



Her Majesty's
Inspectorate of
Probation

An inspection of probation services in:
Gwent PDU
Probation Service – Wales region

HM Inspectorate of Probation, February 2022

Contents

Foreword	3
Ratings	5
Recommendations	6
Background	7
1. Organisational delivery	8
2. Court work and case supervision	24
Annexe one – Progress against previous recommendations	35
Annexe two – Data	40
Annexe three – Web links	51

Acknowledgements

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

The role of HM Inspectorate of Probation

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation is the independent inspector of youth offending and probation services in England and Wales. We report on the effectiveness of probation and youth offending service work with adults and children.

We inspect these services and publish inspection reports. We highlight good and poor practice, and use our data and information to encourage high-quality services. We are independent of government, and speak independently.

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

The fieldwork for the Gwent inspection started on 01 November 2021.

© Crown copyright 2022

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

or email psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available for download at: www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmiprobation

ISBN 978-1-914478-55-0

Published by:

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

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

Foreword

This is only the second Probation Delivery Unit (PDU) inspection conducted using our new methodology, which was developed following the integration of Community Rehabilitation Services (CRCs) and the National Probation Service (NPS) into a single unified probation service in June 2021. The new methodology contains stronger links between our judgements on organisational delivery and casework. Poor scoring in casework limits the scores we are able to award for organisational delivery and we have seen this evidenced in the scores awarded in the inspection of Gwent PDU.

In Wales, the unification of sentence management occurred earlier than in England, in December 2019. Just three months later however, the Covid-19 pandemic started at the end of March 2020. As a result, the service has had to limit access to offices, reduce face-to-face contact with people on probation, reduce capacity in group work, unpaid work and interventions, and manage the staffing shortages which have been felt acutely across this PDU. The impact of the rate and scale of change the service has had to navigate should not be underestimated. Managing unification or the Covid-19 pandemic alone would have been challenging. The 24 months preceding the inspection were unprecedented and we commend staff at all levels who have, in the face of adversity, kept delivering this critical public service.

Strategic relationships in Gwent are as strong as they ever have been, all premises across the PDU have been made Covid-19 safe and the service has tried to continue to deliver a quality service. But this has been challenging and we have seen that in all elements of casework, there are deficits. Of particular concern are the shortfalls in terms of work being undertaken to manage the potential risks of people on probation to the public – including their own families. We accept that Covid-19 restrictions impacted, and continue to impact, the type and duration of contact that is possible between the service and people on probation. However, regardless of these challenges, we do expect to see that work relating to risk of harm and safeguarding is being prioritised. We saw far too many examples of this not happening.

There were important and concerning differences in scoring for cases subject to community orders and those on post-release. Those subject to post-release, as well as cases assessed as being high risk of serious harm, frequently scored better and were more often assessed as being sufficient. There remains room for improvement in these cases, but a clear priority must be raising the standard of work done with the community order caseload.

Gwent PDU, as with all probation services across England and Wales, continues to have difficulties with delivery of accredited programmes, structured interventions and unpaid work. This is a consequence of the rurality of the PDU, the limited availability of delivery space, and ongoing Covid-19 restrictions. But 18 months on from the start of the pandemic, the continuing backlogs and delays in the delivery of unpaid work orders and accredited offending behaviour programmes is very concerning. While we encourage the ongoing efforts to reduce these backlogs, our inspection findings demonstrate the importance of suitable alternatives being used and appropriately quality assured to ensure that the fundamentals of service delivery are maintained.

We recognise that the PDU will be disappointed with the results of this inspection. However, there is work that they are doing well whilst continuing to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic and navigating the roll out of the new unified model. Moving forward, a renewed focus on the basics of probation service delivery needs to be realised, with an enhanced emphasis on information sharing with key stakeholders

to keep people safe. We are keen to see the PDU receive support from both the regional and national teams to address the chronic staffing issues in Gwent. This should be an important starting point in terms of improving the levels and quality of service delivery and returning to the standard of work that we know the Wales region to be capable of.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Justin Russell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J' and 'R'.

Justin Russell
Chief Inspector of Probation

Ratings

Gwent PDU

Score **6/27**

Overall rating

Requires improvement



1. Organisational delivery

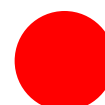
1.1 Leadership

Requires improvement



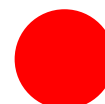
1.2 Staff

Inadequate



1.3 Services

Inadequate



1.4 Information and facilities

Requires improvement



2. Court work and case supervision

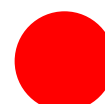
2.1 Court work

Outstanding



2.2 Assessment

Inadequate



2.3 Planning

Requires improvement



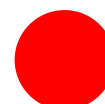
2.4 Implementation and delivery

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

Gwent PDU should:

1. improve the arrangements for information sharing to inform assessment and review of risk of harm, including at pre-sentence report stage
2. improve the quality of work to assess, manage and review risk of harm
3. improve the effectiveness of management oversight and quality assurance of all casework
4. ensure that the interventions necessary to improve desistance and reduce reoffending and risk of harm are provided in all cases
5. ensure staff with responsibility for case management oversight have the skills, knowledge and time to undertake the work effectively.

The Probation Service – Wales region should:

6. ensure that performance monitoring has a greater emphasis on the effectiveness and quality of service delivery.

HM Prison and Probation Service should:

7. ensure that sufficient staffing levels are determined and delivered for the PDU and region
8. address and significantly reduce the 14- to 16-week delay in vetting for both new and existing staff
9. resolve the current shortfall in accredited programme delivery and ensure that the delivery of interventions offered as an alternative are effectively quality assured
10. ensure that measures agreed by the National Demand Management Board prioritise delivering a high-quality service and regularly review the impact of those measures.

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

Background

Gwent PDU

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

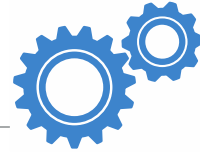
Gwent PDU covers five local authority areas – Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen – and includes one public sector prison (HMP Usk/Prescoed). It is policed by Gwent Police, has a mix of rural and urban communities, and includes key routes such the M4 through south Wales and the main route into Wales from England – the Prince of Wales Bridge.

As of November 2021, the Wales probation region had a total caseload of 13,363, including 7,076 individuals under supervision in the community, 3,748 post-release cases and a further 2,539 cases subject to pre-release supervision. Gwent PDU's total caseload was 2,482.

Gwent PDU has a variety of partnership arrangements including, but not limited to, the Wales Criminal Justice Board, South Wales MAPPA [multi-agency public protection arrangements] Strategic Board, and Gwent Safeguarding Board. Many of these also have localised sub-groups.

Since June 2021, and in line with the new target operating model, The Probation Service has commissioned external providers to deliver services. In Gwent PDU accommodation support is provided by The Forward Trust (although they do not provide accommodation themselves), St Giles Trust 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 Gwent 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 outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic which required The Probation Service to consider delivery in accordance with public health and government guidance. This also impacted on the delivery of both unpaid work and accredited programmes.

1. Organisational delivery



The head and deputy head of Gwent Probation Delivery Unit (PDU) are visible and approachable; they are both well thought of by staff at all grades and by partner agencies. There is an effective strategic link between the region and PDU, as well as good strategic relationships with key stakeholders and partners across the Gwent area. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic is evident across the PDU, at all grades and from all partners. Recovery from the pandemic has been hindered by subsequent staffing shortages. Nevertheless, staff report feeling that the PDU has an open culture in which they feel safe to challenge and that the PDU supports quality despite staffing challenges. However, despite the efforts made by leaders to keep staff informed about change, only 57 per cent of the 26 respondents in our staff survey felt that change is communicated and implemented effectively.

Despite there being clear strengths in the leadership of Gwent PDU, the domain two case management data demonstrates that the effectiveness of this leadership is yet to be seen in the form of effective and impactful service delivery, particularly in managing the potential risks that people on their caseload may present to others. In our case reviews, across three of the domain two standards – assessment, implementation and reviewing – fewer than half of cases were deemed to have had a sufficient focus on risk of harm. In the remaining standard – planning – it was only just over half at 55 per cent. In our review of cases, post-release work scored higher than work on community cases more than half of the time.

While average caseloads across the PDU do not appear to be excessive when considering the workload measurement tool (WMT), 80 per cent of respondents to our survey said that their workloads were not manageable. This was echoed in our interviews with staff at all grades, who described the situation as the “worst it’s ever been” and described being close to “total burn out”. While staff acknowledged the support from their managers, and indeed from the head of the PDU, there is clearly a critical staffing issue, the seriousness of which should not be underestimated, in terms of its impact upon staff’s welfare.

Current staffing difficulties, specifically the rate of staff turnover, is significantly increasing the pressure on administrative staff. In addition, some of the Professional Qualification in Probation (PQiP) learners report being used as substitutes for probation services officer (PSO), rather than being afforded the PQiP learning opportunities they need because “these cases have to go somewhere”.

Senior probation officers (SPOs) have substantial workloads, reporting that aspects of staff management, such as occupational health referrals and absence management, are requiring a significant amount of their time. Case-focused and reflective supervision, as well as management oversight on sentence management has suffered as a consequence. Due to the staffing issues across the PDU and the resulting workloads, managers told us “burnout is coming. We are just trading water.”

