

An inspection of probation services in:  
**Lambeth PDU**  
The Probation Service – London region

HM Inspectorate of Probation, October 2022

# Contents

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<b>Foreword.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Ratings.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Recommendations .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Background.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1. Organisational delivery .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>2. Court work and case supervision .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Annexe one – Web links.....</b>	<b>20</b>

## Acknowledgements

This inspection was led by HM Inspector Shellie Adams, 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 Probation Delivery Unit (PDU) inspection of services within Lambeth since the unification of the Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRC) and National Probation Service (NPS) in June 2021. The overall quality of work delivered to manage people on probation was poor across all four of our standards for casework. Although there were some positives demonstrated in the way this service was organised and led, there was insufficient attention paid to the quality of case management, which should be at the heart of what probation services deliver. As a result of this, the PDU is rated “Inadequate”.

A common theme emerging in the PDUs we have inspected to date is that staffing levels were insufficient. At the point of inspection, Lambeth PDU had an overall vacancy rate of 27 per cent across probation practitioner and middle manager grades. Staff understandably did not feel their workloads were manageable, and many reflected they were not satisfied in their work, acknowledging that there was not enough focus on quality of supervision within the PDU.

We were impressed by the governance and accountability framework in place, led by the head of the PDU, which had driven improvements against key performance indicators. But performance measures alone did little to improve the quality of work being undertaken. We were concerned to see examples of unsatisfactory assessments being countersigned by managers in order to achieve a performance target date for completion, while they openly acknowledged gaps in the quality of the work. This is unacceptable. There was an overall lack of quality assurance in all cases. This is also a regional issue due to inadequate resourcing within regional performance and quality teams, which have been raided to make good shortages in frontline staff resources. The issues of resourcing, while needing regional attention, also require intervention from national senior leaders.

There were positive strategic partnerships across the borough of Lambeth, and this was reflected in the range of services available. These were, however, not then fully utilised by probation practitioners to manage risk of harm or support individuals towards desistance in the cases we inspected. People on probation did not feel involved or engaged in their sentence, or with the Probation Service as a whole. This was reflected in poor engagement and outcome scores across all casework quality standards.

Undoubtedly, both staff and managers will be disappointed with the outcome of this inspection. Whilst we are hopeful that the management structures in place will be able to drive improvements, this will only be achieved when there is a shift to focusing on the quality of supervision, with sufficient staffing in place to facilitate effective delivery.



**Justin Russell**

Chief Inspector of Probation

## Ratings

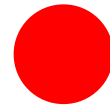
### Lambeth PDU

Fieldwork started August 2022

Score **3/24**

#### Overall rating

**Inadequate**



#### 1. Organisational delivery

1.1 Leadership

Requires improvement



1.2 Staff

Inadequate



1.3 Services

Requires improvement



1.4 Information and facilities

Requires improvement



#### 2. Court work and case supervision

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>

### **Lambeth PDU should:**

1. improve the effectiveness of quality assurance and management oversight of all casework
2. ensure that domestic abuse and safeguarding checks are completed and utilised to inform assessment, planning and risk management
3. improve the quality of work to assess, plan for, manage and review risk of harm
4. ensure that the interventions necessary to improve desistance and reduce reoffending and risk of harm are provided in all cases
5. ensure rehabilitation activity requirements (RAR) are started promptly and recorded correctly
6. engage with people on probation to inform service delivery.

### **London region should:**

7. ensure Lambeth PDU has sufficient staffing resource in place
8. increase quality assurance activity at a PDU level
9. improve the completion rates of accredited programmes
10. 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:**

11. consider incentives to improve recruitment and retention of staff
12. ensure that performance monitoring has a greater emphasis on the effectiveness and quality of service delivery.

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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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The inspection fieldwork in Lambeth PDU was conducted over the week beginning 15 August 2022. We inspected 42 cases where sentences and licences had commenced in the weeks commencing 17 January and 11 February 2022. We also conducted 38 interviews with probation practitioners.

Prior to 26 June 2021, probation services in this area were delivered by the NPS, London division and a private provider Management Training Company (MTC) who were awarded the CRC contract. Lambeth is one of 18 PDUs within the London probation region, which has 3 individual districts. Lambeth is managed under the South and South East London probation district. There is one prison and one approved premise located within the borough: however, no courts. During the transition to a unified service, the Lambeth teams have continued to deliver services from the current office premises.

As a region, London probation manage circa 38,950 people on probation at any one time. As at May 2022, Lambeth PDU were responsible for the management of 1089 people on probation of which 595 were subject to community orders, and 494 subject to licence supervision.

The 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 by HMPPS 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.

