbot PDU does not fully reflect the diversity of the local population. A disproportionate number of the workforce (76.7 per cent) are female. Less than one per cent are from a black, Asian or minority ethnic background compared with an estimated 6.3 per cent across Swansea and 1.1 per cent in Neath Port Talbot.⁷ Of the current caseload, five per cent come from a black, Asian or minority ethnic background.⁸ These disparities are acknowledged and included as targets in the workforce strategy (both regionally and locally) but change is acknowledged as likely to be slow.

Specific training and development is available for those staff working in the specialist teams, including work orientated to deliver a trauma-informed approach to working with women, specific multi-agency engagement working with the police for those in the IOM team and for the STST, and integration within the resettlement function of HMP Swansea. In our practitioner survey, 83 per cent said that they were always or most of the time allocated cases for which they had the appropriate knowledge, skills and experience to manage, and in our practitioner interviews 92 per cent said they had the necessary skills, experience, and knowledge to supervise the case being evaluated.

We were told that annual staff appraisals had been suspended during the Covid-19 pandemic, although staff we spoke to said they did have one. The training needs of staff across the PDU are identified primarily through performance evaluation and regular case evaluations. Across the PDU at the time of the inspection, 69 per cent of staff had completed adult safeguarding training, 74 per cent had completed child safeguarding training and 70 per cent had completed domestic violence training. We were also told that other training, such as that relating to child safeguarding and domestic abuse, was regularly provided by external partners. The organisation maintains a data set of all staff training and monitors progress against identified objectives and mandatory courses. A reasonable majority of practitioners (65 per

⁶ HM Inspectorate of Probation inspection data.

⁷ Information from [Ethnicity by area and ethnic group \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales/ethnicity-by-area-and-ethnic-group)

⁸ Data supplied by The Probation Service.

cent) in our survey believe a culture of learning and continuous improvement is actively promoted most of the time or always.

Despite the level and range of training available, and the fact that staff believe they have the skills necessary to undertake the work they do, there remains a significant question, in light of the case supervision data, as to how effective this training is and how it translates into practice. It is recognised however that the availability of training has been severely limited during the Covid-19 pandemic.

At the time of the inspection, we were told that there were currently 15 PQiPs in the PDU (a rise from when the organisational data was collated). A number of these have come from the PSO staff group and a number of those vacancies have been filled by staff from the administrative team. While a positive approach, this has created some pressure across the service, compounded by average delays of 12 weeks to complete the central Ministry of Justice vetting process for new staff.

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

Oversight is not sufficient to support the delivery of an effective service. Too few practitioners say they receive supervision sufficiently often and our own review found management oversight was too often ineffective.

In principle, all staff should receive structured and focused supervision every four to six weeks. Managers are expected to review cases with practitioners on a regular basis and staff we spoke to confirmed that this does happen, and within the reflective practice supervision approach that is currently operating there is a requirement for six sessions per year with the line manager. Some middle managers acknowledged that this was an area of work that had suffered during the Covid-19 pandemic and closure of West Glamorgan House, although they were quick to emphasise that to compensate, they had more frequent informal contact with their staff. While 58 per cent of practitioners in our survey said that supervision enhanced the quality of their work with people on probation, only 47 per cent said that they received supervision sufficiently frequently. In our casework supervision review we found that in 22 out of 36 cases requiring it, management oversight was judged to be insufficient, ineffective or absent.

An appropriate induction programme is in place in the PDU. However, poor ventilation and social distancing have rendered it difficult, if not impossible, to offer opportunities for shadowing. However, opportunities have been extended from other PDUs to all PQiPs and new PSOs. All staff are expected to complete core training as part of induction which has, during the current restrictions, been made available online.

Of the PDU's practitioners, 65 per cent believe that staff from all backgrounds have equal access to promotion opportunities always or most of the time. Although a formal process of performance management is available, it has not been necessary to implement it since before the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. Two members of staff have been supported informally during this period, resulting in the necessary level of performance being achieved.

Do managers pay sufficient attention to staff engagement?

Many staff feel that while motivated to engage effectively in their work, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, compounded by the current office arrangements, was making this progressively more difficult. A number of initiatives to engage staff and provide welfare support have been initiated throughout the last 20 months.

All teams meet at least weekly and, in most cases, this is done live rather than remotely. A Swansea Neath Port Talbot PDU wellbeing group has been formed following some early concerns about staff welfare and isolation. This has included the introduction of wellbeing champions, mental health allies and a regular newsletter.

Staff can nominate colleagues for 'Star' awards whereby exceptional work is recognised and appreciation shown. It is positive that the people plan for the PDU was drawn up following a series of staff consultation workshops earlier in the year and reflects many of the concerns expressed by staff. A Butler Trust nomination was also submitted in recognition of the work undertaken by the women's team, particularly in relation to the setting up and running of multi-disciplinary case conferences. In our survey, 65 per cent of respondents said that exceptional work is recognised and rewarded.

Despite this it is disappointing that in our survey only 47 per cent said that sufficient attention is paid to their safety most of the time or always, and the same proportion told us that sufficient attention is paid to their wellbeing most of the time or always. Indications are that much of this centres on the current working arrangements and use of alternative office accommodation.

Only 18 per cent of those in our survey said that they had needed reasonable adjustments made to their working environment in accordance with protected characteristics, and two thirds of them said that appropriate adjustments had been made.

1.3. Services



A comprehensive range of high-quality services is in place, supporting a tailored and responsive service for all people on probation.

Inadequate

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

Are the right volume, range and quality of services in place to meet the needs of people on probation?

Interventions and unpaid work data⁹

The proportion of accredited programme requirements for individuals convicted of a sexual offence that have not commenced	64%
The proportion of accredited programme requirements that have not commenced, other than for individuals convicted of a sexual offence	75%
Average waiting time to commence a rehabilitation activity requirement	5.9 weeks
Percentage of unpaid work requirements with hours outstanding beyond 12 months	34%
Proportion of inspected cases where inspectors identified substance misuse problems ¹⁰	70%
Proportion of inspected cases where inspectors identified drug misuse problems	48%
Proportion of inspected cases where inspectors identified alcohol misuse problems	40%

While in theory there is an impressive number of services across the PDU provided both in-house, through commissioned services, and via partner agencies, we saw little evidence of sufficient service delivery in the cases we reviewed. In only 43 per cent of cases was the level and nature of contact sufficient to reduce reoffending and support desistance, and in only 40 per cent of cases was the level and nature of contact offered sufficient to manage and minimise the risk of harm. Backlogs for accredited programmes were also substantial, with 64 per cent of those identified for sex offender accredited programmes still awaiting commencement and 75 per cent of those awaiting the Thinking Skills Programme or Building Better Relationships (BBR) course still to attend their first session. Over a third of unpaid work orders still had hours to complete at the end of 12 months. As a result, we have rated this standard as 'Inadequate'.

A comprehensive directory of these is available to staff to support referrals. Support from the specialist team for women on probation is generally positive, focusing on the needs of women and drawing on partnership arrangements with the commissioned services provided by The Nelson Trust along with work from HM Prison and Probation Service's (HMPPS's) pathfinder project.