The views of people on probation are not routinely sought to help analyse, review and develop services. While early plans are in place to improve this, it is a significant gap. The arrangements for key aspects of service delivery, specifically the exchange of risk and safeguarding information, are not working as effectively as they need to in order to effectively promote desistance and protect the public. We saw no consistent approach to sharing information about reportable incidents and a confused approach to using multi-agency safeguarding hubs (MASHs), with partners reporting a lack of probation presence within them. The roll-out of, and access to,

the Violent and Sexual Offender Register has also been delayed in accordance with the regional exceptional delivery model (EDM). There is an over-reliance on administrative staff using this valuable resource, rather than case management staff.

Strengths:

- The head of Gwent PDU is a visible leader who demonstrates that they are willing to listen, learn and develop services where it is possible to do so.
- Gwent PDU's leadership team have strong relationships with partners and key stakeholders, and these relationships support delivery of the vision and strategy.
- In our staff survey, 64 per cent of respondents said the organisation prioritised quality and adherence to evidence most of the time, 18 per cent of respondents said the organisation always did. This was reflected in our meetings with staff, where there was a sense of prioritising quality, despite the challenging working environment.
- Staff reported feeling well supported by their colleagues.
- There are good relationships with partner agencies at all levels, to support desistance through access to services.
- There is a strategic approach to ensuring offices are safe and the PDU has made a clear attempt to maximise the engagement of staff and people on probation within offices.

Areas for improvement:

- Communication with staff about why decisions have been made could be clearer.
- Delivery plans should be better informed by people on probation.
- Feedback from the staff survey showed that 100 per cent of respondents felt that staffing levels were not sufficient. This was echoed by the staff we spoke to as part of our focus groups. Some of the staff we talked to described this being the "worst it's ever been" and described being close to "total burn out".
- Women are over-represented in Gwent PDU's staffing profile. Individuals with a declared disability as well as black, Asian and minority ethnic people are under-represented in the workforce.
- The views of people on probation are not routinely sought to help analyse, review and develop services.
- The arrangements for key aspects of delivery, specifically the exchange of risk and safeguarding information, are not working as effectively as they need to in order to effectively promote desistance and protect the public.

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 together with the results of our review of cases against the domain two standards. A key element of leadership is the ability to deliver results in practice and therefore we operate a decision rule which means that if the results from each area of the domain two standard are inadequate or requires improvement then performance against the leadership standard can only be rated inadequate or requires improvement. For Gwent PDU that decision rule is in operation which has resulted in a rating for leadership of 'Requires improvement'.

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

The vision and strategy to work in partnership, reduce reoffending, protect the public and support vulnerable groups is set out in the Reducing Reoffending Plan. The plan commits to using the evidence base to develop an interventions package through the Effective Interventions Panel. HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) in Wales Business Plan sets out the four principles through which the strategy will be achieved – enable people to be their best, modernise our estates and technology, an open learning culture, and transforming through partnership.

Integrated Offender Management (IOM) Cymru's Integrated Research Analysis Panel Board looks at empirical evidence to address reducing reoffending pathways. The Effective Practice Strategy identifies six quality development priorities, with each PDU leading on one of the priorities – Gwent leads on improving the implementation of risk management plans and sentence plans. Despite this, in our review of cases in domain two, only 55 per cent of plans focused sufficiently on keeping people safe and only 38 per cent of implementation and delivery of services effectively supports the safety of other people.

Evidence demonstrating the strategic link between Gwent and the wider Wales region can be seen in the Wales Probation Service Business Plan. The focus on quality and effective practice are shared visions within both the regional and local delivery plans. Performance information is collected and analysed at both a regional and PDU level, and the PDU's head demonstrated a clear understanding of the nuances relating to performance. The best practice learning group is a well-established initiative in Gwent PDU and is supported by a Microsoft Teams practice portal. Workshops are hosted by probation practitioners around specific pieces of work, and whilst aimed at PQiP learners, these are open to all probation staff to attend. Learning obtained via serious further offences, serious case reviews or domestic homicide reviews appears to be well understood, and there are examples of multi-agency training being delivered to both staff and partners in response to these incidents.

Key stakeholders and partner agencies consistently spoke of their strong relationship with the PDU and provided examples of where their joint work improved service provision and quality, promoted desistance, and helped to reduce risk of serious

harm. Of fundamental importance to the strategic implementation of the vision are key stakeholders who are engaged by the PDU leadership team. We saw strong evidence of this in IOM Cymru, within the relationship with the Police and Crime Commissioner and with local authorities through the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) initiative.

The PDU does need to make improvements to information sharing of reportable incidents, risk and safeguarding information. However, there are plans in place to address this, including a shared police system to provide probation practitioners access to reportable incidents and integration of probation practitioners within the MASH, covering all five local authorities within Gwent PDU's area.

The PDU effectively influences courts to support delivery of the vision and strategy. They are influenced at a regional level through the wider HMPPS arrangements, and locally there is clear evidence of engagement via the strategic sentencer forum and regular sentencer newsletters.

A strategic approach to meeting diverse needs is evident regionally via the Centralised Operational Resettlement Referral and Evaluation (CORRE) system. Suppliers are influenced at a regional level through commissioning arrangements. At a local level, this is demonstrated through delivery of various Gwent Drug and Alcohol Service (GDAS) outreach projects and Cyfanol Women's project for sex workers.

The extent to which the PDU leadership is involved is evident and while diversity initiatives such as the Wales Criminal Justice Board appear to be developed at a regional rather than local level, there are also local initiatives being developed by the head of PDU, for instance in the work around disproportionality in recall.

Despite strong leadership and positive strategic work across the PDU, our review of cases in domain two demonstrates that effective arrangements and clear local delivery plans have not translated the vision and strategy into frontline practice, particularly in relation to keeping other people safe. In our case reviews across three of the four domains – assessment, implementation and reviewing – fewer than half of cases were deemed to have had a sufficient focus on safety. In the remaining domain – planning – it was only just over half at 55 per cent.

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

Transition to a unified service for sentence management occurred in Wales in December 2019. Within three months of this, the service was impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. In response, the regional risk register identifies key risks, including unsatisfactory 'National Probation Service' buildings and Covid-19 safe working environments. In Gwent PDU, this is supported by local risk and issue registers which clearly document local risks and cite appropriate mitigations and controls. Controls include HMPPS Wales Estates Board at a regional level and regular, well-attended health and safety meetings locally. Additionally, at PDU level, regular risk assessment reviews are undertaken.

The EDM's status tracker shows regular review of general risk assessments to move to a green EDM and this is well communicated at a local level via the 'Pathway to Green' overview delivered to PDU teams.

Overall, risks to local service delivery are well understood and appropriate mitigations and controls have been put in place to manage the delivery of EDMs and move towards a business-as-usual approach to service delivery. Appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure continued provision of local services throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

The return to an in-person or face-to-face service provision had started by the implementation of the new National Standards in September 2021. However, in our review of cases in domain two, in 43 per cent of cases the level and nature of contact offered was insufficient to manage and minimise the risk of harm.

Due to the critical staffing issues currently being experienced across Gwent PDU, a demand management strategy has been agreed by the Regional Probation Director and Chief Probation Officer. This includes a freeze on staff secondments, a freeze on all non-mandatory and voluntary training until February 2022, suspension of any mandatory further contact for anyone on post-sentence supervision (unless there are active safeguarding concerns), suspension of OASys (Offender Assessment System) termination assessments, suspension of face-to-face contact with lower-risk cases, and SPOs and the deputy head of PDU picking up case management functions where required. The PDU told us that the suspension of non-mandatory training does not preclude peer-to-peer learning or line management support in professional development. Further, they informed us that OASys terminations are still expected to be completed if there is a significant change in risk and staff are expected to explain any other changes using nDelius in the absence of OASys. Finally, they reported that non-contact for post-sentence supervision cases is risk dependent and only in the absence of safeguarding concerns and for low-risk cases, any reduced contact needs to be explained in nDelius in terms of the rationale and contingencies.

Whilst we were encouraged to hear that a strategy had been implemented, we do have concerns about how well thought out this strategy is. The PDU told us that the local demand management arrangements were not designed in reaction to this inspection, and that this is a national tool for managing demand. Consequently, the actions within the strategy do not appear to have been developed in consultation with local staff or take account of their views. Whilst the PDU told us that engagement of staff preceded the demand management strategy, at the time of inspection we did not see evidence of this, or of the actions being impactful. Staff continued to feel that workloads were unmanageable.

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

Delivery plans in Gwent PDU reflect the regional model. Whilst also being involved in several pan-Wales initiatives, there are good examples of local initiatives including GDAS, VAWDASV strategies and the local Pill project.

Probation service provision in Gwent PDU is divided into nine teams, including two PDU-wide specialist teams for IOM and short-term sentences in addition to specialist WISDOM probation practitioner roles, integrated into the general sentence management teams. While the specialist teams are linked to wider initiatives across the Wales region, they also reflect local needs and are well linked with key stakeholders in Gwent PDU's area.