At the point of inspection, Lambeth PDU was operating at an amber status. Amber PDUs have 60-70 per cent of staff in place and staff are operating on average at 120 per cent or above of their target workload for 4 consecutive weeks. Under Amber status, concessions will begin to be made in respect of not completing business as usual activities and greater utilisation of a blended supervision model (for example, increased use of telephone rather than face to face reporting). All applications to move to Amber status have to be approved by Chief Probation Officer, which ensures the highest level of accountability and oversight for business-critical decision.

At the time HM Inspectorate of Probation announced this inspection, in May 2022, centrally held figures indicated the PDU had a vacancy rate of 11 per cent.<sup>2</sup> At the point of inspection figures held locally indicated these vacancy rates had increased to 27 per cent when SPO, PO and PSO vacancies were taken into consideration.<sup>3</sup> It was evident that there was insufficient resourcing across key grades of probation practitioner which meant that the PDU was having to prioritise workload to minimise the negative impact on the staff who were present and ensure public protection was not compromised.

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<sup>2</sup> Data provided by the Probation Service – London region.

<sup>3</sup> Data provided by Lambeth PDU, Probation Service – London region.

# 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.

Requires improvement

### Strengths:

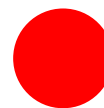
- There were effective strategic relationships with key partner agencies within the Safer Lambeth Partnership, enabling meaningful contributions which inform commissioning and joint working arrangements. Senior managers and probation practitioners were well regarded by key partner agencies.
- The head of service had a clear vision for how the PDU operated and had the support of the managers in delivering the model, and largely had buy-in from probation practitioners. Effective governance and accountability arrangements were in place. While not filtering through to the cases inspected, these were strong foundations to enable the leadership team to drive improvements in service delivery.
- The senior management team were visible and accessible to all staff. There was a positive working relationship between the head of service and head of operations. The priorities were consistent and there were clear lines of communication at both PDU and regional senior leadership level. All staff understood the priorities of both the PPF and performance measures.

### Areas for improvement:

- The head of service was clear about expectations regarding the frequency of both team meetings facilitated by SPOs and the level of supervision probation practitioners received. However, this was inconsistently applied, creating resentment and misunderstanding amongst teams at both a probation practitioner and administrator level and requires remedial action.
- Five teams had been merged into four, pending the recruitment of an additional SPO. There was insufficient blending of probation practitioners with most sitting within their residual teams and one team located on a different floor to the other three. As one probation practitioner pointedly told us "let's be honest, we don't know each other's names let alone those of CRS providers".
- Performance against key indicators was prioritised, however, the delivery of quality was not. We saw no examples of quality assurance activity outside of countersigning requirements. In some instances, even where countersigning had been given, the quality of this work was poor. Whilst training has been completed, this was not embedded in practice. There needs to be strategic and operational steer by senior managers on the need to improve quality supported by meaningful management oversight.
- There was no people on probation survey activity across the PDU to drive improvement in service delivery.

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## 1.2. Staff



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

Inadequate

### Strengths:

- Relationships in probation practitioner and administration teams appeared strong and many described being well supported by their colleagues. They used each other as a source of information regarding the management of cases and access to additional services.
- The head of service drives a performance and learning culture. There were days set aside each month for both data quality assurance and directed learning. All staff were expected to attend in-person and this was a positive framework upon which to build.

### Areas for improvement:

- Staffing levels across the PDU were insufficient. At the point of announcing the inspection centrally held figures indicated there was a vacancy rate of 11 per cent overall. At the point of inspection vacancy rates recorded locally were higher and consisted of 25 per cent for SPOs, 21 per cent for POs (which increases to 33 per cent when sickness absences and leavers in the next 30 days were taken into consideration), and 36 per cent for PSOs; a total of 27 per cent overall.<sup>4</sup>
- It was not possible to provide the level of service to effectively reduce reoffending and manage the risk of harm with this level of vacancies.
- Workload management data indicated that average workloads for PO's stood at 140 per cent of target levels, and 115 per cent for PSOs. We repeatedly saw cases inappropriately allocated to PO-grade staff when they should have been suitable for management by a PSO. Excessive caseloads meant a lack of meaningful engagement, desistance and risk management for the majority of cases inspected.
- The HM Inspectorate of Probation staff survey found 19 out of 20 respondents did not consider staffing levels sufficient within the PDU, and only three out 20 considered their workload manageable. This was slightly more positive amongst probation practitioners interviewed as part of case inspections with 10 out of 38 stating their workload was quite manageable.
- Management oversight was absent, insufficient, or ineffective in 75 per cent of cases inspected. Whilst probation practitioners told us that SPOs were available and approachable for case discussions and oversight in cases, this was not reflected in case records. This included instances where very clear directions were given by SPOs and these actions, at times relating to risk

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<sup>4</sup> Data provided by Lambeth PDU, Probation Service – London region.



management, were not completed, and there was insufficient follow-up by managers.