Recently commissioned rehabilitative services are bedding in well but remain in the early stages of implementation. Nevertheless, The Forward Trust, offering accommodation support, has already received over 100 referrals, The Nelson Trust is working with 50 women across the PDU, and Maximus (providing employment

⁹ Data supplied by The Probation Service.

¹⁰ HM Inspectorate of Probation inspection data.

training and education opportunities) has worked with 88 individuals between the end of June and mid-October. The St Giles Wise group is also providing wellbeing services in two partnerships, one for men under 25 and the other for men over 25.

The introduction of CORRE earlier in the year to support the identification, referral and management of interventions has been received well by practitioners who see it as a helpful approach to support links to appropriate services.

Services and support for other protected characteristics is limited, although some recent work and financial support has been extended to a Swansea-based service working with black, Asian and minority ethnic people on probation.

The impact of Covid-19 and extended office restrictions impacts substantially on the provision of accredited programmes. Programmes have, since August, been delivered in the YMCA building in Swansea. Although sufficient space is afforded to ensure safe delivery under Covid-19, only three BBR courses (designed to address domestic abuse) can be run at any given time. A further building is expected to come onstream within the next few months. Such limitations on space also means that the delivery of accredited programmes to address sexual offending is delivered at an alternative PDU.

The interventions team is working, appropriately, within the national guidelines for prioritisation but this means many people are not able to access the programme they need. Where the criteria are not met, probation practitioners are expected to take back responsibility. In most cases this requires the delivery of related 'toolkits' as part of HMPPS's strategy to manage backlogs, but these were never designed as an alternative to accredited programmes and, while staff deliver them to the best of their ability, some expressed concern about having the necessary training to implement them and there being no formal quality assurance in place. However, we were told that this lack of quality assurance is in line with expectations as part of the national approach under the exceptional delivery model.

At regional level the service monitors the issues of disproportionality for women and black, Asian and minority ethnic people in relation to the completion of accredited programmes, breach and recall. This is not currently available at PDU level although it is acknowledged that this is necessary. Regionally no differences are identified in relation to these outcomes.

In our practitioner survey, 77 per cent of respondents said they had access to an appropriate range of services to meet the needs and risks of people on probation. Furthermore, 82 per cent of those practitioners whose cases we reviewed said they had access to an appropriate range of services, either in-house, or through other agencies, specifically to meet the needs of the case under review. Effective use of this provision however was not borne out by our case review. As an example, drug services across Wales are provided by Dyfodol, including those within HMP Swansea. They run an extensive range of individual and group interventions. In our case supervision inspection, we found that in 28 cases individuals had at least drug or alcohol problems. However, while we saw a number of very positive interventions through the organisation, in only 10 did we assess that sufficient services had been delivered.

Unpaid work continues to be a challenge under the current pandemic and, while delivery across Wales is presently around 80 per cent of pre-pandemic levels, in Swansea this is around 110 per cent, which is positive. A rigorous policy is in place to rectify shortfalls, primarily by way of increasing capacity on worksites, increasing the number of supervisors to facilitate more projects, and exploring alternative

options including the 'Project in a Box' initiative introduced in a number of other regions during the early months of the Covid-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, the significant backlog will take many months to resolve.

Are relationships with providers and other agencies established, maintained and used effectively to deliver high-quality services to people on probation?

Relationships with both the police and safeguarding services (children's and adult's) were well established at a strategic level, but our case inspections suggest that this did not consistently manifest in practice. We found that the involvement of other organisations in the delivery of services was sufficiently well coordinated in only 41 per cent of cases. In only 38 per cent of cases was the involvement of other agencies in managing and minimising the risk of harm sufficiently well-coordinated.

In our review of case supervision, 74 per cent of practitioners said that in the case under review there were effective working relationships with other agencies to support the person on probation's desistance. However, this fell to 60 per cent in terms of relationships with other agencies to manage the risk of harm to others. This was not reflected in what we found in our inspection of cases.

Sentencers spoken to during the inspection described relationships with The Probation Service as positive, which was further reinforced by the sentencers survey.

In our survey, 91 per cent of sentencers also said that courts were either very well or quite well kept up to date with the outcomes of work undertaken by The Probation Service. All respondents also said that the pre-sentence advice and information provided to court was analytical and personalised to the individual, to support the court's decision-making. It is therefore disappointing that from our review of 20 pre-sentence reports, in only 11 (55 per cent) was the pre-sentence information and advice provided to court sufficiently analytical and personalised to the individual to support the court's decision-making.

Resettlement

Across all elements of our case supervision review we found that those cases subject to post-release licence were consistently more likely to be judged as meeting the standard than those of community orders.

The STST has, since June 2021, incorporated staff formerly employed in Through the Gate work at HMP Swansea into their team, although they remain largely based at the prison. As early adopters of this model, it appeared to be working reasonably well. Relationships and engagement with prisons further afield were reported by staff to be less well developed.

In 69 per cent of cases the community offender manager was judged to have ensured a proportionate level of contact with the prisoner before release and in 63 per cent of cases they were assessed to have addressed the key resettlement or desistance needs before release. In a number of cases however, it was apparent that while the needs of the prisoner were met prior to their release, this was not always due to the work of the community offender manager but often the work of another agency working in the prison (drug misuse services or housing agency etc.). We also found that in eight out of 13 cases where it was necessary, the community offender manager addressed key risk-of-harm needs before release, although again in some cases this was actually undertaken by other agencies on behalf of the community offender manager.

Of significant note in our case inspection, is that high and very-high risk cases, across both post-release licence and community order cases, managed better than medium-risk cases and that cases that were subject to multi-disciplinary post-release support were also, generally, managed well. All six of the IOM cases in our cohort were subject to post-release licence.

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 people on probation.	Requires improvement
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In making a judgement about information and facilities, we take into account the answers to the following four questions:

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

Despite work to analyse and evidence learning, given our findings in relation to casework, questions remain as to how effective this is in embedding effective practice and driving improvements.

HMPPS's performance and quality strategy outlines the regional structure, with PDU performance reports providing management information on a weekly basis. Weekly tasking meetings help ensure that work is appropriately allocated. While PDU performance reports focus appropriately on targets and completion data, with virtually all targets either achieved or exceeded, there is less focus on the effectiveness of practice in these reports.

The best-practice learning group is well established and appropriately focused. It also includes work specifically in the PDU. The Wales effective practice portal offers a further opportunity to disseminate and share information, focuses on best practice, and responds to queries and areas of concern raised by staff. Examples include information about stalking, coercive control, and trauma responsive work with women. Much of what is available is of a high standard. Disappointingly, although there is a selection of video interviews with staff about effective file and data recording, we found in a number of cases we reviewed that information was not always recorded on Delius.

A PDU-specific quality calendar includes a range of focused briefings and staff events relating to developing effective practice and performance. Examples include briefings on substance misuse and accredited programmes. Further monthly events include talks by representatives from all teams to disseminate learning. Examples of these include mental health, safeguarding and multi-agency public protection arrangements work along with work relating to recent HM Inspectorate of Probation's thematic work such as that relating to race and equality and IOM. Learning points from serious further offences (reviewed at regional level) are disseminated appropriately, with four events undertaken in June 2021.