Staff engagement events and surveys have taken place to promote staff understanding of what they are accountable for delivering. However, the impact of these events is questionable when considering the rate of staffing changes as well as the high workloads across the PDU.

During the inspection, we saw no evidence that the PDU takes account of the views of people on probation. However, this was recognised as an area for development and plans about how to meaningfully do so are in their infancy.

The review of cases in domain two demonstrates that across three of the four domain two standards – assessment, implementation and reviewing – fewer than half of cases were deemed to have had a sufficient focus on safety. In the remaining domain two standard – planning – it was only just over half at 55 per cent.

1.2. Staff



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

Inadequate

In making a judgement about staffing, we take into account the answers to the following four questions. A key element of staffing is whether staff within the PDU are empowered to deliver a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all people on probation. For Gwent PDU, we have assessed this not to be the case which has resulted in a rating for staffing of 'Inadequate'.

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

It is not clear if PDU staffing levels are sufficient because the target staffing model is not currently known. Following transition of sentence management in December 2019, no national review of staffing was undertaken. As such, current staffing levels are based on "lift and shift" from the previous structures, and no formal review or evaluation has been completed. The target staffing model has still not been formally reviewed, despite the subsequent transition of interventions and programmes into the new operating model. National Workforce Planning expect this will be resolved by March 2022, although repeated efforts have been made regionally to resolve this issue sooner. It is clear that, whilst PDU staffing levels are planned, reviewed and changes are made to meet demand, for example through the offer of overtime to staff and the newly agreed demand management model, there is a critical staffing issue across Gwent PDU.

In the staff survey, five per cent of respondents felt that staffing levels are "not that sufficient" and 95 per cent of respondents felt they are "not sufficient at all". Consequently, 50 per cent of respondents stated their workload was "not so manageable", 30 per cent felt it was "not at all manageable" and only 20 per cent said it was "quite manageable". This was echoed in our interviews with practitioners, during which 67 per cent said their workload was "not so manageable" or "not at all manageable".

According to data provided by the PDU, the average caseload for a probation officer (PO) is 31, and for a PSO it is 42. The same data shows that those with a caseload which is greater than the local WMT target is 47 per cent of POs and 28 per cent of PSOs. While these figures do not appear to be exceptionally high, they do not take account of staff sickness or attrition, which has a significant impact because cases frequently need to be reallocated. In addition to this, the WMT is not able to account for restrictions associated with the Covid-19 pandemic, such as having to work from home or having a limited time in which to access interview rooms due to air circulation restrictions being in place. Despite its limitations, the WMT is the primary measure for staffing workloads. It was for this reason that, for staff across all grades that we spoke to, workloads were not considered manageable.

At the time of inspection, we were encouraged to hear that 11 new PSOs were due to join Gwent PDU, in addition to eight PQiP learners, two SPOs and one qualified probation practitioner. However, of the 12 PSOs recruited last summer, only five remain. This level of attrition was attributed to staff leaving The Probation Service to take on roles within the police and in teaching. But we also heard of a 14-16 week wait for vetting, which is undoubtedly having an impact on the PDU's ability to retain staff to whom offers of employment have been made. Concerningly, this wait applied both to new staff joining the organisation as well as to existing staff within the organisation who were changing roles. We accept that this issue is both outside of the control of Gwent PDU and not exclusive to this area. As such, the Inspectorate feels that this issue needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency as the current situation is untenable and will continue to have a detrimental impact across the whole of The Probation Service.

Administration staff workloads were described as "massive" and were impacted both by the shortages of probation practitioners and by a grade one recruitment freeze, meaning that reception staff could not be recruited. The cumulative effect of these pressures is that administration staff are clearly overwhelmed with their workloads and in our focus groups, reported to be struggling with the competing demands on their time.

Likewise, middle managers reported a "never-ending cycle of difficulties" where managing staff sickness, navigating the Single Operating Platform, making occupational health referrals, constant moving of cases, PAROM sign offs, chairing multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPAs), Skills for Effective Engagement Development supervision sessions and OASys countersigning were all expected to take priority. We heard that workloads were acutely difficult over the previous two months because of the attrition rate within the PSO grade and the ongoing struggles associated with Covid-19 and staff sickness levels.

The aforementioned alternative workload options which had been agreed as part of the demand management arrangements were an early indication of the PDU taking steps to address the workload issues. As previously stated, it remains unclear whether the actions will have a positive impact for staff in terms of workloads.

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

The workforce of Gwent PDU does not reflect the local population. A disproportionate number of the workforce (89.3 per cent) are female, and less than five per cent are from a black, Asian or minority ethnic background compared with the non-white population in Gwent, which is estimated to be 5.3 per cent. In Gwent PDU, the proportion of people on probation who are black, Asian or minority ethnic is 23.8 per cent.

There has been a realistic attempt at maintaining staff training during the Covid-19 pandemic using online platforms. Many staff believe they have the necessary skills and experience to manage the cases they are responsible for, but some staff referenced online learning being a "tick box exercise" that they navigated through quickly in order to be able to report completion, but without actually having taken on any of the learning.

Of the nine teams across Gwent PDU, there are two specialist teams covering IOM and the short-term sentences team (STST). We also heard that some WISDOM officers were being given the necessary caseload reductions, but others were not. This seemed to be a geographical issue and varied between office locations.

Currently there are seven PQiPs in the PDU, many of whom came from existing PSO roles. This has had a significant impact on their experience of access to training, case allocation and levels of supervision. Some reported being used as a PSO resource rather than being afforded the PQiP learning opportunity because "these cases have to go somewhere".

The regional workforce diversity and equality strategies do not sufficiently ensure that the diverse needs of the caseload are fully met, and local arrangements are lacking in some areas. For example, we saw no evidence of provision of interventions aimed at working with those convicted of racially aggravated offences. Whilst the PDU informed us that they have an intervention named "ERASE", we saw no evidence of this during the inspection.

We saw evidence of practitioners becoming over-reliant on the CORRE and there being occasions where significant amounts of time pass between referral and any intervention starting. Meanwhile, sessions with people on probation seem to be more like "check ins" than having any meaningful structure or purpose. In 43 per cent of our case reviews for domain two, the level and nature of contact offered was not sufficient to manage and minimise the risk of harm to others.

Volunteers had previously been used through Circles of Support and Accountability, though volunteer recruitment was suspended due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

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

It was positive to see that a culture of learning and continuous improvement was being promoted regionally through the Effective Practice Strategy. This includes the facilitation of peer learning events and large-scale Dsygu Cymru staff learning events to discuss good practice, as well as joint training events facilitated with key partners. In our staff survey, 55 per cent of respondents felt that a culture of continuous learning and development was either "always" promoted or promoted "most of the time".

PDU managers told us that in line with the target operating model, they expected staff to have regular supervision, including observations of practice and practice supervision discussions. This supports staff to reflect on their work to drive their own learning and development. The pressure on the SPO resource may be the reason that many staff reported not always receiving regular, case-focused supervision or practice observations. In our staff survey, 40 per cent of respondents stated they did not receive supervision sufficiently frequently. In our interviews with staff, there was a mixed picture regarding structured and case-focused supervision, with some staff reporting significant lapses in time between formal supervision sessions. However, many staff were complimentary of their line managers and described situations where they could approach them at any time, with an "open door" policy being the norm in terms of having more informal case discussions.

Staff development and appraisal policies are in place at a regional level, and some opportunities for development exist, for example through practice tutor assessor roles. We also saw encouraging practice with provision of extra support being given to a member of the PDU's staff who was applying for promotion. She was given shadowing opportunities as well as coaching with interview skills; she was successfully promoted.

Staff spoke highly of the Offender Personality Disorder Pathway and the additional oversight this provision gave them in terms of managing cases.

Access to non-mandatory in-service training is now suspended due to demand management being implemented. However, prior to this there was good evidence of access to training being maintained.

The strategy to ensure that all staff have equitable access to promotion opportunities is not yet fully implemented. The Ministry of Justice's talent and capability strategy commits services to leadership and capability development. The competency-based framework is being introduced to support staff to move up their pay band each year. The core quality management framework is a national framework supporting regional quality management activity. Wales' talent management meeting records a positive picture on the middle-management group with "lots of staff" in the higher talent groupings.

In our review of cases for domain two, management oversight was deemed ineffective in 67 per cent of cases.

Do managers pay sufficient attention to staff engagement?

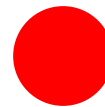
Of the nine teams across Gwent PDU, two are specialist teams covering IOM and the STST. Specific training is available for those staff working in specialist teams including taking a trauma-informed approach and multi-agency engagement working with police and prison colleagues. In our staff survey, 60 per cent of respondents said that they were allocated cases for which they had the appropriate knowledge, skills and experience to manage "always" or "most of the time", and in our practitioner interviews 58 per cent said they "always" had the necessary skills, experience, and knowledge to supervise the case being reviewed, 38 per cent said "most of the time" and four per cent said "not that often".

