



HM Inspectorate  
of Probation

An inspection of probation services in:  
**Hammersmith, Fulham, Kensington, Chelsea,  
and Westminster PDU**

The Probation Service – London region

HM Inspectorate of Probation, October 2022

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## 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.

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

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## Foreword

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This was the first of six Probation Delivery Unit (PDU) inspections in the London region, since the unification of the Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) and the National Probation Services (NPS) in June 2021. Hammersmith, Fulham, Kensington, Chelsea, and Westminster (HFKCW) PDU faces huge challenges, many of which predate the transition to the new probation service, and the Covid-19 pandemic, and have been present for some time.

Such were the scale of our concerns that we raised an 'organisational alert' about this PDU with the leadership of the Probation Service during our inspection fieldwork, requiring urgent action to reduce the risks that we found – the first time this has happened since I became Chief Inspector in June 2019. Given the very poor quality of work uncovered by this inspection we have had no choice but to rate this PDU as 'Inadequate'.

Across all five of our standards for case work, we rated provision as 'Inadequate'. Of particular concern though, was the fact that over 900 cases in this area had not been allocated to a named probation practitioner, including Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangement (MAPPA) cases and those with active safeguarding and domestic abuse concerns. We found insufficient contact taking place with these unallocated cases and ineffective monitoring arrangements to keep the public safe which was of serious concern.

Almost all staff felt their workloads were unmanageable which was not surprising given that HFKCW had an overall vacancy rate of 43 per cent. The strategy implemented to try and manage this was complex. This created a sense of anxiety and confusion among staff who, despite best efforts, were struggling to identify what was a priority, and what was not, at any given time. As well as the high staff vacancy rates, high levels of staff sickness were also contributing to the problem and staff retention is a huge issue, with a third of staff having left this PDU in the 12 months prior to the announcement of this inspection.

Strategically, there are clear delivery plans and improved relationships with key partner agencies. While this is encouraging progress, the impact of these is yet to be seen in effective delivery of services and they are unlikely to have the desired impact until the chronic resourcing issues in this PDU are addressed. In many of the cases we assessed there was no meaningful intervention work being undertaken in supervision. Only 20 per cent of people on probation we surveyed said they had access to the services they need via probation.

Whilst the current PDU leaders have made efforts to rectify the dire situation they find themselves in, the reality is that they are unable to do so by themselves and require significant and enhanced support and oversight from national senior leadership teams if they are to make any real progress. Staff and managers across HFKCW will be extremely disappointed with the outcome of this inspection, but we would be doing them a disservice if we did not report openly and honestly about the severity of the situation they are working in.



**Justin Russell**

Chief Inspector of Probation

## Ratings

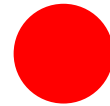
### Hammersmith, Fulham, Kensington, Chelsea, and Westminster

Fieldwork started August 2022

Score **0 / 27**

#### Overall rating

Inadequate



#### 1. Organisational delivery

1.1 Leadership

Inadequate



1.2 Staff

Inadequate



1.3 Services

Inadequate



1.4 Information and facilities

Inadequate



#### 2. Court work and case supervision

2.1 Court work

Inadequate



2.2 Assessment

Inadequate



2.3 Planning

Inadequate



2.4 Implementation and delivery

Inadequate



2.5 Reviewing

Inadequate



## Recommendations

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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.<sup>1</sup>

### **HFKCW should:**

1. improve the quality of work to assess, plan for, manage and review risk of harm
2. ensure that the interventions necessary to improve desistance and reduce reoffending and risk of harm are provided in all cases
3. improve the arrangements for information sharing to ensure that pre-sentence domestic abuse and safeguarding enquiries are completed and utilised to inform assessment, planning and risk management
4. improve the effectiveness of quality assurance and management oversight of all casework
5. ensure staff have the relevant training to use risk and safeguarding information, obtained from key stakeholders, to appropriately inform risk assessment and sentence plans for people on probation
6. ensure staff with responsibility for case management oversight have the skills, knowledge and time to undertake the work effectively
7. engage with people on probation to inform service delivery
8. complete all actions identified as part of the organisational alert.