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

Policies are primarily designed at regional and national level. Staff briefings across the PDU are regular, frequent and appear comprehensive.

The availability of Microsoft Teams has made the ability to undertake such all-staff events relatively easy. Given the current issues locally at the PDU's central office at West Glamorgan House and with limited capacity elsewhere, such briefings have been essential for keeping staff informed and engaged. Regular twice-weekly management meetings with a further monthly meeting serve similar functions.

Do the premises and offices enable staff to deliver a quality service, meeting the needs of all people on probation?

The current premises' arrangements for staff are insufficient but beyond the control of the PDU. This is a significant concern for staff. In our survey, 94 per cent of practitioners said that the premises and offices did not support the delivery of appropriate work and the effective engagement of people on probation. The remaining six per cent said that it did only 'to some degree'.

The management of alternative premises has been well organised, but inevitably limited. In total, six different buildings are being used across the PDU. This affords up to 235 sessions a week available to see people on probation, not including the delivery of accredited programmes nor the use of the Include Hub for women. All but one of the premises has wheelchair access and where it does not, alternatives are in place.

The consequence of the current situation is that, with social distancing still in place and, in some cases, limited ventilation, most staff are limited to attending offices just one day a week. It also means that sessions with people on probation are often limited to only 15-minute slots, often restricting contact to mere 'check-ins'. Consequently, in many cases, work to address issues to reduce reoffending and to improve desistance is, by necessity, undertaken remotely via telephone, which is particularly difficult and, as we found in our case inspection, too often of limited effectiveness.

The return to West Glamorgan House is being managed well and it is expected that a phased approach will be undertaken between the end of November 2021 and the end of January 2022. It remains unclear as to whether this will resolve the issues of effective engagement and case management.

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

ICT systems are broadly sufficient and able to support both staff in their day-to-day work and to generate sufficient management information.

All POs and PSOs have a laptop computer and a mobile telephone to which they can tether their computer. Staff spoken to said that this was broadly sufficient to facilitate their work, although occasional problems with mobile signals, especially within the civic building, have added to the frustrations of current working arrangements.

Generated management information includes exceptional delivery model data to support comparisons across all PDUs in Wales. This can also be broken down to inform PDU leads about teams and even individuals.

Performance data is also collected across the region and is again broken down by PDU to track performance levels against targets. This includes data reflecting some, but not all, protected characteristics, including women and those with a black, Asian or minority ethnic background, to monitor disproportionality.

Feedback from people on probation

Work by the PDU to get the feedback of people on probation remains in its infancy. Delays in developing engagement due to the Covid-19 pandemic has been a frustration to managers, but work is beginning to develop, with expressions of interest being sought from people currently on licence or orders to be part of a user group or council.

Our own engagement with people on probation produced a mixed picture. Respondents to our text and paper surveys were relatively positive about their experience. Although response rates were quite low, over 90 per cent said they were happy about the service they received, and a similar number said they felt safe accessing probation services. Women who responded to our written survey were generally more positive than men, with nearly all citing the relationship they have with their probation officer as the best part of their experience. As one woman succinctly put it:

“My officer is really supportive and listens to my views and helps me.”

The highest response rate in the text survey was to the question about being able to access the services needed to make positive changes in their lives, to which only two thirds agreed or strongly agreed.

Participants in our focus group with people on probation during the inspection were more negative. There was a view that access to services was often difficult and that, overall, their experience of time on probation very much depended on which PO they were allocated to. The following examples demonstrate some of the contrasting experiences:

“My PO has been a great source of support to me and I don’t think I would be here if it wasn’t for her.”

“My experience is that it depends on who your officer is and that makes a big difference. Some POs make a negative judgement about you based on your offence and it follows you through your case.”

Most group participants also felt that telephone contact was better, because it was more convenient, but overall, there was a view that currently contact was often very short and often pointless. One man in our focus group said he had been:

“waiting in all day for a three-minute appointment, which was completely pointless”.

This view ties in with our finding of ‘check-in’ calls.

Interestingly however, although participants in our group were fairly negative, it was apparent that they were keen to be part of a solution and wanted to be consulted on service planning and delivery.

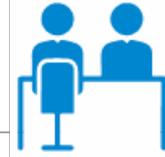
Diversity and inclusion

Swansea Neath Port Talbot PDU takes issues of diversity seriously but acknowledges that there is still more to do, particularly in relation to staff recruitment and the provision of specialist services.

In the Swansea local authority area, the non-white population is estimated at 6.3 per cent and in Neath Port Talbot 1.1 per cent. In the Swansea Neath Port Talbot PDU, the proportion of people on probation who are black, Asian or minority ethnic is five per cent

The PDU's equality and diversity action plan is comprehensive and covers all protected characteristics along with objectives around supporting the development of the Welsh language. There is a good range of information for staff, including access to video sessions and documents to support equality. A number of initiatives are in train to take work forward. The present commissioning of a neurodiversity project acknowledges the potential barriers for some people on probation to access services; this will inform a better understanding. The current pre-sentence report pilot, while not focusing specifically on black, Asian and minority ethnic defendants, will include an analysis of the impact on this group of individuals. Furthermore, guidance has been produced for staff quality-assurance reports, including those for court and sentence planning, regarding unintentional bias and disproportionality.

2. Court work and case supervision



We inspected 16 community sentence cases and 24 post-release supervision cases. We inspected 20 relevant court reports arising from those cases. We examined the quality of assessment, planning, implementation and delivery, and reviewing in each case. Each of these elements was inspected in respect of engaging the person on probation and addressing issues relevant to offending and desistance. The quality of work undertaken needs to be above a specific threshold for it to be rated as satisfactory. We also inspected the outcomes achieved for people on probation.

Overall, against the four elements of assessment, planning, implementation and delivery, and reviewing, we found that only a minority achieved the necessary standard to be rated as 'Sufficient' in all three key questions. In particular, questions relating to the management of risk and keeping other people safe scored poorly. As a consequence, all four elements were rated as 'Inadequate'.

There were some notable distinctions to be drawn. Consistently and across 11 out of the 12 key questions, post-release licence cases scored substantially better than those of community order cases. We also found that in nine out of 12 key questions, those cases assessed as medium risk of harm scored worse than either those assessed as low or high/very high risk of harm. This was the case in all four of the key questions relating to risk and the management of harm.

Across the Swansea Neath Port Talbot PDU, 56 per cent of all cases, and 62 per cent in the community at the time of the inspection, were assessed as a medium risk of harm. Of those in the community at the time of the inspection, 19 per cent were assessed as low risk of harm and 18 per cent as high/very high risk of harm. Not surprisingly, a slightly higher proportion of our licence cohort (31 per cent) were high/very high risk of harm, compared with only nine per cent of the community sample, with a lower proportion (56 per cent) of medium risk of harm cases on licence compared to 71 per cent on community orders.

The reasons for the differences in our assessed scores between those on community orders and those on post-release licence is not entirely clear. However, in many cases, pre-release work engaged other organisations already working, and often well established, in prisons, including drug services and accommodation agencies. Work by these agencies often supplemented work by probation practitioners (and sometimes replaced them) and it was not always possible to ascribe activity to the probation practitioner. Often, but by no means always, a good assessment increases the likelihood of better work delivered subsequently on a case.