The head of PDU is a strong advocate of staff wellbeing and it is clear that there are both formal and informal engagement opportunities for all staff. The commitment to making improvements to staff engagement and wellbeing are evident in initiatives like the staff wellbeing room, staff away days with the agenda decided by staff, and the Gwent PDU Wellbeing-dedicated Instagram page. However, 75 per cent of

respondents to our staff survey felt that sufficient attention was not paid to their wellbeing. In our interviews with staff, there was an acknowledgement of the efforts being made in terms of staff wellbeing, but their workloads meant they were not able to feel the effects of these efforts.

In our staff survey, of those that required it, 30 per cent of respondents said that reasonable adjustments had not been made for them. Under the Equality Act 2010, the Probation Service have a duty to make 'reasonable adjustments' to workplace arrangements for disabled staff. A new workplace adjustment service was launched in April 2021, with a Covid-19 specific section to support those working from home. This service is described as a "straightforward process designed to allow decisions to be made as soon as possible" and this only makes our findings more concerning.

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 both the answers to the following three questions and also the rating given to implementation and delivery in the domain two cases reviews. Services has been rated 'Inadequate' because the range and quality of services do not support a tailored and responsive service for all people on probation, and the majority of the ratings in our domain two case reviews were also 'Inadequate'.

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

Characteristics of inspected cases²

Proportion of caseload who are female	15%
Proportion of inspected cases who are black, Asian or minority ethnic	2%
Proportion of inspected cases with a disability	55%
Proportion of inspected cases where inspectors identified alcohol misuse problems	32%
Proportion of inspected cases where inspectors identified drug misuse problems	52%

² HM Inspectorate of Probation inspection data.

Number of accredited programme requirements for individuals convicted of a sexual offence that have not commenced ³	46
Number of accredited programme requirements that have not commenced, other than for individuals convicted of a sexual offence	153
Average waiting time before commencing a Rehabilitation Activity Requirement	6.1 weeks
Proportion of unpaid work requirements with hours outstanding beyond 12 months	23%

There are significant backlogs in delivering accredited programmes and the delivery of unpaid work (UPW) continues to be a challenge, one which is made more complex by the rurality of some parts of Gwent PDU's area. We heard that the increase from one to three people on probation allowed on transportation was helping, but at the time of the inspection, there were 617 cases with an UPW requirement, and 23 per cent of those had hours outstanding beyond 12 months.

There are significant backlogs in delivering accredited programmes and, while this is not a Gwent-specific issue, where accredited programmes cannot be delivered because individuals do not meet HMPPS's prioritisation criteria, the work is returned to the probation practitioner. We heard that some probation practitioners felt ill-equipped to deliver this work and identified it as a learning need. Others reported insufficient time to deliver any meaningful one-to-one work. In both instances, we saw no evidence of management oversight of consistent delivery and no formal quality assurance.

The PDU provides access to a range of services based on the profile of many of the people on probation, and these are clearly outlined in a comprehensive local directory of services. However, in our staff survey, only 50 per cent of respondents indicated that they had access to an appropriate range of services to meet the needs and risks of people on probation most of the time. Furthermore, in 62 per cent of our cases reviewed for domain two, the implementation and delivery of services did not support the person on probation's desistance.

There is some focus on building strengths and enhancing protective factors through addressing criminogenic traits such as drug and alcohol misuse, poor personal wellbeing and inadequate accommodation.

Services and support for protected characteristics are limited, and not all diversity factors or issues of disproportionality are sufficiently identified or addressed. While we saw evidence of unique and specialised intervention for sex workers, the focus on addressing race inequalities is less clear. We did not see evidence of any additional specialist services available to people on probation.

³ Data supplied by The Probation Service.

Gwent accounts for 19 per cent of the offending population in Wales. Of Gwent PDU's caseload, 31 per cent is for violence (below the Wales average) and seven per cent for sexual offences against a child (above the Wales average). Of those people on probation in Gwent, 51 per cent have a declared disability (above the Wales average), and 7.5 per cent are black, Asian or minority ethnic (above the Wales average).

In our case management interviews with staff, 60 per cent felt that they had access to an appropriate range of services either in-house or through other agencies "most of the time", 28 per cent said "always" and only 13 per cent said "not that often".

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 (child and adult) were well established at a strategic level, but it is clear from the case review that this did not consistently manifest in practice. This was also clear in our interviews with practitioners, some of whom told us that there was no MASH, when in fact there are two arrangements covering East and West Gwent.

There are a good number of services across the PDU, most of which are delivered by partner agencies, and these are well documented in an extensive service directory. Services commissioned under the newly established Commissioned Rehabilitative Services are developing well, but remain in the early stages of development and are hampered by restrictions associated with the Covid-19 pandemic.

Likewise, the introduction of CORRE is recent and, while this initiative is well understood by staff, there are also some concerns that it has created a lack of ownership over service delivery. Support for substance misuse via GDAS is excellent, and there is a specialist provision for sex workers. However, other specialist services are lacking, and we saw little evidence of further specialist services being available.

There appears to be an overreliance on CORRE by probation practitioners, where a significant amount of time passes between referral and any intervention starting. Meanwhile, sessions with people on probation were described as a "check in" rather than having any meaningful structure or purpose. In 40 per cent of the cases reviewed for domain two, the involvement of other organisations in the delivery of services was not sufficiently well coordinated.

In our interviews with staff, some told us that they did not feel confident delivering interventions on a one-to-one basis in supervision and identified this as a learning need. This is of particular concern when considering both the domain two data relating to implementation and delivery, but also the suspension of non-mandatory training for all staff until February 2022 under the new demand management model that has recently been implemented.

There is clearly a strong link with courts via the sentence liaison meetings and sentence newsletters. In our survey, 100 per cent of sentencers said that the skills of court staff support the delivery of a high-quality standard. However, in our interviews with sentencers, we heard that more relevant information is required, for example about the efficacy of unpaid work.

Resettlement

Since June 2021, staff providing resettlement support to prison leavers have been part of the STST. The Wales region and Gwent PDU are early adopters of this resettlement model. The offender management in custody (OMiC) model, designed for men serving longer-term sentences, remains problematic and the perception from staff is that there is a complex relationship between the resettlement and OMiC models which they reported having little or no time to get to understand. Consequently, those with longer sentences are less likely to receive the service they should expect from the OMiC model.

Given the scale and rate of change in this area, it is unsurprising that resettlement is an area of service delivery where improvements are required. In only 45 per cent of the cases that we assessed was the community probation practitioner deemed to have ensured a proportionate level of contact with the prisoner before release, and in 59 per cent of cases, the community probation practitioner had addressed key risk of harm needs before release. More encouragingly though, we were pleased to see that in 64 per cent of cases, the community probation practitioner was assessed to have addressed the key resettlement or desistance needs before release. Cases that scored well in this area were those that had involvement from agencies outside The Probation Service.

Given the challenges of unification and the Covid-19 pandemic both to resettlement and to service delivery more widely, it is perhaps not surprising that improvement is required. However, it is important to note that, in many of our case reviews, when considering key questions, we found that cases subject to post-release generally scored better and were more likely to be assessed as meeting the specified criteria, than those subject to a community order. The one IOM case in our sample was subject to post-release and we were pleased to see that in the wider case sample, resettlement work consistently scored better in higher-risk cases. This was not always found to be the case in other areas of work we assessed and therefore deserves recognition.

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

In making a judgement about information and facilities, we take into account the answers to the following four questions. We have assessed that information and facilities insufficiently support a high-quality, personalised and responsive approach for all people on probation and have therefore rated this as 'Requires improvement'.

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

HMPPS's performance and quality strategy outlines the regional structure in PDUs across Wales. Gwent PDU's performance report has a strong focus on targets and completion data, which in many areas is impressive. However, there is a notable lack of information about the quality or effectiveness of service delivery.

The best practice learning group is a well-established initiative in Gwent PDU and is supported by a Microsoft Teams practice portal. Workshops are hosted by probation practitioners around specific pieces of work and, whilst aimed at PQiP learners, these are open to all probation staff to attend. Learning obtained via serious further offences, serious case reviews or domestic homicide reviews appears to be well understood, and we heard examples of multi-agency training being delivered to both staff and partners, in response to these incidents.

Learning is communicated in a range of ways, including but not limited to the best practice learning group, the Wales effective practice portal and joint training events with partners. However, the results of the cases reviewed for domain two are not demonstrative of effective learning being embedded and translated into frontline practice.

The views of key stakeholders such as the police and courts are sought to inform service development but the views of people on probation are not sufficiently sought at a PDU level, and we did not see evidence of service improvement plans.

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

Diversity information is collected at a regional rather than PDU level but there is comprehensive diversity information about people on probation within the PDU's performance reports.

Policies and guidance are primarily owned at a national or regional level, but they are communicated to all staff through EQuIP.⁴

Gwent PDU's service directory and the Resettlement Service's free-to-use documents detail local policies and guidance about the full range of locally commissioned services, their suitability for individual people on probation and the referral processes. There are regular briefings for all staff across the PDU, but we also heard from staff that they felt able to approach their line managers and senior managers with any issues or concerns they had.