### **London region should:**

9. complete all actions identified in the organisational alert
10. ensure priorities are clearly communicated and understood by probation practitioners and middle managers
11. ensure HFKCW has sufficient staffing resource in place
12. ensure that management information in relation to Commissioned Rehabilitative Services (CRS) referrals is available for PDU managers and analysed effectively to increase the use of available services.

### **Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service should:**

13. consider incentives to improve recruitment and retention of staff
14. improve the support provision to sites assessed as red under the Prioritising Probation Framework (PPF).

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

## Background

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We conducted fieldwork in Hammersmith, Fulham, Kensington, Chelsea, and Westminster (HFKCW) over the period of a week, beginning 01 August 2022. We inspected 41 cases where sentences and licences had commenced between 17 January and 18 February 2022. We also conducted 24 interviews with probation practitioners.

Prior to 26 June 2021 MTC was the parent organisation awarded the contract to provide probation services in these boroughs through London CRC. They also owned the Thames Valley CRC. Now part of The Probation Service, London probation region is made up of 18 PDUs which are, in all, responsible for the management of around 38,590 people on probation. HFKCW is one of the 18 PDUs and is managed under the West/North West London probation district. Unpaid work and accredited programme arrangements are pan-London and therefore do not fall under the management of the PDUs.

The Probation Service's Prioritising Probation Framework (PPF) is a mechanism which attributes a RAG rating to a PDU based on staffing levels and workloads. Depending on their RAG rating, the PDU will be expected to focus its resources on agreed priorities at the expense of other business activities. The principles of the PPF were first established in March 2020 as a response to the operational pressures which the Covid-19 pandemic presented, including significant reductions in staffing due to illness. Whilst the Probation Service has enacted a recovery agenda following the end of the restrictions, there continues to be a significant business risk around levels of staffing.

HFKCW PDU has a RAG rating of red under the PPF framework. Red PDUs have less than 60 per cent of staff in place and staff who on average have had caseloads of 120 per cent or more of target levels for more than 4 weeks. Whilst rated as red, PDUs will no longer operate to National Standards and will be allowed further concessions such as lower expectations around face-to-face appointments and no requirements for formal case reviews except in the event of a significant change in risk. Red rated PDUs are expected to prioritise high or very high risk of serious harm cases (9 of the 41 we inspected in HFKCW) as well as those with imminent and escalating risk of harm and services to Court. All applications to move to red status have to be approved by Chief Probation Officer, which ensures the highest level of accountability and oversight for business-critical decision.

Staffing has been a challenge across London for some time, with HFKCW PDU being the worst affected. This PDU has operated with under 50 per cent of its staffing capacity since the unification of probation services but was suffering staffing issues long before that. The region had, in response to these challenges provided some additional support, including securing two heads of service on detached duty in October 2021. They had also directed staff to HFKCW and sought volunteers to support the PDU, including staff from their serious further offence and complaints teams, probation offender management function and the quality and development team. However, the region has struggled to secure staff on detached duty from other PDUs due to resourcing issues elsewhere across the region.

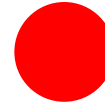
The effect of this enduring resourcing issue is that approximately 900 cases were found to be unallocated to a named probation practitioner in HFKCW at the time we announced our inspection. These cases included those with active child safeguarding and domestic abuse concerns, as well as Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangement

(MAPPA) cases. The lack of oversight of these cases prompted an organisational level alert, the details of which can be found in annexe 2.

In response to this alert, the Probation Service activated its Urgent Strategic Response process, including a commitment to redeploy 20 additional probation practitioners to HFKCW and an urgent revision to the rules around the use of reporting centres for unallocated cases. Additional office space has also been identified at Westminster Magistrates Court to enable easier reporting by people on probation in that part of the PDU.