Added to this, five of the seven multi-agency public protection arrangement cases were on licence, and all six of those subject to integrated offender management (IOM) were also post-release cases. There were strong indications that, where multi-agency work was in place, cases were generally managed better, although there were some exceptions.

Case supervision

Strengths:

- Overall, high- and very-high risk of harm cases are managed reasonably well, although it should be noted that the number of cases in the sample was relatively low (seven).
- Consistently those cases on post-release licence are managed better than those on community orders.

Areas for improvement:

- In too many cases, contact was insufficient and even when it was at an appropriate level, too often its focus was vague or unclear.
- In too many cases, the word of the person on probation was accepted without verification.
- Probation practitioners often focused their attention on factors that were not the most important in either reducing reoffending or increasing desistance.
- Probation practitioners did not focus sufficiently on protecting actual and potential victims of offending and did not always recognise changes in risk factors

2.1 Court work



The pre-sentence information and advice provided to court supports its decision-making.

Requires improvement

Our rating for court work is based on the percentage of cases we inspected being judged satisfactory against the key question:

Key question	Score
Is the pre-sentence information and advice provided to court sufficiently analytical and personalised to the individual, supporting the court's decision-making?¹¹	55%

¹¹ The rating for the standard is driven by the score for the key question, which is placed in a rating band.

The PDU is rated as 'Requires improvement' for court work, with only 55 per cent of cases inspected being rated as satisfactory against our quality standard.

We saw, among our case sample, some very well-written and constructed court reports. In most of the cases, individuals were appropriately involved and engaged in the report-writing process, and in a large majority of cases the diversity and personal circumstances of individuals were appropriately taken into consideration.

Disappointingly however, in too few cases did the information and advice draw on the full range of available information; in many cases this did not include child safeguarding and/or domestic abuse information. In the better examples, a comprehensive analysis of information was undertaken which was then set in an appropriate context, and the analysis and recommendation to the court led logically and helpfully from this, as in the following example:

Good practice example

In preparation for the report, both domestic abuse and child safeguarding checks were undertaken. The author engaged William in the process, considering relevant diversity information such as physical health (pneumothorax and back injury), mental health issues (obsessive compulsive disorder, anxiety, depression and previous suicidal thoughts) and his experience of trauma as a victim of physical and emotional abuse along with witnessing, as a child, abuse perpetrated against his mother. These factors, alongside factors identified as contributing towards the risk of reoffending and risk of harm, were included to assist with sentencing. This ensured the recommendation was personalised and provided a sentence to reduce the risks posed to known or identifiable victims.

It was not always clear why domestic abuse or child safeguarding checks had not been undertaken, especially where information, for instance in previous Offender Assessment System (OASys) reviews, indicated earlier concerns. In too many cases, even where appropriate information had been sought and considered, the level of analysis was insufficient.

The following demonstrates the point:

Poor practice example

In preparation for the report, both domestic abuse and child safeguarding checks were undertaken. There were no specific diversity needs identified but the author considered Jon's denial of the index offence and his view that the Criminal Justice System believed women over men in cases of domestic abuse. The author neither identified specific factors contributing to the offence nor explored further information detailing the minimising of his own behaviour, difficulties in managing the reportedly fractious relationship the person on probation had with his ex-partner, poor problem solving and consequential thinking, and poor emotional management which could have been highlighted to the court by exploring the detail provided in the Crown Prosecution Service documents.

2.2. Assessment



Assessment is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the person on probation.

Inadequate

Our rating¹² for assessment is based on the percentage of cases we inspected being judged satisfactory against three key questions:

Key question	Scores		
	Community sentences	Post-release sentences	All cases
Does assessment focus sufficiently on engaging the person on probation?	46%	81%	60%
Does assessment focus sufficiently on the factors linked to offending and desistance?	42%	88%	60%
Does assessment focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	21%	56%	35%

The PDU is rated as 'Inadequate' for assessment, as the lowest score for the key questions was 35 per cent.

The importance of an effective assessment cannot be overstated; it invariably underpins subsequent work and determines both the focus and nature of engagement. Therefore, the scores in this section almost inevitably drive failings against our other standards.

There is a stark difference in the quality of assessments undertaken with those individuals on a community order compared with those on a post-release licence, with far more of the latter judged to be sufficient. While there are exceptions, in broad terms those cases where there is co-working and/or multi-agency responsibility tend to benefit from better quality assessments. This would include IOM cases and most female cases. It is also apparent that those released from custody generally benefit from multi-agency/department pre-release involvement, focusing on housing, substance misuse, health and 'employment training and education' among others. The assessment of motivation and readiness to change, and analysis of individual personal circumstances, both underpin the overall focus on engaging and are far better in those cases on post-release licence.

Similarly, a far greater focus on identifying and analysing offending-related factors and a greater use of available sources of information in those cases on post-release

¹² 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 in bold in the table.

licence again leads to an evaluation that these cases focused more sufficiently on the factors linked to offending and desistance.

Of greatest concern is the insufficient focus on keeping other people safe. Too few of those cases on post-release licence have sufficient attention paid to the risks they pose, but more worrying is that this falls to only one in five of those on a community order. Similarly, in only 27 per cent of those cases assessed as medium risk did assessment focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe.

The following examples demonstrate the contrasts we found:

Good practice example

Marie has a long and complex history of offending and also of being the victim of crime. The assessment of her personal history paints a clear picture of all the factors in her life that have contributed to her offending; how prevalent they are, those that need to be addressed and those that require monitoring to support desistance. The assessment is based on the probation practitioner's in-depth knowledge of Marie, information received from her key worker in prison and that gained from the various partner agencies involved with her in the community prior to sentence.

Checks completed for Marie's release on home detention curfew included domestic abuse enquiries.

Assessment explores all these factors and considers them in relation to the risk Marie poses to others and also in terms of her own vulnerability. Risk of serious harm to children and the nature of the risk is identified and sufficiently focuses on keeping people safe.

Poor practice example

The pre-sentence report identifies that Jack feels he has a 'split personality' and that he also has attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and is struggling with his mental health. This is not recognised in the practitioner's assessment which states that Jack has no issues in this area. There is no evidenced exploration of Jack's childhood or any areas other than the relationship with his partner to assess the impact of life events of his behaviour.

Jack's thinking skills are identified as linked to reoffending and are explored sufficiently to identify appropriate intervention, but there is a lack of exploration around Jack's mental health and how this impacts on his behaviour and desistance. Previous offending is noted in records to be linked to alcohol misuse, but this is not identified as a relevant factor in the assessment, and it is noted that Jack states he has no issues in this area. It would appear that the practitioner has relied on Jack's own account rather than analysing the index offence and his previous behaviour. Domestic abuse has been an issue in Jack's previous and current relationships, with earlier OASys reviews suggesting call-outs with his current partner, but no domestic abuse checks were conducted regarding his current relationship and it is noted that there are no issues in his relationships. This has led to the practitioner not identifying any risk to partners and an inaccurate overall assessment of risk. Furthermore, although Jack has a significant history of using weapons during his offences, this is not accounted for in the risk summary.

2.3. Planning



Planning is well-informed, holistic and personalised, actively involving the person on probation.