We heard positive feedback about the blended approach to work, and the availability of Microsoft Teams has helped improve attendance at meetings and made all staff events easier for staff to attend. Previously, these types of events would have involved a significant amount of travel for many, given the rurality of Gwent PDU.

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

There is clear evidence of a strong, strategic approach to ensuring offices are safe and a clear attempt at maximising the engagement of staff and people on probation within offices, with initiatives such as the wellbeing rooms.

⁴ Excellence and Quality in Processes is a system provided by HMPPS described as 'A way of working that supports process management to "equip" staff with the guidance and forms they need to do their job.'

Premises within Gwent PDU are accessible for all staff and people on probation. There are no concerns relating to offices, although the PDU agrees that the Newport and Caerphilly offices are much better than Ebbw Vale and East Gwent, which are both to be looked at as part of the wider estates strategy next year.

While the Ebbw Vale and East Gwent offices are dated and provide challenges regarding space and adaptability, they are safe and provide good geographic spread across the PDU.

There is a staff wellbeing room in use within the Newport office, and a soft interview room is planned for implementation in Newport. This has been well received by staff.

In our staff survey, 70 per cent of respondents answered "to some extent" or to "a great extent" that premises and officers support the delivery of appropriate work and the effective engagement of people on probation.

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

Probation practitioners and probation service officers have laptops and mobile phones to which they can connect their laptops remotely to access internet-based databases. These databases are also able to generate appropriate management information which can be broken down to inform PDU leads about the performance of teams and individuals.

Performance data is also collected across the region and presented by individual PDUs in the form of the PDU Performance Report which is circulated monthly. The purpose of this is to track performance against targets, and comparisons are made between the PDUs which make up the wider region.

Management information data includes some data about protected characteristics, but this is limited to women and those with a black, Asian or minority ethnic background.

In our staff survey, 65 per cent of respondents said information and communication technology systems enable delivery of work in a timely way "most" or "all" of the time. We did not see any evidence of staff experiencing difficulties with IT accessibility during our remote inspection and we heard some positive feedback about blended working, such as the use of Microsoft Teams having increased attendance at MAPPA meetings.

Feedback from people on probation

The views of people on probation are not sufficiently sought at a PDU level, and this was recognised as an area for improvement. While we saw early plans about how best to engage people on probation, we saw little evidence of the progression of these plans.

Our own engagement with people on probation provided, on the whole, a positive picture. We undertook a survey in which respondents spoke highly of the GDAS service and commended hard-working, friendly probation practitioners and a flexible approach to managing supervision appointments. There did appear to be some variation in terms of contact however, with reports of contact being "as a when" probation sees fit or "as required", with a mix of face-to-face and telephone contact arrangements being used.

Diversity and inclusion

Diversity and inclusion are also significant areas for improvement across Gwent PDU. The staffing profile is overrepresented by women. Individuals with a declared disability as well as black, Asian and minority ethnic individuals are underrepresented in the workforce.

Meanwhile, services and support for protected characteristics is also limited, and not all diversity factors or issues of disproportionality are sufficiently identified or addressed. While we saw evidence of a unique and specialised intervention for sex workers, the focus on addressing race inequalities is less clear. We did not see evidence of any additional specialist services available to people on probation.

We heard that senior leaders are “acutely aware” of unconscious bias, and in our focus groups with staff we heard that they felt matters of diversity had become far more prominent. While these are encouraging messages, we saw very little evidence of formal diversity and inclusion training taking place, and it does not feature in the list of mandatory training for new staff at any grade.

2. Court work and case supervision



We inspected 40 community sentence cases and 22 post-release cases. We also inspected 33 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 in relation to each element of case supervision needs to be above a specific threshold for it to be rated as satisfactory. We also inspected the outcomes achieved for people on probation and provide data on these results.

In three elements – assessment, implementation and delivery, and reviewing – we found that questions about the management of risk of harm and keeping other people safe scored poorly. Despite there being signs of positive practice in other areas such as engaging the person on probation and supporting desistance, as a consequence of low scoring in the aforementioned, all three of these elements were rated as “Inadequate”. In planning, the score for keeping other people safe was much improved, and as such this element was rated as “Requires improvement”.

In the seven key questions where there were notable differences in the scores, the scores were higher for post-release cases. Across Gwent Probation Delivery Unit (PDU) 66 per cent of all cases, and 70 per cent of the community cases at the time of the inspection, were assessed as a medium risk of harm. Of the cases we inspected, 23 per cent of community cases and five per cent of post-release cases were assessed as low risk. Eight per cent of community cases and 36 per cent of post-release cases were assessed as high risk of harm.

The variances in our assessed scores between those on community orders and those on post-release is difficult to explain. It is likely that, due to pre-release work being completed prior to release from custody, individuals on probation who are released from custody are supported by both their probation practitioner and by the external agencies providing services such as drugs and alcohol interventions, accommodation support and education, training and employment support. These cases demonstrate that good assessment, planning and implementation is achievable despite the challenging circumstances as a result of the Covid-19 restrictions.

In addition to this, all five of the MAPPA (multi-agency public protection arrangement) category two cases were post-release, while the only MAPPA category three case we reviewed was subject to a community order. The only case subject to integrated offender management was also a post-release case. Due to the low numbers, it is not possible to say conclusively that multi-agency work resulted in cases being managed more effectively.

Case supervision

Strengths:

- The introduction of the Centralised Operational Resettlement Referral and Evaluation (CORRE) system has aided probation practitioners in undertaking effective sentence planning.
- The quality of reports provided to the court to aid decision-making is very good.
- Work with post-release cases is consistently of a better standard.

Areas for improvement:

- Safeguarding and domestic abuse checks are not routinely undertaken to inform assessment.
- Implementation and delivery of sentence plans is fragmented, with meaningful and impactful work being undertaken infrequently.
- In too many cases, contact was insufficient. When it was at an appropriate level, it was lacking structure and impact.
- There was an overreliance on self-disclosure by the person on probation, and too often this was accepted without question or verification.
- Probation practitioners lacked professional curiosity and too often, opportunities were missed to obtain important and relevant information from people on probation that would have helped to appropriately manage risk and promote desistance.

2.1. Court work



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

Outstanding

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?⁵	88%

Gwent PDU was rated as "Outstanding" for court work. As part of our court work, we assessed 33 court reports, 70 per cent of which were short-format written reports without an OASys (Offender Assessment System) assessment. Of these, 18 were assessed as medium risk of serious harm, four as low and one as high.

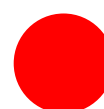
Two of the strongest areas that we saw were: firstly, where advice considered the individual's diversity and personal circumstances, which was assessed as happening in 100 per cent of cases; and secondly, in 97 per cent of the cases, we assessed that there was a sufficient record of the advice given, and the reasons for it. Therefore, 88 per cent of our cases were found to be assessed positively in the summary judgement question: "Is the pre-sentence information and advice provided to court sufficiently analytical and personalised to the individual, supporting the court's decision-making."

⁵ The rating for the standard is driven by the score for the key question, which is placed in a rating band.

However, our concerns about safeguarding and police checks do extend into court work. In 70 per cent of the cases we assessed, there was no evidence that enquiries were made to the police about domestic abuse, and there should have been. Similarly, in 42 per cent of the cases we assessed, there was evidence that enquiries were not made to children’s services and there should have been.

Despite this, we assessed that in 88 per cent of cases, the advice did consider factors related to risk of harm. At the time of the inspection, questions relating to police and safeguarding checks fall into the “information only” category of our assessment and as such, the impact of this has not been reflected in the scores related to court work. Nonetheless, it is critical that work is done across the PDU to ensure police and safeguarding checks are undertaken as a matter of routine, and that information is appropriately used to inform court work, assessment, planning, implementation and delivery, and reviewing.

2.2. Assessment



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

Our rating⁶ for assessment is based on the percentage of cases we inspected being judged sufficient against three key questions:

Key question	Scores		
	Community sentences	Post-release sentences	All cases
Does assessment focus sufficiently on engaging the person on probation?	63%	77%	68%
Does assessment focus sufficiently on the factors linked to offending and desistance?	63%	77%	68%
Does assessment focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	43%	55%	47%

The lowest score for the key questions was 47 per cent; this relates to whether assessment focuses sufficiently on keeping other people safe. As a result, the score falls within the “Inadequate” ratings band and the PDU has been rated as “Inadequate” overall for assessment. Assessment is a critical element of being able to keep people safe; a good risk assessment is evidence based and uses statistical evidence, informed by research into likely risk factors for the type of offending, but is also individualised. Good risk assessments form the foundations of a risk

⁶ 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.

management plan that uses supportive and restrictive processes to reduce the risk and impact of further harm. Therefore, the importance of a good assessment should not be underestimated. The cases that scored higher in this area were those assessments that identified the strengths and protective factors of the person on probation and those assessments in which the person on probation was meaningfully involved in their assessment, and their views were taken into account. A good example of this was:

Good practice example

Kara's assessment considers her previous engagement with services as well as updating on her current level of motivation. It also, rightly, details a range of personal and diverse issues that have previously presented as a barrier to her engaging. The assessment included identifying Kara's complex needs and a completed self-assessment which allowed Kara to provide her own perspective which then informed the assessment.