# 1. Organisational delivery

## 1.1. Leadership



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

Inadequate

### Strengths:

- At a strategic level, relationships with key partners have improved under the leadership of the current head of the PDU. This was attributed to increased engagement with strategic-level partners.
- The work that the head and deputy head of PDU completed around strategy formation is impressive. However, it is too early to comment on the impact. The effectiveness will not be realised until the PDU is sufficiently resourced.
- Staff at all levels commented on how impactful the interim business manager had been in improving processes in the PDU and making staff feel supported.

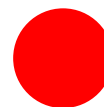
### Areas for improvement:

- An organisational-level alert was raised due a significant number of cases not allocated to a probation practitioner – see annexe 2 for further details.
- Inspectors were concerned to find no consistent approach to enforcement for the unallocated caseload, and therefore were not assured that timely, lawful and appropriate enforcement action was being undertaken. The PDU had no exit strategy to address and improve the situation, lacking a robust plan to improve resources or service delivery. Staff could not see an end to the pressures, leading to a sense of helplessness and despair.
- The culture of the PDU is not cohesive, inspectors heard that court staff do not feel part of the PDU, and sentence management staff do not feel integrated into the wider region. Clear divisions remain among staff who previously worked for the NPS and CRC.
- Communication requires improvement, staff reported feeling confused about what they should prioritise due to instructions changing frequently.
- The situation in court was creating challenging circumstances for staff and sentencers. The PDU's resourcing issues resulted in poor service delivery, and therefore sentencers lacking confidence. This was evidenced by domain two data for court work being assessed as 'Inadequate'.
- Given the challenges being faced by this PDU, the relative infancy of the leadership team, and its status as a 'red site', we did not see evidence of an enhanced level of support or oversight from the Regional Leadership Team. This was also noted by some of the staff we spoke to in the PDU. Inspectors were informed by regional leaders about initiatives that had been put in place such as reallocation of cases to other London PDUs, priority allocation for Newly Qualified Officers (NQOs), increased reward and recognition, Head of



Operations engagement events and a range of individual support and mentoring for PDU leaders. However, the impact of this activity was not clear.

## 1.2. Staff



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

Inadequate

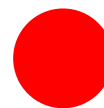
### Strengths:

- Staff felt well supported by their colleagues, describing colleagues as a critical support network. Staff described their colleagues as willing to help one another, in terms of managing their workloads and their personal wellbeing.

### Areas for improvement:

- Staffing levels are insufficient. At the time the inspection was announced, the PDU's overall vacancy rate was 43 per cent. The senior probation officer vacancy rate was 35 per cent, the probation officer vacancy rate was 42 per cent, the probation services officer vacancy rate was 63 per cent and the court team vacancy rate was 28 per cent. In our staff survey, all 11 of 11 respondents said staffing levels were "not at all sufficient".
- Staff retention in HFKCW PDU remains problematic. In the 12 months prior to the announcement of this inspection, 33 per cent of staff left the PDU. Staff we spoke to described there being a constant churn of staff due to the unmanageable workloads. Staff attrition had been a problem before this period following the closure of the Dorset Close office.
- Sickness levels were at a critical point across the PDU, the average number of days lost annually to sickness was 18, an additional pressure on workloads.
- There was an inconsistency with regard to structured and case-focused supervision, with some staff reporting significant lapses in time between formal supervision sessions. The approach meant there was an absence of effective management oversight.
- The scale and complexity of the rota systems in place was problematic. Staff of all grades felt concerned, confused, frustrated, and overwhelmed by these arrangements, and while consulted in July 2022 would have welcomed further engagement about how adaptations or improvements could be made.
- When cases are allocated (and they are not always), they were not always allocated to staff who were appropriately qualified and/or experienced. We heard of NQOs being allocated extremely complex and challenging parole cases, less than six months after qualification. This issue was also cited as a contributing factor in staff leaving the PDU.
- The PDU had, rightly, suspended its offer of Professional Qualification in Probation (PQiP) learner placements. However, we heard that plans were in place to restart placements imminently. We have grave concerns about the PDUs ability to appropriately support its current staff; this addition would add an increased pressure that, clearly, the PDU is not ready to take on.

### 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

#### Strengths:

- There was a good draft directory of services in place which detailed services available in the area for probation practitioners to access.