Inadequate

Our rating¹³ for planning is based on the percentage of cases we inspected being judged satisfactory against three key questions:

Key question	Scores		
	Community sentences	Post-release sentences	All cases
Does planning focus sufficiently on engaging the person on probation?	33%	63%	45%
Does planning focus sufficiently on reducing reoffending and supporting desistance?	38%	56%	45%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	30%	69%	46%

The PDU is rated as 'Inadequate' for planning, with all three scores for the key questions falling within the rating band for 'Inadequate'.

Unsurprisingly, data regarding planning suggests a very similar pattern and issues as that in assessment, with the number of cases demonstrating sufficient planning consistently higher in the post-release licence sample than that of the community order cohort. This was the case in all three of the key questions.

In the better cases, across both post-release licence and community order cases, the individual is engaged with their plan to increase the likelihood of compliance. The plan reflects the primary areas of concern and indicates; what work needs to be done and why, who will undertake it and by when, and what the anticipated benefits of this work will be along with how it will be measured. Included also are appropriate contingency plans in case of shortfalls in the planned work.

Conversely we saw a number of examples where there was little or no engagement with the person on probation, where in some cases referrals are made to a service which the person on probation has little motivation to attend and with little indication of any contingency plans. Weaker cases are also characterised by a lack of clarity as to what work needs to be engaged in, why or by whom. We also saw examples where little consideration was given to what the likely impact of problematic behaviour, such as alcohol or substance misuse, would have on compliance with the order.

¹³ 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 in bold in the table.

In some cases, plans we saw were unrealistic, setting unachievable targets. In one case for instance, a woman with a long history of poor compliance, alcohol misuse and associating with pro-offending peers, had targets set to: "maintain abstinence from alcohol" and to: "no longer associate with pro-offending peers".

In relation to planning that focuses sufficiently on keeping other people safe, again in better-managed cases we saw explicit prioritisation of key issues, clear objectives and, where necessary and/or appropriate, coherent joint planning with other agencies such as the police in IOM cases, substance misuse agencies or children's services.

In too many of the cases we looked at planning did not sufficiently consider all key factors associated with offending, especially those regarding the safety of others. In some cases, some factors were considered but not the most significant ones. Engagement, and the sharing of information, with children's services were too often lacking and often were without any contingency plans.

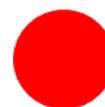
Poor practice example

The assessment identifies relevant factors relating to harm and outlines intervention to address relationships. Although drug misuse is referenced in the sentence plan, this is in terms of monitoring and there are no objectives to explore Jacob's drug misuse which, although less frequent than previously, is identified as an ongoing issue. This is particularly relevant considering that he has reported living with his partner and her three children, who may witness any drug misuse. Consideration is not given to referring Jacob to a community drug misuse agency.

Jacob links his mental health to his offending behaviour and the practitioner also links emotional management, but this is neither considered when planning interventions nor reflected in objectives. There is no evidence of a check being conducted with children's services in relation to his partner's children or of a referral being submitted in relation to the potential risks posed towards Jacob's partner and her children. It is of note that the practitioner states that checks were made but these are not evidenced. The practitioner did not feel that a referral to children's services was warranted due to there being no call-outs with the current partner, despite Jacob's history of domestic abuse, which is of concern. The practitioner did contact the police regarding a Claire's Law disclosure; however, the result is not recorded. The practitioner noted that a disclosure was not wanted by Jacob's partner. The contingency plan does not identify responses in terms of any contact with his ex-partner, breach of restraining order or deterioration in his mental health, which are key areas linked to his risk.

Of particular note is the fact that those cases where individuals are assessed as either a high or low risk of serious harm were substantially more likely to be judged as sufficient in relation to planning focusing sufficiently on keeping other people safe than those assessed as a medium risk. Only eight out of 25 medium-risk cases (32 per cent) met this criterion.

2.4. Implementation and delivery



High-quality, well-focused, personalised and coordinated services are delivered, engaging the person on probation.

Inadequate

Our rating¹⁴ for implementation and delivery is based on the percentage of cases we inspected being judged satisfactory against three key questions:

Key question	Scores		
	Community sentences	Post-release sentences	All cases
Is the sentence or post-custody period implemented effectively with a focus on engaging the person on probation?	48%	88%	64%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support desistance?	35%	56%	44%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?	38%	63%	48%

Swansea Neath Port Talbot PDU is rated as 'Inadequate' for implementation and delivery, as the lowest score for the key questions was 44 per cent for the implementation and delivery of services that effectively support the person on probation's desistance, and only 48 per cent for the implementation and delivery of services which effectively support the safety of other people, both of which fall within the rating band for 'Inadequate'.

Although a large majority (81 per cent) of cases of those on a post-release licence started on time, this is to be expected given that on release, people on licence are expected to report to their community probation practitioner. Nevertheless, this does compare favourably to those on community orders where only half were judged to have started on time.

In some post-release licence cases, although there was little or no contact from the community offender manager (probation practitioner), work was undertaken pre-release by the prison to meet the needs of those due to be released on licence. In some respects, this disguised the lack of practitioner activity. The following is an example:

¹⁴ 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 in bold in the table.

Good practice example

There was no apparent pre-release contact from the community offender manager, but there was some evidence of other pre-release work being delivered within the prison focusing on the need for accommodation. Mark was released to bail accommodation and support services. Post-release, the case improved significantly when a new PSO was allocated, who really focused on understanding the barriers to engagement and addressed them effectively; primarily Mark's ongoing accommodation and substance misuse needs, which were correctly identified as the priority for him.

It is encouraging that overall, in a large majority of cases we reviewed, we found that sufficient efforts were made to enable people on probation to complete their licence or order. Although in only 45 per cent of cases was the risk of non-compliance identified and addressed, once cases that did not require it are removed this rises to 18 out of 27 cases. Similarly, once those cases where breach or recall was not required are removed, 17 out of 22 cases where it was required were managed appropriately. Encouragingly, this equates to all of those cases on post-release licence.

Overall, only 43 per cent of cases were judged to have had sufficient contact to support desistance and reduce the risk of reoffending. Of greater concern is that only 40 per cent of cases were judged to have had sufficient contact to manage risk. In many cases, face-to-face contact was insufficient and remote telephone contact ineffectual.

The three areas of work most widely identified to address risk of harm were 'thinking and behaviour' in 33 cases, 'family and relationships' in 23 cases and 'drug misuse' in 18 cases. However, sufficient work to address these issues were assessed to have taken place in only four of the thinking and behaviour cases, two relating to family and relationships, and six requiring support with drugs. Of note however is that, of the 11 cases identified as requiring accommodation support, nine were adjudged to have been sufficiently managed. This was even higher in relation to individuals released from prison.

Such limitations must of course be seen within the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, compounded by the current closure of West Glamorgan House. But such limitations should lead to a far greater focus on the most important aspects of a case and emphasises the necessity of working with partner agencies as a minimum, especially around the management of risk. Too often this was not the case.

Poor practice example

While there is frequent contact by a number of means, including regular home visits, contact is not particularly meaningful and appears as a basic check-in. During interview the probation practitioner struggled to explain what was meant by the constant repetition in records of "engaging well". No attention was paid to emotional wellbeing or mental health issues, and the self-report of the person on probation about compliance with his methadone prescription was accepted without any verification with Dyfodol (drugs misuse agency). If checks had been undertaken it would have been noted that he was relapsing.