Conversely there was an absence of safeguarding checks, and this is our greatest concern in assessment, particularly in relation to domestic abuse, for which checks to inform assessments were not undertaken when they should have been in 68 per cent of cases. The picture was slightly more encouraging for sharing information related to child safeguarding, which was absent in 35 per cent of cases. The lack of necessary checks being made to adequately inform assessment has been demonstrated in the case assessment data, and the subsequent "Inadequate" rating, but it was also clear in our interviews with staff, who appeared confused about information sharing arrangements for both adult and child safeguarding and the police.

There is a difference in our judgement of the quality of assessment of risk of harm undertaken with individuals on a community order when compared with those on post-release. However, in all cases, scores related to assessment of desistance and engaging people on probation were far better, with the scores in these areas falling into the "Good" ratings band. Assessment has been rated "Inadequate" overall owing to the low score for assessments sufficiently focusing on keeping other people safe, as seen in this example:

Poor practice example

In Fran's assessment, liaison with social care was critical in aiding the probation practitioner's understanding of the risk Fran posed to her own children. However, no liaison took place. The result of this was that there was no understanding of when Fran's children were taken into care, or what the arrangements were in terms of Fran being allowed to have contact. In Fran's assessment, there was no analysis of the offence and limited context relating to a previous offence committed against a child. No police checks were undertaken either and this was in spite of Fran disclosing that she had been a victim of domestic abuse, which may have been a significant factor in her risk of reoffending.

2.3. Planning



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

Requires improvement

Our rating⁷ 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?	50%	55%	52%
Does planning focus sufficiently on reducing reoffending and supporting desistance?	60%	73%	65%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	58%	50%	55%

The lowest score for the key questions was 52 per cent; this relates to whether planning focuses sufficiently on engaging the person on probation. As a result, the score falls within the "Requires improvement" ratings band and the PDU has been rated as "Requires improvement" overall for planning. The overall picture in planning is better than in assessment, implementation and delivery, and review but concerningly, we found that individuals on probation were only meaningfully engaged in planning in just over half of the cases we reviewed. This may be a consequence of restrictions imposed by exceptional delivery models relating to the nature and duration of contacts with people on probation. However, we were pleased to see that in 61 per cent of cases, planning took sufficient account of the personal circumstances of the individual which may affect engagement and compliance. Also, in 69 per cent of cases, planning took sufficient account of the readiness and motivation of the person on probation to change.

⁷ 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.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the concerns raised in assessment, risk of harm was an area of concern in terms of planning. We found that only 42 per cent of cases sufficiently addressed risk of harm factors and prioritised those which were most critical. We saw evidence of planning failing to identify factors relating to domestic abuse, and as a result there was no work planned to address this risk factor as is demonstrated in this example:

Poor practice example

Despite Michael identifying ongoing children's services involvement, there was no consideration given to child safeguarding within the risk management plan and children's services were not identified as another agency involved in this case. In addition, police checks were not undertaken, and as a consequence the plan did not identify how the risks associated with domestic abuse would be managed. Although there was some consideration given to interventions to address factors related to the index offence, this was too generic, for example "offence-focused work and victim awareness". Contingency planning consisted of one line stating that Michael would be returned to court should he fail to comply.

As previously mentioned, where there were notable differences in scoring, post-release cases scored better than community cases in planning and we saw good examples of pre-release planning in which individuals on probation were meaningfully engaged and central to decision-making, and probation practitioners being consistent in sharing information with other agencies, that were central to planning, such as this example:

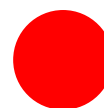
Good practice example

Planning in Graham's case begins in custody and involves Graham in a comprehensive pre-release meeting. This meeting addresses and then starts to plan for Graham's resettlement needs. There is good planning to support Graham's mental health and emotional wellbeing needs, linked to a bereavement. There is also effective planning to increase Graham's level of engagement upon release, as previously Graham's levels of engagement have been poor.

Planning where setting out the services most likely to reduce reoffending and support desistance was also good, and we saw a number of cases where sentence plan objectives were reasonable, achievable and informed by the person on probation. However, a recurring theme was the lack of sufficient planning for unpaid work. Consideration to safeguarding in stand-alone unpaid work cases, lack of consideration for employment as a potential barrier to being able to attend unpaid work and a lack of contingency planning for what action may be required if unpaid work hours cannot be completed all contributed to poor scores in terms of planning.

We also saw a number of cases in which no initial sentence plan had been undertaken. This may be linked to the timeliness of initial appointments and subsequent time pressures for completing plans. At the time of inspection, timeliness for initial appointments for community orders was 83 per cent, although once again this was much higher – 100 per cent – in post-release cases. It is also likely that the frequency of staff changes has contributed to the poor scores, although this could be a contributing factor in all elements of domain two and is not limited to planning.

2.4. Implementation and delivery



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

Inadequate

Our rating⁸ 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?	58%	77%	65%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support desistance?	31%	50%	38%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?	31%	50%	38%

The lowest score for the key questions was 38 per cent; this relates to implementation and delivery supporting desistance and keeping other people safe. As a result, the PDU has been rated as “Inadequate” overall for implementation and delivery. We recognise that there are a number of external factors such as the Covid-19 pandemic, unification and the significant staffing issues across Gwent PDU that will have undoubtedly had an impact on the service’s ability to implement and deliver. These challenges demonstrate the importance of sticking to the fundamental basics of probation service delivery and habitually using partner agencies to assist in the maintenance of promoting desistance and managing risk of harm. Yet we have found that there is an overarching absence of the very minimum delivery of service that we would expect to see, as well as an absence of a reliance on partners.

Cases that scored higher in this area were those where positive engagement with people on probation was undertaken. We assessed that in 65 per cent of cases the sentence or post-custody period was implemented effectively with a focus on engaging the person on probation. Additionally, in 63 per cent of cases, sufficient focus was given to maintaining an effective working relationship with the person on probation, taking into account their diversity needs. Encouragingly, in 68 per cent of

⁸ 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.

cases, sufficient efforts were made to enable the individual to complete their sentence, including flexibility to take appropriate account of their personal circumstances.

Cases which did not score as well were those where the individual on probation had two, three, or more than three probation practitioners since the start of the order that we were assessing. Undoubtedly, this is another consequence of the chronic staffing issues experienced within the PDU, but the impact of cases being reallocated this number of times cannot be underestimated. The detrimental impact of multiple changes, both to the individual on probation and to the probation practitioners, is demonstrated in the poor scores across all elements of domain two and is perpetuated by the cycle of staff sickness and case reallocation. The resulting impact upon service delivery, seen in the domain two scores for this inspection, needs to be addressed by the PDU as a matter of urgency.

There were two other areas of concern within implementation and delivery – home visits and victim work. In 57 per cent of cases home visits were not undertaken where necessary to support the effective management of risk of harm. Similarly, in 48 per cent of cases sufficient attention was not given to protecting actual and potential victims. These areas have both contributed to the score of 62 per cent of cases being assessed as implementation and delivery of services not effectively supporting the safety of other people. Once again, it is likely that the restrictions related to the Covid-19 pandemic will have impacted upon the frequency of home visiting and engaging victims. However, these areas are both fundamental to the ability of the PDU to keep people safe and, as such, when considered alongside the absence of police and safeguarding checks within court work and assessment, it leaves grave concerns about the work of the PDU being adequate to effectively manage risk of harm and keep people safe.

2.5. Reviewing



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

Our rating⁹ 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?	50%	73%	58%

⁹ 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.

Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting desistance?	42%	57%	47%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	36%	64%	46%

The lowest score for the key questions was 46 per cent; this relates to whether reviewing focuses sufficiently on keeping other people safe. As a result, the PDU has been rated as “Inadequate” overall for reviewing. The differences seen within the other three elements are less pronounced; however, regarding keeping people safe, the difference remains as stark.

The expectation is that a case is reviewed following a significant change in circumstances, significant event or after six months. Changes might include a new probation practitioner, or indeed for the individual on probation, might include a change of circumstances such as a further offence, beginning a new relationship, an existing relationship ending or a number of other changes. In some of the cases we reviewed, we found that appropriate reviews had been undertaken and appropriately recorded, sometimes prompted by a change in practitioner, but usually because of changes in circumstances for the person on probation. During our interviews with staff, we saw evidence of cases being reviewed, despite there being no formal record of a review having taken place. In talking to probation practitioners, it was evident that reviewing cases at the rate required was untenable and again, this often related to staff changes and reallocation of cases. This is of particular concern when considering examples such as this one:

Poor practice example

In Paul’s case, a number of changes had occurred which should have prompted a review and consideration to implementing an enhanced risk management plan. These changes included Paul engaging in a number of alcohol misuse intervention sessions in the Approved Premises (AP), which should have triggered a referral to community-based services for continuity of this intervention upon his moving on from the AP, as alcohol was a critical risk factor in Paul’s offending. Additionally, leaving the AP and having a significant change in accommodation should have triggered a review, not least because this resulted in there being a loss of a number of external risk management controls such as a curfew, daily sign-in times and enhanced behavioural monitoring by AP staff. Also, monitoring of the approved contact with Paul’s daughter should have been scrutinised to ensure it was supervised if occurring. Liaison with children’s services should also have been undertaken when Paul was expecting written communication and was experiencing low mood due to lack of clarity over such contact. Finally, and perhaps most concerning, information about a potential new relationship should have prompted more active enquiry from the probation practitioner both with the individual on probation as well as partner agencies, given that Paul is assessed as high risk of serious harm to partners and had a subsequent licence condition requiring disclosure.