#### Areas for improvement:

- Time protected for women-only reporting (Friday morning) was not being used exclusively for women. Men were also being booked in for appointments during this time. It was encouraging though, to hear that reception staff would not permit men entry when these instances occurred.
- There was no meaningful intervention work being undertaken in supervision. In 71 per cent of the cases we assessed, the implementation and delivery of services did not effectively support the person on probation's desistance.
- Relationships with sentencers were precarious, and sentencers did not have confidence in the probation service's ability to deliver a quality service either within Westminster court or more widely to people on probation. In our sentencer survey, when asked whether courts were kept up to date with the outcomes of work undertaken by the probation service, 11 out of 21 said "not that well" and seven out of 21 said "not at all well".
- Appropriate services were not delivered either in-house or through other agencies, such as education, training and employment, housing or mentoring, to meet the identified needs and risks of people on probation. There was also a lack of available data to track the impact of services that were delivered.
- Staff were reluctant to refer to CRS providers because of perceived difficulty – firstly, in making a referral, and secondly, the quality of the service that was then delivered. In terms of housing support, probation practitioners described situations where it was quicker and easier for them to undertake a duty to refer housing referral themselves than it was to refer to the CRS provider.
- Diversity factors and issues of disproportionality were not addressed sufficiently in the way that services were delivered, and had almost become an afterthought for probation practitioners who, under such challenging circumstances, were struggling to manage their workloads.
- Relationships with other agencies to manage the risk of harm were ineffective. We heard of information sharing problems with the Metropolitan Police Service, including that they would not undertake domestic abuse enquiries except in cases deemed to be high risk of serious harm. Even in these cases, the process for requesting this information was time consuming and complicated. In our domain two data, implementation and delivery of services did not effectively support the safety of other people in 76 per cent of cases, reflecting that people are not being kept safe from the harms posed.

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## Resettlement work

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### Strengths:

- Assessments for post-release cases took greater consideration for actual or potential victims, than assessments for community cases did.<sup>2</sup>

### Areas for improvement:

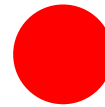
- The quality of work undertaken with resettlement cases was poor. We saw no evidence of effective Offender Management in Custody arrangements, or short sentence resettlement work. This was unsurprising, given that the resourcing issues and the PPF arrangements in HFKCW mean that community work was the priority.
- In 74 per cent of post-release cases assessed, the community offender manager did not address the key resettlement or desistance needs before release. This resulted in people being released with no supportive plans in place.
- In 74 per cent of the post-release cases assessed, the community offender manager did not address key risk of harm needs before release. This led to factors linked to risk of serious harm not being managed sufficiently and placing people at risk.
- In 84 per cent of post-release cases, the community offender manager did not ensure a proportionate level of contact with the prisoner before release. Probation practitioners did not fully understand the needs of those being released due to the lack of contact and therefore did not ensure the appropriate assessments and plans were in place for effective oversight.

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<sup>2</sup> We use a Relative Rate Index calculation when comparing results from separate groups within the cohort data, to consider whether differences should be deemed substantial.

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## 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. Inadequate

### Strengths:

- Some staff reported that having improved IT (e.g. their own laptops) and the allied hybrid working arrangements, were having a positive impact on their workload and work/life balance.

### Areas for improvement:

- Staff reported feeling unsafe working in the building because of a perceived lack of action and learning following a violent incident perpetrated against a member of staff in the office. Despite leaders telling us that violent incidents had resulted in lessons-learned exercises having taken place, as well as positive actions to prevent future incidents, we did not see evidence of this.
- We heard from probation practitioners and people on probation that the location of the office, and lack of alternative provision, could be problematic for those with rival gang conflicts. Staff and partners also noted that the loss of the PDU's central London office (Marylebone) had significantly contributed to the attrition of staff, due to increased travel times and increased cost of commuting.
- Policies and guidance were not well communicated to, and understood by, staff. This was evident in the confusion over what staff should prioritise, and the anxiety and frustration of staff having to manage several different duty rotas. In all, 11 people completed our staff survey and of those, four answered "not that often" and three "not at all" to the question "Is change communicated and implemented effectively?"
- Information was not always exchanged with partners and other key stakeholders as necessary, nor was information exchange always completed by staff of the appropriate grade. This was evident in case administrators requesting police and children's services information, and sentencers discontent with the information they received from the PDU.
- Due to the lack of effective arrangements being in place to undertake domestic abuse enquiries with the police, probation practitioners had stopped carrying out these requests, knowing the information would not be provided. This process raised significant concerns over the PDU's ability to safely manage the risks posed and keep people safe.