The following case however demonstrates how effective a clear focus on contact and multi-agency work can be:

Good practice example

Claire’s case includes evidence of involvement with accommodation support, Dyfodol (drugs misuse agency), Include HUB (women’s services support), access to sexual health resources as needed through Dyfodol, and access to independent domestic violence advice services prior to her ex-partner’s release from custody. Appropriate intervention is organised through other agencies to address key areas impacting on desistance, including accommodation, drug misuse and a pro-social lifestyle. There is very frequent liaison with several agencies to coordinate support after Claire left the area and entered a refuge due to domestic abuse from her ex-partner. This includes refuge support, Women’s Aid, and Dyfodol, particularly to manage any emerging risks. Additionally, there is liaison with probation to see Claire in person while she is out of area and with accommodation to ensure appropriate support is available to allow Claire to return to South Wales when appropriate.

2.5. Reviewing



Reviewing of progress is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the person on probation. **Inadequate**

Our rating¹⁵ for reviewing is based on the percentage of cases we inspected being judged satisfactory against three key questions:

Key question	Scores		
	Community sentences	Post-release sentences	All cases
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the compliance and engagement of the person on probation?	46%	75%	58%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting desistance?	58%	63%	60%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	35%	63%	46%

¹⁵ 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 in bold in the table.

Fewer than half the cases we inspected were satisfactory in relation to whether case reviews focused sufficiently on keeping other people safe. Therefore, we have rated the quality of reviewing overall as 'Inadequate'.

Although the pattern of more post-release licence cases than community orders being assessed as sufficient continues in relation to reviewing, the differences in a number of aspects is less apparent. However, in regard to the management of risk of harm, the difference remains as stark as in the previous three dimensions of casework. The pattern of medium-risk cases consistently being less likely to meet the threshold for sufficiency continues and is particularly apparent in relation to keeping other people safe, where only nine out of 25 cases (36 per cent) met the threshold.

It is expected that a case is reviewed following a significant event or after six months. This might include a new responsible practitioner, or it might include a change of circumstances for the person on probation, including a further offence, alcohol/drug misuse relapse, new information coming to light or a new personal relationship being entered into, along with many other events.

In a number of the cases we reviewed we found that appropriate reviews had been undertaken, sometimes because of a change of practitioner but usually because of changes in circumstances. In the better cases, the person on probation is included in the review themselves along with, where appropriate, other agencies involved in the work. From this a clear plan for the next period of supervision can be agreed. In the poorer examples the converse was true.

It is worth noting that in some of the cases we reviewed, although there was little on file to indicate that a review had taken place, it was apparent from talking to the practitioner that not only did they know the case concerned but that they had undertaken reviews and constructed meaningful plans for future work. While these cases were marked as sufficient it was something of a pattern across our case reviews that recording was not always satisfactory.

In too many of the cases we saw, because there had been relatively little meaningful activity, even when contact had been sufficiently frequent, there was little to actually review. Our primary concern however was, again, the issue of reviewing in relation to keeping other people safe. In some cases, again, we found there to have been an overreliance on what the person on probation told the practitioner without sufficient checks to verify. Across both community orders and post-release licence cases, in only a minority of cases was there a sufficient focus on ensuring that reviewing was informed by necessary input from other agencies involved in managing the risk of harm. The following was not, unfortunately, unusual:

Poor practice example

There is no evidence Richard was involved in reviewing the risk of harm he posed. The case was reduced from medium to low risk on the basis that the unpaid work had been completed but without any checks with the police domestic abuse unit to verify if there were any further concerns around breach of the non-molestation order. There was an overreliance by the probation practitioner on what the person on probation was telling them and a lack of verification.

2.6. Outcomes

Not rated

Early outcomes are positive, demonstrating reasonable progress for the person on probation.

Not rated

Outcomes	Community sentences	Post-release sentences	All cases
Do early outcomes demonstrate that reasonable progress has been made, in line with the personalised needs of the person on probation?	33%	31%	33%

As has been noted earlier, in too many of the cases we reviewed we found that there had been insufficient contact with the person on probation or, where contact had been frequent enough, it was not sufficiently focused. This inevitably impacts on outcomes.

In many of the cases where some progress was being made this was because of the involvement of external agencies, such as those delivering substance misuse services, or where practical support, such as improvements in accommodation, were delivered. In most cases there had been no interventions delivered or the key focus had been on developing motivation due to the actual or threat of non-compliance.

Annexe one – Progress against previous recommendations

HM Inspectorate of Probation has made recommendations for the previous community rehabilitation companies (CRCs) and National Probation Service (NPS) divisions, arising from core and thematic inspections. Since the unification of the probation service, we have expected the new probation service to continue to implement these recommendations. Below are our findings from the inspection of Swansea Neath Port Talbot Probation Delivery Unit (PDU) in respect of the relevant recommendations:

Recommendation from an inspection of probation services provided in Wales by KSS Community Rehabilitation Company, published July 2019:

Better manage the workloads of staff, and provide sufficient staff to deliver services as intended.

Inspection findings:

- Overall attrition rate is 15.6 per cent (14.2 per cent for probation officers (POs), 10 per cent for probation service officers (PSOs)). The overall vacancy rate is 18 per cent.
- Average caseload of POs is 32.53 and of PSOs it is 37.46. But 27 per cent of POs and 20 per cent of PSOs have workloads over 110 per cent of the workload management tool.
- In the practitioner survey, 81 per cent said their caseload was less than 40. Of those practitioners interviewed during the inspection, 53 per cent said their caseload was up to 40, with a further 39 per cent saying it was between 41 and 50. Only 41 per cent of practitioners in our survey said their caseload was very or quite manageable, along with 48 per cent of those practitioners interviewed.
- In recognition, a further generic team is being created to enable greater flexibility for the specialist teams.

Categorisation **Some progress**

Improvement still required? **Yes**

Recommendation from an inspection of probation services provided in Wales by KSS Community Rehabilitation Company, published July 2019:

Improve the quality of planning to address risk of harm and safeguarding.

Inspection findings:

- During the last inspection of Wales CRC in our domain two case management review, in only 48 per cent of cases did planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe. We found in this inspection this figure was 46 per cent.

Categorisation **No progress**

Improvement still required? **Yes**

Recommendation from an inspection of probation services provided in Wales by KSS Community Rehabilitation Company, published July 2019:

Provide training and development that meet the needs of staff and monitor the impact of training on practice.

Inspection findings:

- All new staff are required to complete core training and demonstrate competence prior to the allocation of complex cases.
- At the time of the inspection, 69 per cent of staff had completed adult safeguarding training, 74 per cent had completed child safeguarding training and 70 per cent had completed domestic violence training.
- In the practitioner survey, 65 per cent said the organisation actively promoted a culture of learning and continuous improvement.
- The impact of training is expected to be monitored through reflective practice and regular supervision, though in our practitioner survey, only 47 per cent said they received supervision sufficiently frequently. Our domain two review of cases suggests that the impact and benefit of training is not yet being seen in practice.