Cases that scored higher in this area were those where the person on probation was meaningfully included in the review along with, where appropriate, other individuals or agencies also involved in working with the individual. In doing so, a clear plan can be developed whereby the focus is sufficiently on supporting the compliance and engagement of the person on probation, as can be seen in this example:

Good practice example

A review was undertaken in Christopher's case following a change of probation practitioner. The new probation practitioner attended the interview personally and recognised that, up to this point, there had been no apparent compliance issues. However, the practitioner also recognised that the change could be a destabilising factor for Christopher. In response, the practitioner mitigated this by taking time to build an effective working relationship with Christopher, which helped to inform the review.

Cases that scored lower were those that did not meaningfully involve the person on probation in reviewing the risk of harm, as well as those that did not identify and address changes in factors related to risk of harm, with the necessary adjustments being made to the ongoing plan of work.

The lack of work being undertaken in implementation and delivery has predictably resulted in there being little work to review. Even where the frequency of contact occurred as we would have expected, the lack of meaningful or impactful work having been undertaken during these contacts has resulted in there being little to review. While scores were slightly better in the post-release cases, once again a key concern in reviewing, as in the previous three elements of casework, is keeping people safe, with only 46 per cent of cases reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe.

2.6. Outcomes

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

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?	28%	38%	31%

We do not currently rate the Outcomes standard but provide this data for information and benchmarking purposes only. It is logical that where services and interventions are not being delivered, outcomes will not be seen, and that has been the case in this inspection. As the domain two data demonstrates, in many of the cases we reviewed we found that there had been insufficient contact with the person on probation. Where the level of contact had been sufficient, the nature of the contact was too often lacking structure and impact, and while we accept that there may be reasons for this, there has evidently been an impact on outcomes.

In many of the cases we reviewed, where progress was being made in terms of service delivery, this was because of the involvement of partner agencies such as those commissioned through the commissioned rehabilitative services (CRS) framework. However, when we spoke to CRS providers, they described needing the CORRE to “turn off the tap” of referrals as they had been inundated and could not meet the demand.

Consequently, in most of the cases we reviewed, there had been no interventions delivered. This may be a consequence of the changes required as a result of unification, and/or the restrictions imposed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, and therefore not a Gwent-specific issue. Nonetheless, there is a significant amount of work to do in order to improve outcomes within the PDU. This may include, but will not be limited to, continuing to address unpaid work and accredited programme backlogs, upskilling staff so that they feel confident in delivering interventions themselves, and managing the number of referrals to CRS providers. There may also be the necessity for the region to consider whether CRS providers are adequately equipped to deliver the volume of services required by the PDUs.

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 Probation Service to continue to implement these recommendations. Below are our findings from the inspection of Gwent Probation Delivery Unit (PDU) in respect of the relevant recommendations:

Recommendation from a previous CRC inspection in February 2019:

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

Inspection findings:

- The average caseload is 28 for probation officers (POs) and 41 for probation services officers (PSOs). Forty-four per cent of POs and 27 per cent of PSOs have a caseload which is greater than the local workload measurement tool (WMT) target, suggesting that workloads may not be manageable for many practitioners. As of June 2021, vacancies were only being held at senior probation officer and PO grade, there were no administrative or intervention/rehabilitative staff vacancies.
- In the practitioner survey, 50 per cent of staff reported they felt their workload was not so manageable, 30 per cent felt it was not at all manageable and 20 per cent felt it was quite manageable. Feedback from the staff survey also showed that 100 per cent of respondents felt that staffing levels were not sufficient. This was echoed by the staff we spoke to as part of our focus groups. Some of the staff we talked to described this being the “worst it’s ever been” and described being close to “total burn out”. While staff acknowledged the support from their managers, and indeed from the head of PDU, there is clearly a critical staffing issue, the seriousness of which should not be underestimated in terms of impact upon staff’s welfare.
- In recognition, the Regional Probation Director had just agreed a significant demand management strategy, but at the time of the inspection, this had only just been agreed and it is likely to take some time before staff feel the benefit of this on their work loads.

Categorisation	No progress
Improvement still required?	Yes

Recommendation from a previous CRC inspection in February 2019:

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

Inspection findings:

- Following the last inspection of Wales CRC, our domain two case management review showed that, in 48 per cent of cases, planning focused sufficiently on keeping other people safe. In this inspection of Gwent PDU, that figure had risen to 55 per cent.

Categorisation **Some progress**

Improvement still required? **Yes**

Recommendation from a previous CRC inspection in February 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. In our meetings with staff, many of them identified learning needs particularly around delivering interventions.
- At the time of the inspection, 69 per cent of staff had completed adult safeguarding training, 80 per cent of staff had completed child safeguarding training, 73 per cent of staff had completed domestic violence training and 62 per cent of staff had completed WRAP3 training.
- In the practitioner survey, 55 per cent said the organisation actively promoted a culture of learning and continuous improvement, and 60 per cent felt they were always allocated cases for which they have the appropriate knowledge, skills and experience.
- It was evident that some Professional Qualification in Probation learners who had previously been employed as PSOs, felt their learning needs were not prioritised and they described being “used as a PSO resource” which negatively impacted their ability to fulfil the necessary requirements to develop from trainee POs into newly qualified officers.

Categorisation **Some progress**

Improvement still required? **Yes**

Recommendation from a previous CRC inspection in February 2019:

Enable team managers to provide effective management oversight of practice.

Inspection findings:

- In the practitioner’s survey, 50 per cent of respondents said they receive supervision that enhances the quality of their work with people on probation.
- In focus groups with staff across grades, we saw a mixed picture regarding structured and case-focused supervision. Some staff reported significant lapses, in some cases up to two years, since their last formal supervision session.

- Middle managers told us that they had an open-door policy, and had increased levels of supervision, in response to the critical staffing issue and associated workload increases.

Categorisation **Some progress**

Improvement still required? **Yes**

Recommendation from a previous CRC inspection in February 2019:

Improve the coordination of resettlement activity.

Inspection findings:

- Since June 2021, staff employed in providing resettlement support to prison leavers have been employed by the short-term sentences team (STST) and the Wales region, therefore Gwent PDU is an early adopter of this resettlement model.
- The offender management in custody (OMiC) model, designed for men serving longer-term sentences, remains problematic and the perception from staff is that there is a complex relationship between the resettlement and OMiC models. Staff reported having little or no time to get to understand this relationship. Consequently, those with longer sentences are less likely to receive the service they should expect from the OMiC model.

Categorisation **Some progress**

Improvement still required? **Yes**

Recommendation from a previous NPS inspection in November 2018:

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

Inspection findings:

- A new tiering framework was introduced across England and Wales in June 2021. With this, a new workload framework was also adopted. Despite central guidance, the Wales probation service has adopted some variations and weightings to reflect the complexities of some specialised services, especially the STST, Integrated Offender Management (IOM) and WISDOM teams, all of which have average caseloads in excess of 110 per cent on the WMT.
- From probation practitioners, we heard that those in specialist teams such as IOM still had a non-specialist or 'generic' caseload. Staff described this as a "struggle" and said they felt they were "in limbo, straddling two caseloads". We also heard that some WISDOM officers were being given the necessary caseload reductions, but others were not. This seemed to be a geographical issue differing between offices.

Categorisation **No progress**

Improvement still required? **Yes**

Recommendation from a previous NPS inspection in November 2018:

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

Inspection findings:

- We saw evidence of staff being over reliant on information being provided to them informally by colleagues, rather than proactively seeking information themselves. It was clear that the arrangements for the exchange of risk and safeguarding information were not working as effectively as they needed to in order to effectively promote desistance and protect the public. Staff were confused about the multi-agency safeguarding hub and which local authorities these covered. We heard that this often meant practitioners were emailing social workers directly and waiting significant amounts of time for a response.
- At the time of the inspection, reportable incidents were not established; however, we were told that a database had been developed and was due to be rolled out across the PDU imminently.
- The case review data shows that in 68 per cent of cases, domestic abuse checks were not undertaken when they should have been. Meanwhile, in 35 per cent of cases reviewed, child safeguarding information sharing was not undertaken when it should have been.

Categorisation **No progress**

Improvement still required? **Yes**

Recommendation from a previous NPS inspection in November 2018:

Undertake risk of harm assessments in all applicable cases.

Inspection findings:

- In our case reviews we found that 72 per cent of assessments identified and analysed offending-related factors.

Categorisation **Sufficient progress**

Improvement still required? **No**

Recommendation from a previous NPS inspection in November 2018:

Improve the use of the Violent and Sexual Offender Register (ViSOR) database to share information with police and prisons.