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## Feedback from people on probation

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### Overview

- Of the people on probation surveyed, 13 per cent (nine out of 70) said that 'appointments' are what was good about their probation experience.
- Half of those interviewed (seven out of 14) said they got what they needed to out of their probation appointments.
- People on probation reported to having long journeys to get to appointments.
- Of those surveyed, 55 per cent said they had been able to speak to a probation practitioner at a time that suited them, and 47 per cent felt that they were able to contact their probation practitioner when required.

One respondent said:

*"I just get a call but they ask the same useless questions all the time and it's all pointless and they just send me breach letters all the time."*

Probation practitioner performance was described as 'make or break' for people on probation's experience but in HFKCW, they experienced a revolving door of probation practitioners. People on probation reported that they get more out of their appointments – for example, higher engagement with relevant services – when they have a capable probation practitioner.

Seven out of 14 people on probation interviewed shared negative opinions of their probation practitioner. Whereas others were indifferent, stating their probation practitioner was "alright", two people described their probation practitioner as "good" or "brilliant". When asked, "What has been good about your probation experience", 11 per cent cited "relationship with their probation practitioner (PP)". And 12 per cent (eight out of 70) stated their probation practitioner was the biggest challenge.

The type of contact that people on probation wanted varied. The majority reported that they preferred face-to-face contact while others preferred telephone contact. Most respondents reported "Once every three months" when asked "How often do you think you should see your probation practitioner?". This was followed closely by "Monthly" and then "Twice monthly". However, it should be noted that many of those who answered "Once every three months" did so because of their frustration with their probation practitioners, appointments and general communication.

Issues with communication are prevalent across HFKCW, with communication being the most frequent response (28 per cent (19 out of 70)) to "What has been your biggest challenge whilst being on Probation?" People on probation stated that probation staff, specifically probation practitioners, do not answer the phone, or reply when they try to contact them. Therefore, people on probation cannot easily convey the reasons for absence, or that they were going to be late. The result was that people on probation are often in fear of breach when they cannot attend appointments and have a valid reason. We heard one example of a person on probation being threatened with a warning when missing their appointment, due to being in hospital after having been stabbed.

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## Diversity and inclusion

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### Strengths:

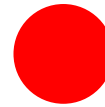
- Diversity is managed at a regional level; the Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging roadmap for 2023 is supported by the 2021/22 plan. The Bridging the Divide committee meets monthly, and involves diversity and inclusion leaders and champions, and each protected characteristic has a lead senior leader allocated. In addition to this, the equalities board meets bi-monthly and is attended by the Head of Equalities; the Head of Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging; the Equalities Manager; and the Equalities and Diversity and Inclusion Officers.
- Equality, Diversity and Belonging was described as 'integral' to HFKCW PDU, and we were told that the PDU People Plan priorities support the regional initiatives to tackle discrimination and upskill staff to ensure they meet the needs of people on probation.