Categorisation **Some progress**

Improvement still required? **Yes**

Recommendation from an inspection of probation services provided in Wales by KSS Community Rehabilitation Company, published July 2019:

Enable team managers to provide effective management oversight of practice.

Inspection findings:

- Middle managers spoken to told us they were responsible for between 12 and 18 staff. Most said this was manageable but difficult, especially with pandemic restrictions compounded by the recent evacuation of West Glamorgan House.
- In our practitioner's survey, 58 per cent said they receive supervision that enhances the quality of their work with people on probation.
- However, in our domain two casework review we found that in 22 out of 36 cases where it was required, management oversight was insufficient, ineffective or absent.
- Senior managers recognised this pressure and a seventh team is being created to reduce individual spans of control, but further work is required on effective case management quality assurance.

Categorisation **No progress**

Improvement still required? **Yes**

Recommendation from an inspection of probation services provided in Wales by KSS Community Rehabilitation Company, published July 2019:

Improve the coordination of resettlement activity.

Inspection findings:

- Since June 2021, staff providing resettlement support to prisoners at HMP Swansea have been employed by the short-term sentence team, offering an in-reach service. Swansea Neath Port Talbot PDU is an early adopter of this model. This nascent service appears to be developing appropriately.
- Men serving longer-term sentences appear less likely to receive the full provision expected under the offender management in custody model, while the equivalent support for women appears more established and better coordinated.
- Nevertheless, overall, the quality of work undertaken on post-release licence cases around assessment and planning is better than that undertaken on community orders.

Categorisation **Some progress**

Improvement still required? **Yes**

Recommendation from an inspection of probation services provided in Wales by KSS Community Rehabilitation Company, published July 2019:

Make sure that all buildings and ICT (information and communication technology) support staff to deliver effective services.

This recommendation is no longer relevant.

Recommendation from an inspection of the National Probation Service in Wales, published in April 2019:

Review and actively manage workloads to ensure an equitable and efficient distribution of work.

Inspection findings:

- With the new tiering framework introduced across England and Wales in June 2021, a new workload framework was also adopted. Despite central guidance, the Wales probation service and Swansea Neath Port Talbot PDU have adopted some variations and weightings to reflect the complexities of some specialised services, especially the short-term sentence team and the women's team.

Categorisation **Some progress**

Improvement still required? **Yes**

Recommendation from an inspection of the National Probation Service in Wales, published in April 2019:

Make appropriate and effective use of the services provided under commission from the CRC.

This recommendation is no longer relevant.

Recommendation from an inspection of the National Probation Service in Wales, published in April 2019:

Improve the process for obtaining relevant information from children's services and domestic abuse units in all relevant cases.

Inspection findings:

- In only half the cases inspected were domestic abuse checks undertaken and in only 23 per cent of cases did child safeguarding information sharing take place.

Categorisation **No progress**

Improvement still required? **Yes**

Recommendation from an inspection of the National Probation Service in Wales, published in April 2019:

Undertake risk of harm assessments in all applicable cases.

Inspection findings:

- In our domain two case review we found that in 65 per cent of cases, assessment did not clearly identify all relevant factors.

Categorisation **No progress**

Improvement still required? **Yes**

Recommendation from an inspection of the National Probation Service in Wales, published in April 2019:

Improve the use of the violent offender and sex offender register (ViSOR) database to share information with police and prisons.

Inspection findings:

- Recent training has been undertaken to increase the number of staff who have access to ViSOR to five, from one. Limitations have been inevitable due to the Covid-19 pandemic and lack of access to West Glamorgan House. Once staff return to the main office it is anticipated that all POs will undertake ViSOR training.

Categorisation **Some progress**

Improvement still required? **Yes**

Annexe two – Data

Key staffing data¹⁶

Total staff headcount (full-time equivalent (FTE))	137
Total number of probation officers (POs) (sentence management) (FTE)	37.84
Total number of probation services officers (PSOs) (sentence management) (FTE)	22.7
Total number of senior probation officers (SPOs) (sentence management) (FTE)	6.57
Professional Qualification in Probation (PQiP) trainees	7
Advice to court staff	10.22
Resettlement staff	8.5
Vacancy rate (total number of unfilled posts as a percentage of total staff)	18%
Vacancy rate of SPO sentence management grade only (total number of unfilled posts as a percentage of total number of required SPO posts)	-6%
Vacancy rate of PO sentence management grade only (total number of unfilled posts as a percentage of total number of required PO posts)	-4%
Vacancy rate of PSO sentence management grade only (total number of unfilled posts as a percentage of total number of required PO posts)	-8%
Sickness absence rate (average days lost in the previous 12 months for all staff)	12.7
Sickness absence rate SPO (average days lost in the previous 12 months for SPOs)	1.1
Sickness absence rate PO (average days lost in the previous 12 months for POs)	16.5

¹⁶ Data supplied by The Probation Service.

Sickness absence rate PSO (average days lost in the previous 12 months for PSOs)	8.4
Staff attrition (percentage of all staff leaving in the previous 12-month period)	15.6%
Staff attrition SPO grade only (percentage of all SPO grade staff leaving in the previous 12-month period)	0%
Staff attrition PO grade only (percentage of all PO grade staff leaving in the previous 12-month period)	14.2%
Staff attrition PSO grade only (percentage of all PSO grade staff leaving in the previous 12-month period)	10.0%

Court work data

2.1 Court work	
Is the pre-sentence information and advice provided to court sufficiently analytical and personalised to the individual, supporting the court's decision-making?¹⁷	
Does the information and advice draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including child safeguarding and domestic abuse information?	50%
Is the individual meaningfully involved in the preparation of the report, and are their views considered?	85%
Does the advice consider factors related to the likelihood of reoffending?	80%
Does the advice consider factors related to risk of harm? **	65%
Does the advice consider the individual's motivation and readiness to change?	65%
Does the advice consider the individual's diversity and personal circumstances?	90%
Does the advice consider the impact of the offence on known or identifiable victims?	45%
Is an appropriate proposal made to court? **	75%

¹⁷ This question is only asked in cases where there has been a recent report prepared in the inspected probation delivery unit.

Is there a sufficient record of the advice given, and the reasons for it?	90%
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Questions marked ** do not apply in every case, and only positive answers are reported here.

Case supervision data

2.2. Assessment	Community sentences	Post-release sentences	All cases
Does assessment focus sufficiently on engaging the person on probation?			
Does assessment analyse the motivation and readiness of the person on probation to engage and comply with the sentence?	38%	81%	55%
Does assessment analyse the protected characteristics of the individual and consider the impact these have on their ability to comply and engage with service delivery?	38%	56%	45%
Does assessment analyse the personal circumstances of the individual, and consider the impact these have on their ability to comply and engage with service delivery?	38%	75%	53%
Is the person on probation meaningfully involved in their assessment, and are their views taken into account?	39%	50%	44%

Does assessment focus sufficiently on the factors linked to offending and desistance?			
Does assessment identify and analyse offending-related factors?	46%	88%	63%
Does assessment identify the strengths and protective factors of the person on probation? **	42%	47%	44%
Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information?	42%	81%	58%
Does assessment focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?			
Does assessment clearly identify and analyse any risk of harm to others, including identifying who is at risk and the nature of that risk?	13%	6%	10%
Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including past behaviour and convictions, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	21%	44%	30%
Does assessment analyse any specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims? **	21%	38%	28%

Questions marked ** do not apply in every case, and only positive answers are reported here.