### 1.3. Services



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

Requires improvement

#### Strengths:

- CRS providers of education, training and employment were co-located. There were strong operational links with the Integrated Offender Management police also co-located, and with women service providers, with access to an enabling environment responding to individual need.
- Referrals into CRS provision was actioned by duty officers,<sup>5</sup> so people on probation were not needing to wait for an allocated probation practitioner before accessing services.
- Supervision for people with gang related offending was facilitated across other locations, which enabled safer reporting. There was pro-active commissioning of accommodation services for young people at high risk of serious harm within the borough.
- There were processes in place to safeguard children and young adults up to the age of 25 via the multi-agency violence and exploitation panel, removing obstructions to engagement, improving progress in cases, and facilitating disruption or preventative activity.

#### Areas for improvement:

- The completion rate for accredited programmes (other than for those individuals convicted of a sexual offence) was low at 16 per cent. Although delivery of programmes sits in the regional team, this had a direct impact on the management and outcomes for people on probation.
- The average waiting time for delivery of RAR days is 52 weeks. There was confusion amongst some staff about what RAR days consist of and how they could be utilised.
- There was no routine analysis of the data for CRS provisions. There were inconsistent referral rates across both teams and probation practitioners. Services available were not readily understood, which impacted referrals.
- The CRS personal wellbeing service was under-utilised which was a concern given that this would be appropriate for a large number of the current demographic of people on probation within Lambeth, 92 per cent of whom are male, and 21 per cent of whom are under the age of 25.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Duty officers are probation staff who on a rota basis will see people on probation in the absence of the named probation practitioner or pending allocation.

<sup>6</sup> Lambeth PDU Overview – internal document

- Whilst probation practitioners indicated that they considered they had access to the right services to both address offending behaviour and manage risk of harm in the majority of cases, this was not evidenced in practice.
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## **Resettlement work**

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### **Strengths:**

- The assessment of risk of harm to others was more frequently focussed on keeping others safe, for post release cases than for community cases.
- Key individuals in the person on probation's life were more likely to be engaged, where appropriate, to support both desistance and the effective management of risk, in post release cases than for community cases.
- Home visits, supporting the effective management of risk, were more likely to be undertaken with post release cases.

### **Areas for improvement:**

- There were no specific resettlement teams within Lambeth PDU and all custody cases were shared amongst generic teams. Many of the licence cases inspected were not allocated until post release, meaning there was a lack of contact with cases prior to release into the community. In some instances, this took a number of weeks, and even when allocated an officer, there were several changes thereafter, which is detrimental to engagement, managing risk and promoting desistance.
- Whilst there was evidence of referrals for access to some services pre-release, these were not completed by probation, and there was a general lack of communication or consistency to the work being completed.
- People on probation who were subject to post release supervision were less likely to be engaged in the assessment, planning and implementation of their sentence than those subject to community sentences.
- Assessment, planning and subsequent implementation and delivery, was less likely to focus sufficiently on effectively supporting the person on probation's desistance when they were subject to post release supervision, than when subject to community sentences.
- Analysis of protected characteristics and personal circumstances was demonstrated less frequently in post-release cases.
- Key risk of harm needs were not sufficiently addressed prior to release in the majority of cases, with this only being evidenced in one out of 11 post-release cases inspected.
- Services were often not delivered that would reduce reoffending and support desistance. We saw a lack of referral into personal wellbeing services for men, which would facilitate engagement with people on probation and offer the opportunity to build on individual strengths pre-release.

## 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

### Strengths:

- There was a framework for promoting learning through head of service briefings, teams' meetings and directed learning time which was protected for all probation practitioners.
- Direct strategic and operational actions had been taken as a result of learning from SFOs and serious incidents within the office, demonstrating a willingness to learn.
- Following recent refurbishment activity of the PDU office, the building was in a good state of repair and provided a positive environment to work from.
- There were strong strategic relationships with key stakeholders. Probation is an active partner reviewing, analysing, and improving the effectiveness of jointly delivered services.
- Understanding of the PDU's priorities and the actions to be taken under the PPF were consistent amongst all grades.