### Areas for improvement:

- The overarching model was positive, with clear targets and objectives. However, it was not clear what progress was being made, particularly against the backdrop of the resourcing issue in HFKCW.
- Implementation of the PPF had, by the PDU's admission, caused work around diversity to fall down the list of priorities. However, PDU leaders reported that an Equality and Diversity representative continued to host events within the team, to raise the importance and value of how equality and inclusion was included in practice. Staff we spoke to did not tell us about this work.
- The PDU did not provide data that showed to what extent any group is disproportionately impacted by services. Or if individuals protected under *The Equality Act 2010* are more or less likely to complete orders, be breached or recalled. More work to compile this data, and use it meaningfully to improve practice, is required.
- In 76 per cent of the cases we assessed, assessment did not analyse the protected characteristics of the individual or consider the impact of these on their ability to comply and engage with service delivery.
- In 73 per cent of cases, planning did not take sufficient account of the diversity factors of the individual which may affect engagement and compliance. These figures reflect the impact of the lack of focus.
- The current workforce in HFKCW PDU does not adequately reflect the diversity of the local population. Women are overrepresented and it lacks representation from people with lived experience. However, we note that the PDU was severely under-resourced, and that a more reflective workforce could be achieved when the PDU achieves a full complement of staff.

## 2. Court work and case supervision

### 2.1. Court work



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

Inadequate

Our rating<sup>3</sup> for court work is based on the percentage of cases we inspected being judged satisfactory against the key question:

| Key question   | Percentage 'Yes' |
|--|------------------|
| Is the pre-sentence information and advice provided to court sufficiently analytical and personalised to the individual, supporting the court's decision-making? | 17%              |

#### Strengths:

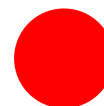
- At a strategic level, efforts to share the vision had been more impactful and strategic partners recognise early improvements.
- In 100 per cent of the cases we assessed, the individual was meaningfully involved in the preparation of the report, and their views were considered.
- Consideration to diversity and personal circumstance was better in court work than other areas of case management, which was seen in 75 per cent of the reports.

#### Areas for improvement:

- The PDU's resourcing issues resulted in poor service delivery and sentencers lacking confidence, as demonstrated in the overall rating of 'Inadequate'. This was reflected in their response when asked "How well do probation staffing and workload levels in court support the delivery of a high-quality service for people on probation?"; 11 out of 21 sentencers surveyed said "Not that well" and 7 out of 21 said "Not at all".
- Reports were based on insufficient information; 92 per cent lacked enquiries with the police for domestic abuse information.
- Enquiries with children's services were not done in 55 per cent of cases when they should have been, which queries the accuracy of the reports.
- The information and advice contained within 75 per cent of the reports we looked at did not draw sufficiently on available sources of information from other agencies.

<sup>3</sup> The rating for the standard is driven by the score for the key question, which is placed in a rating band. Full data and further information about inspection methodology is available in the data workbook for this inspection in the [data annex](#).

## 2.2. Assessment



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

Inadequate

Our rating<sup>4</sup> for assessment is based on the percentage of cases we inspected being judged satisfactory against three key questions:

| Key question  | Percentage 'Yes' |
|---|------------------|
| Does assessment focus sufficiently on engaging the person on probation?               | 37%              |
| Does assessment focus sufficiently on the factors linked to offending and desistance? | 24%              |
| Does assessment focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?                      | 15%              |

HFKCW PDU is rated as 'Inadequate' for assessment as the lowest score out of the three key questions was 15 per cent. Concerningly, this score relates to whether there was sufficient focus on keeping other people safe, with this only being demonstrated in a small minority of cases, regardless of sentence type.

### Areas for improvement:

- Due to the lack of resources, there was an overall absence of assessment taking place. People were being seen without any pre-screening of risks and offending taking place, exposing staff and others to unknown harm.
- Child safeguarding and domestic abuse information sharing did not take place when it should have. While one reason is ineffective relationships with other agencies, we heard some staff were simply no longer making the enquiries. Where information exchange did take place, it did not contribute to any effective assessment or analysis.
- Assessments did not identify and analyse offending-related factors. This was not surprising when considering 10 out of 14 people on probation interviewed did not receive an induction at all; those that did receive an induction described them as short and uninformative.
- The absence of structured assessments reflected through the other standards we inspected, leading to poor planning and a lack of appropriate services being delivered.

<sup>4</sup> The rating for the standard is driven by the score for the key question, which is placed in a rating band. Full data and further information about inspection methodology is available in the data workbook for this inspection in the [data annex](#).