Inspection findings:

- Most Gwent PDU staff have now been vetted for ViSOR but, due to the impact of unification and Covid-19, that training and the roll out of wider use has been slowed. All administrative staff have access, but we were told that they either were not using it at all, or not using it as they should.

Categorisation **Some progress**

Improvement still required? **Yes**

Recommendation from a previous NPS inspection in November 2018:

Ensure that individuals are able to start accredited programmes promptly after sentence, or as soon as they are ready to do so.

Inspection findings:

- We accept that the delivery of accredited programmes has been severely hampered both by the unification and the Covid-19 pandemic. However, despite this, the commencement of accredited programmes in Gwent PDU remains poor. There are significant backlogs and waiting lists with 46 out of 56 accredited programme requirements for individuals convicted of a sexual offence not yet started. Also, 153 of 201 accredited programme requirements for anything other than a sexual offence have not commenced.

Categorisation **No progress**

Improvement still required? **Yes**

Recommendation from a previous NPS inspection in November 2018:

Ensure that efficient and effective use is made of PSO resources.

Inspection findings:

- Gwent PDU has a critical shortage of PSOs. In a review of the workload, the head of PDU found a disparity with POs holding PSO cases, but the PDU are 12 PSOs down.
- Last summer, the PDU recruited 12 PSOs, but only have five remaining out of the 12; some went to other roles, and some were not settling and feeling overwhelmed. As such, Gwent PDU has an attrition rate for PSOs that is above the national average.
- In response, the head of PDU has taken on board that working from home is challenging for staff. The newly recruited PSOs who are due to start, once vetted, will be in an office five days per week.

Categorisation **No progress**

Improvement still required? **Yes**

Annexe two – Data

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

Key staffing data¹⁰

Total staff headcount (full-time equivalent) (FTE))	160
Total number of senior probation officers (SPOs)	10
Total number of probation officers (POs) (FTE)	55
Total number of probation service officers (PSOs) (FTE)	50
Vacancy rate (total number of unfilled posts as a percentage of total staff headcount)	-11%
Vacancy rate of SPO grade only (total number of unfilled posts as a percentage of total number of required SPO posts)	-2%
Vacancy rate of PO grade only (total number of unfilled posts as a percentage of total number of required PO posts)	-9%
Vacancy rate of PSO grade only (total number of unfilled posts as a percentage of total number of required PSO posts)	11%
Sickness absence rate (average days lost in previous 12 months for all staff)	7.4
Staff attrition (percentage of all staff leaving in 12-month period)	18.4%
Staff attrition SPO grade only (percentage of all SPO-grade staff leaving in 12-month period)	20%
Staff attrition PO grade only (percentage of all PO-grade staff leaving in 12-month period)	18.1%
Staff attrition PSO grade only (percentage of all PSO-grade staff leaving in 12-month period)	30.21%
Caseload and workload data	
Average caseload per PO (FTE) ¹¹	41.39
Average caseload per PSO (FTE) ¹¹	37.46

¹⁰ Data supplied by The Probation Service.

¹¹ Data supplied by The Probation Service.

Workload management tool (WMT) average per PO	30.21
WMT average per PSO	41.39
Proportion of POs (or equivalent) in this PDU describing workload as unmanageable ¹²	74%
Proportion of PSOs (or equivalent) in this PDU describing workload as unmanageable ¹²	56%

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?¹³	
Does the information and advice draw sufficiently on available sources of information including child safeguarding and domestic abuse information?	36%
Is the individual meaningfully involved in the preparation of the report, and are their views considered?	94%
Does the advice consider factors related to the likelihood of reoffending?	94%
Does the advice consider factors related to risk of harm? **	88%
Does the advice consider the individual's motivation and readiness to change?	88%
Does the advice consider the individual's diversity and personal circumstances?	100%
Does the advice consider the impact of the offence on known or identifiable victims? **	58%
Is an appropriate proposal made to court? **	94%
Is there a sufficient record of the advice given, and the reasons for it?	97%

¹² HM Inspectorate of Probation inspection data.

¹³ This question is only asked in cases where there has been a recent report prepared in the inspected PDU.

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.

2.2. 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?	63%	73%	66%
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?	65%	68%	66%
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?	70%	81%	74%
Is the person on probation meaningfully involved in their assessment, and are their views taken into account?	75%	73%	74%
Does assessment focus sufficiently on the factors linked to offending and desistance?			
Does assessment identify and analyse offending-related factors?	69%	77%	72%

Does assessment identify the strengths and protective factors of the person on probation? **	80%	68%	76%
Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information?	68%	64%	66%
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?	41%	73%	52%
Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including past behaviour and convictions, and involve other agencies where appropriate?	40%	64%	48%
Does assessment analyse any specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims? **	35%	59%	44%

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?	53%	64%	56%

Does planning take sufficient account of the diversity factors of the individual which may affect engagement and compliance? **	45%	41%	44%
Does planning take sufficient account of the personal circumstances of the individual which may affect engagement and compliance? **	63%	59%	61%
Does planning take sufficient account of the readiness and motivation of the person on probation to change which may affect engagement and compliance?	65%	77%	69%
Does planning set out how all the requirements of the sentence or licence/ post-sentence supervision will be delivered within the available timescales?	68%	55%	63%
Does planning set a level, pattern and type of contact sufficient to engage the individual and to support the effectiveness of specific interventions?	70%	73%	71%
Does planning focus sufficiently on reducing reoffending and supporting desistance?			
Does planning sufficiently reflect offending-related factors and prioritise those which are most critical? *	55%	68%	60%
Does planning build on the individual's strengths and protective factors, using potential sources of support? **	58%	36%	50%

Does planning set out the services most likely to reduce reoffending and support desistance?	73%	77%	74%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?			
Does planning sufficiently address risk of harm factors and prioritise those which are most critical? **	33%	59%	42%
Does planning set out the necessary constructive and/or restrictive interventions to manage the risk of harm? **	43%	68%	52%
Does planning make appropriate links to the work of other agencies involved with the person on probation and any multi-agency plans? **	35%	50%	40%
Does planning set out necessary and effective contingency arrangements to manage those risks that have been identified? **	35%	55%	42%

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?	53%	68%	58%

Is sufficient focus given to maintaining an effective working relationship with the person on probation, taking into account their diversity needs?	60%	68%	63%
Are sufficient efforts made to enable the individual to complete their sentence, including flexibility to take appropriate account of their personal circumstances?	58%	86%	68%
Are risks of non-compliance identified and addressed in a timely fashion to reduce the need for enforcement actions? **	33%	45%	37%
Are enforcement actions taken when appropriate? **	40%	59%	47%
Are sufficient efforts made to re-engage the individual after enforcement actions or recall? **	28%	50%	36%
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?	30%	59%	40%
Wherever possible, does the delivery of services build upon the individual's strengths and enhance protective factors? **	45%	45%	45%

Is the involvement of other organisations in the delivery of services sufficiently well-coordinated? * **	28%	41%	32%
Are key individuals in the life of the person on probation engaged where appropriate to support their desistance? * **	15%	27%	19%
Is the level and nature of contact sufficient to reduce reoffending and support desistance?	40%	64%	48%
Are local services engaged to support and sustain desistance during the sentence and beyond? * **	25%	64%	39%
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? **	38%	59%	46%
Is sufficient attention given to protecting actual and potential victims? **	18%	55%	31%
Is the involvement of other agencies in managing and minimising the risk of harm sufficiently well-coordinated? * **	15%	36%	23%
Are key individuals in the life of the person on probation engaged where appropriate to support the effective management of risk of harm? * **	15%	27%	20%

Are home visits undertaken where necessary to support the effective management of risk of harm? * **	10%	36%	20%
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?	3%	45%	18%
Post-custody cases only: Did the community offender manager address the key resettlement or desistance needs before release?	0%	64%	23%
Post-custody cases only: Did the community offender manager address key risk of harm needs before release?	0%	59%	21%

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%	50%	50%
Is the person on probation meaningfully involved in reviewing their progress and engagement?	39%	50%	43%

Are written reviews completed as appropriate as a formal record of actions to implement the sentence? **	39%	73%	52%
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? *	34%	57%	42%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on building on the strengths and enhancing the protective factors of the person on probation? **	34%	29%	32%
Is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies working with the person on probation? **	26%	48%	34%
Are written reviews completed as appropriate as a formal record of the progress towards desistance? **	34%	68%	47%
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? **	21%	29%	23%
Is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies involved in managing the risk of harm? **	15%	29%	20%

Is the person on probation (and, where appropriate, are key individuals in their life) meaningfully involved in reviewing the risk of harm? * **	23%	14%	20%
Are written reviews completed as appropriate as a formal record of the management of the risk of harm? **	36%	59%	44%

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?	28%	38%	31%
Have there been improvements in those factors most closely linked to offending both in developing strengths and addressing needs?	20%	23%	20%
Has there been a reduction in factors most closely related to risk of harm to others? **	13%	14%	13%
Has there been a reduction in offending?	13%	14%	13%

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 \(justiceinspectors.gov.uk\)](https://justiceinspectors.gov.uk)

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

[Glossary \(justiceinspectors.gov.uk\)](https://justiceinspectors.gov.uk)