2.3. Planning	Community sentences	Post-release sentences	All cases
Does planning focus sufficiently on engaging the person on probation?			
Is the person on probation meaningfully involved in planning, and are their views taken into account?	33%	31%	33%
Does planning take sufficient account of the diversity factors of the individual which may affect engagement and compliance? **	21%	38%	28%
Does planning take sufficient account of the personal circumstances of the individual which may affect engagement and compliance? **	33%	50%	40%
Does planning take sufficient account of the readiness and motivation of the person on probation to change which may affect engagement and compliance?	29%	63%	43%
Does planning set out how all the requirements of the sentence or licence/post-sentence supervision will be delivered within the available timescales?	38%	69%	50%
Does planning set a level, pattern and type of contact sufficient to engage the individual and to support the effectiveness of specific interventions?	54%	50%	53%

Does planning focus sufficiently on reducing reoffending and supporting desistance?			
Does planning sufficiently reflect offending-related factors and prioritise those which are most critical? *	25%	63%	40%
Does planning build on the individual's strengths and protective factors, utilising potential sources of support? **	17%	31%	23%
Does planning set out the services most likely to reduce reoffending and support desistance?	42%	56%	48%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?			
Does planning sufficiently address risk of harm factors and prioritise those which are most critical? **	13%	56%	30%
Does planning set out the necessary constructive and/or restrictive interventions to manage the risk of harm? **	33%	63%	45%
Does planning make appropriate links to the work of other agencies involved with the person on probation and any multi-agency plans? **	21%	50%	33%
Does planning set out necessary and effective contingency arrangements to manage those risks that have been identified? **	17%	50%	31%

Prompts marked * do not apply in unpaid work only cases.

Questions marked ** do not apply in every case, and only positive answers are reported here.

2.4 Implementation and delivery	Community sentences	Post-release sentences	All cases
Is the sentence or post-custody period implemented effectively with a focus on engaging the person on probation?			
Do the requirements of the sentence start promptly, or at an appropriate time?	50%	81%	63%
Is sufficient focus given to maintaining an effective working relationship with the person on probation, taking into account their diversity needs?	63%	81%	70%
Are sufficient efforts made to enable the individual to complete their sentence, including flexibility to take appropriate account of their personal circumstances?	71%	94%	80%
Are risks of non-compliance identified and addressed in a timely fashion to reduce the need for enforcement actions? **	25%	75%	45%
Are enforcement actions taken when appropriate? **	29%	63%	43%
Are sufficient efforts made to re-engage the individual after enforcement actions or recall? **	33%	63%	45%

Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support desistance?			
Are the delivered services those most likely to reduce reoffending and support desistance, with sufficient attention given to sequencing and the available timescales?	50%	56%	53%
Wherever possible, does the delivery of services build upon the individual's strengths and enhance protective factors? **	25%	38%	30%
Is the involvement of other organisations in the delivery of services sufficiently well-coordinated? * **	22%	69%	41%
Are key individuals in the life of the person on probation engaged where appropriate to support their desistance? * **	17%	38%	25%
Is the level and nature of contact sufficient to reduce reoffending and support desistance?	54%	25%	43%
Are local services engaged to support and sustain desistance during the sentence and beyond? * **	38%	75%	53%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?			
Is the level and nature of contact offered sufficient to manage and minimise the risk of harm? **	29%	56%	40%

Is sufficient attention given to protecting actual and potential victims? **	25%	38%	30%
Is the involvement of other agencies in managing and minimising the risk of harm sufficiently well-coordinated? * **	35%	44%	38%
Are key individuals in the life of the person on probation engaged where appropriate to support the effective management of risk of harm? * **	8%	31%	18%
Are home visits undertaken where necessary to support the effective management of risk of harm? * **	33%	63%	45%
Prompts relevant to post-custody cases only:			
Post-custody cases only: Did the community offender manager ensure a proportionate level of contact with the prisoner before release?	8%	69%	33%
Post-custody cases only: Did the community offender manager address the key resettlement or desistance needs before release?	0%	63%	25%
Post-custody cases only: Did the community offender manager address key risk of harm needs before release?	0%	50%	20%

Prompts marked * do not apply in unpaid work only cases.

Questions marked ** do not apply in every case, and only positive answers are reported here.

2.5 Reviewing	Community sentences	Post-release sentences	All cases
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the compliance and engagement of the person on probation?			
Does reviewing consider compliance and engagement levels and any relevant barriers, with the necessary adjustments being made to the ongoing plan of work? **	50%	63%	55%
Is the person on probation meaningfully involved in reviewing their progress and engagement?	42%	44%	43%
Are written reviews completed as appropriate as a formal record of actions to implement the sentence? **	79%	75%	78%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting 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? *	50%	50%	50%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on building on the strengths and enhancing the protective factors of the person on probation? **	33%	25%	30%
Is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies working with the person on probation? **	29%	50%	38%

Are written reviews completed as appropriate as a formal record of the progress towards desistance? **	75%	75%	75%
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? **	25%	44%	33%
Is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies involved in managing the risk of harm? **	29%	44%	35%
Is the person on probation (and, where appropriate, are key individuals in their life) meaningfully involved in reviewing the risk of harm? * **	17%	19%	18%
Are written reviews completed as appropriate as a formal record of the management of the risk of harm? **	63%	56%	60%

Prompts marked * do not apply in unpaid work only cases.

Questions marked ** do not apply in every case, and only positive answers are reported here.

Outcomes	Community sentences	Post-release sentences	All cases
Do early outcomes demonstrate that reasonable progress has been made, in line with the personalised needs of the person on probation?			
Have there been improvements in those factors most closely linked to offending both in developing strengths and addressing needs?	17%	27%	21%
Has there been a reduction in factors most closely related to risk of harm to others? **	8%	13%	10%
Has there been a reduction in offending?	29%	28%	15%
What was the individual's accommodation status at the start of the order/licence?			
Settled	92%	38%	71%
Transient	8%	50%	25%
Homeless	0%	13%	5%
What was the individual's accommodation status at the point of the inspection/licence?			
Settled	87%	70%	81%
Transient	12%	13%	13%
Homeless	0%	19%	8%
What was the individual's education, training, employment (ETE) status at the start of the order/licence?			
Full-time ETE	37%	0%	24%
Part-time ETE	0%	0%	0%
Unemployed	21%	63%	38%
Not available for work	42%	38%	40%

What was the individual's ETE status at the point of the inspection?			
Full-time ETE	37%	6%	26%
Part-time ETE	0%	0%	0%
Unemployed	13%	50%	28%
Unknown	42%	44%	43%
	8%	0%	5%

Questions marked ** do not apply in every case, and only positive answers are reported here.

Annexe three – Web links

Further information about the methodology used to conduct this inspection is available on our website, using the following link:

[Our work \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk)

A glossary of terms used in this report is available on our website, using the following link:

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/about-hmi-probation/about-our-work/documentation-area/probation-inspection/