## 2.3. Planning



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

Inadequate

Our rating<sup>5</sup> for planning is based on the percentage of cases we inspected being judged satisfactory against three key questions:

| Key question  | Percentage 'Yes' |
|---|------------------|
| Does planning focus sufficiently on engaging the person on probation?               | 29%              |
| Does planning focus sufficiently on reducing reoffending and supporting desistance? | 37%              |
| Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?                      | 29%              |

HFKCW PDU is rated as 'Inadequate' for planning; once again, one of the lowest scores relates to whether there was sufficient focus on keeping other people safe.

### Strengths:

- Planning that focused sufficiently on reducing reoffending and supporting desistance for female people on probation scored much higher.<sup>6</sup>

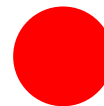
### Areas for improvement:

- Given the lack of information exchange being undertaken in court and for the purpose of assessment, it was unsurprising that planning did not sufficiently address the risk of harm factors and prioritise those most critical.
- Planning did not make appropriate links to the work of other agencies involved with the individual. Probation practitioners told us that it was quicker and easier for them to make housing referrals themselves, than it was to refer to the CRS provider. Appropriate services which meet the identified needs and risks of people on probation were not provided through other agencies, such as education, training and employment or mentoring. Undoubtedly, both of these factors will have contributed to the low scoring across planning.
- Given the complicated arrangements for managing the unallocated caseload, as well as the frequency of change to allocated officers, proper recording of contingency plans was fundamental, but was not happening.

<sup>5</sup> The rating for the standard is driven by the score for the key question, which is placed in a rating band. Full data and further information about inspection methodology is available in the data workbook for this inspection in the [data annex](#).

<sup>6</sup> We use a Relative Rate Index calculation when comparing results from separate groups within the cohort data, to consider whether differences are should be deemed substantial.

## 2.4. Implementation and delivery



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

Inadequate

Our rating<sup>7</sup> for implementation and delivery is based on the percentage of cases we inspected being judged satisfactory against three key questions:

| Key question   | Percentage 'Yes' |
|--|------------------|
| Is the sentence or post-custody period implemented effectively with a focus on engaging the person on probation? | 29%              |
| Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support desistance?                                 | 29%              |
| Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?                 | 24%              |

HFKCW PDU is rated as 'Inadequate' for implementation and delivery and we did not find any strengths in this area of work.

### Areas for improvement:

- Operationally, relationships with other agencies to support desistance through access to mainstream services were ineffective and, as a result, 61 per cent of cases did not engage local services to support and sustain desistance during the sentence and beyond.
- Only 17 per cent (10 out of 70) of the people on probation surveyed said they could access services relevant to them in HFKCW.
- The combination of the PPF and the unallocated case load had created a situation where people on probation were experiencing a very poor service. People on probation told us *"Sometimes I call him just to check he's alive"* and *"I have a duty officer, different person each time, and they just call every three months."*
- Home visits were not completed in 66 per cent of cases. Although these have been suspended as part of the PPF arrangements, that in itself does not negate their value in terms of developing effective relationships and managing risk of harm.

<sup>7</sup> The rating for the standard is driven by the score for the key question, which is placed in a rating band. Full data and further information about inspection methodology is available in the data workbook for this inspection in the [data annex](#).

## 2.5. Reviewing



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

Our rating<sup>8</sup> for reviewing is based on the percentage of cases we inspected being judged satisfactory against three key questions:

| Key question   | Percentage 'Yes' |
|--|------------------|
| <b>Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the compliance and engagement of the person on probation?</b> | 37%              |
| <b>Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting desistance?</b>   | 32%              |
| <b>Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?</b>   | 29%              |

HFKCW PDU is rated as 'Inadequate' for reviewing as the lowest score out of the three key questions was 29 per cent.

### Strengths:

- Female people on probation were more meaningfully involved in the reviewing of their risk of harm than males.

### Areas for improvement:

- Staff did not receive the necessary support from managers in their work. We found it to be insufficient, ineffective, or absent in 85 per cent of cases. Given the issues related to workload and resourcing, management oversight was a critical factor in overseeing the quality of work, but the absence of this reflected in our ratings.
- Reviewing did not sufficiently focus on keeping other people safe in 71 per cent of cases. This is particularly concerning given that reviewing was used as a tool to allocate cases into (and indeed, out of) the 'unallocated' case load. Insufficient reviewing of cases calls into question the efficacy of the oversight of these 'unallocated' cases and this concern forms part of the organisational-level alert (see annexe two).
- Reviewing was not informed by necessary input from other agencies involved in managing the risk of harm in 56 per cent of cases. This is likely to be another consequence of the challenges around information exchange.

<sup>8</sup> 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.

## 2.6. Outcomes

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

We do not currently rate the Outcomes standard, but provide this data for information and benchmarking purposes only.

| Outcomes   | Percentage 'Yes' |
|--|------------------|
| <b>Do early outcomes demonstrate that reasonable progress has been made, in line with the personalised needs of the person on probation?</b> | 17%              |

### Areas for improvement:

- The arrangements and local delivery plans did not effectively translate the vision and strategy into frontline practice. This was clear from the inadequate domain two scores across all five standards, and early outcomes not demonstrating that reasonable progress had not been made in 83 per cent of cases.
- Appropriate services were not provided and there was a distinct lack of data available to track the impact of any services that were being delivered.
- Relationships with other agencies, to support desistance through access to mainstream services, were ineffective. Only 20 per cent of people on probation surveyed said they had access to the services they need via probation.
- Inspectors identified the needs and risks related to offending and risk of harm for individuals from the point of sentence, finding that in 31 out of 41 cases there had been no progress on the areas of need and risk such as accommodation, employment, substance misuse and relationships.
- Due to the insufficient work undertaken to identify and address the risk of serious harm, improvements were only seen in 17 per cent of cases.

## Annexe one – Web links

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Full data from this inspection and further information about the methodology used to conduct this inspection is available [on our website](#).

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

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

## Annexe two – Organisational alert

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An [organisational-level alert](#) was raised regarding a significant number of cases not allocated to a probation practitioner. At the time the evidence in advance was submitted, there was an unallocated caseload of 993. The main concern was that there was insufficient management of risk of serious harm factors, placing people at imminent risk due to the unallocated caseload consisting of:

- cases with active safeguarding and domestic abuse concerns
- cases sentenced at court, the order having ended, and those individuals having had no contact with The Probation Service
- 234 cases with no next appointment recorded on the case management system; oversight of these cases was therefore not clear
- cases of Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)
- a lack of a consistent approach to enforcement; inspectors were therefore not assured that timely, lawful, and appropriate enforcement action was being undertaken
- there being no exit strategy, which provided inspectors assurances that managing an unallocated caseload was a short-term, temporary measure
- actions relating to the unallocated caseload being escalated to a practitioner for completion, these actions were then undertaken, and the case was returned to the unallocated caseload. Inspectors were not confident that sufficient, dynamic risk assessment was taking place
- limited access offender (LAO) cases; we cannot be assured that these cases can be suitably assessed or reviewed by staff. These cases being reviewed by different members of staff undermines the LAO status, which means only specific people have the authority to access the case.

We received a prompt response from the Regional Probation Director, which outlined the actions to be taken in response to the organisational alert. At the time of writing (August 2022), some of the actions were in progress:

- The Chief Executive for HMPPS has requested HM Prison and Probation Service's Effective Probation Practice Service Improvement Group to review their staffing to secure volunteers to support the PDU. One person had been identified. Volunteers had also been sought from other London PDUs.
- London probation region is securing additional administrative resource, to support the completion of checks for unallocated cases and the MAPPA coordinator or a senior probation officer (SPO) has reviewed the 58 unallocated MAPPA cases. This was completed and resulted in three cases being allocated to practitioners.
- The head of service and deputy were to review management information system reports for missed appointments in line with accountability meetings. This was in progress, and part of a wider London initiative.
- The region was to negotiate with commissioned rehabilitative services providers to deliver group sessions to support education, training and employment activities and request interventions teams to deliver structured interventions for Rehabilitation Activity Requirements at HFKCW PDU's office. Both were ongoing.