### Areas for improvement:

- The focus of analysis and review was on performance measures.
- There were limited quality assurance processes in place as a consequence of chronic short staffing for the Quality Development Officer resource at a regional level (three full-time equivalent (FTE), where target staffing levels are 18 FTE), and a lack of capacity to undertake local activity. Quality of work was not prioritised, reflected in the cases we inspected.
- The framework for accountability against performance measures does not incorporate the quality of casework in order to drive improvements in addressing offending behaviour and managing risk of harm.
- Information was not requested or exchanged with partners as necessary to ensure that full risk and needs of the people on probation were understood. This related to both safeguarding and children services enquiries. There was an agreed protocol for requests from the Metropolitan Police, but staff did not utilise these routinely to inform assessments and risk management. Returns were not consistently received.
- Probation practitioners advised that they had easy access to children services information. However, we saw that this was not requested when required in most cases inspected, suggesting a lack of awareness of when and why this exchange would be appropriate.

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## Feedback from people on probation

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### Overview

User Voice, working with HM Inspectorate of Probation, made contact with 41 people on probation as part of this inspection. Forty of the respondents were male, with one female responding. The majority of respondents were black, Asian or minority ethnic (23 out of 41), and 18 respondents were white or white British.

### Strengths

- 34 out of 41 respondents said they had been able to contact their probation practitioner when needed, which is important for building a constructive relationship. Thirty-four out of 41 respondents indicated they were able to have conversations in private with their officer when required.
- Most people on probation who we spoke to said they felt safe accessing the probation office, which, given the high level of violent crime and group-based offending, is positive.
- 26 out of 41 respondents, said they had a positive experience with reception at Lambeth PDU office. We saw positive engagement with people on probation by reception staff whilst on inspection.

### Areas for improvement

- Relationships between people on probation and probation practitioners appeared generally poor, with two out of three people interviewed indicating they generally had a negative experience with their officer. We were told:

*“can they please start following through with their promises and make more effort to understand the issues people face. I know they are not staffed properly and probably have too many clients, but they are failing everyone at the moment.”*

- There was a significant lack of engagement with people on probation, 33 out of 41 respondents did not feel their views about being on probation had been asked for and there was no evidence at a PDU level of engagement activity.
- Disappointingly, only 11 out of 41 respondents felt that probation had helped them access services they needed. It was recognised throughout the inspection that having some CRS provisions based on site, or nearby, did help with referral and engagement processes although not all available services were being used to their full advantage. This was reflected in the feedback received as one person told us:

*“They are just letting me down”.*

- Further to this, only five out of 41 respondents felt they were able to access services relevant to their personal needs. This would suggest that either the full range of services to support individual needs are not available or alternatively not advertised sufficiently to ensure that people on probation can make informed choices about accessing additional services.

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## Diversity and inclusion

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### Strengths:

- The Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EDIB) roadmap for 2023 was supported by the 2021/2022 plan, with diversity being managed at a regional level. Implementation of the plan was led by the Bridging the Divide committee, overseen by the equalities board.
- Evidence was provided of staff engagement events focussed on EDIB learning across the PDU. These included interactive events to explore Black History Month and increase understanding of Gypsy Roma and Traveller communities.
- With the exception of gender, the workforce reflected the diversity of those subject to probation supervision, with 52 per cent of the workforce being black, Asian, or minority ethnic (69 per cent of people on probation in Lambeth identifying as black, Asian, or minority ethnic) and 15 per cent of staff having a declared disability (with 20 per cent of people on probation in Lambeth declaring a disability).


### Areas for improvement:

- Whilst reference was made to EDIB being 'integral' to Lambeth PDU there was limited evidence of how this was being delivered in practice.
- The PDU action plan speaks to integrating EDIB approaches across key areas of practice and learning, however, lacked detail of how this will be achieved.
- There was no people plan at PDU level to support the regional initiatives to tackle discrimination. We did not see an agreed approach to ensuring that the needs of people on probation were being met outside of those services provided via CRS and co-commissioned with partners.
- Although there were identified Single Point of Contacts (SPOCs) for Equality and Diversity across the PDU, we saw limited demonstration of how these SPOCs took forward the EDIB agenda.
- Whilst there was an overview given regarding caseload diversity, type of offending and local socio-demographics, there was no data presented to demonstrate that disproportionality is routinely analysed across the PDU.
- Protected and personal characteristics were not routinely analysed to a sufficient standard in order to understand how such characteristics would impact on an individual's ability to comply and engage with service delivery.
- The views of people on probation were not routinely sought and there was no evidence of people with lived experience being used as mentors, volunteers or offered an opportunity of paid employment within the PDU.

## 2. Court work and case supervision

The pre-sentence information and advice provided to court supports its decision-making.	Not applicable
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This standard was not inspected. There is no court located within Lambeth and there were no pre-sentence reports prepared within the inspected PDU.

<b>2.2. Assessment</b>	
Assessment is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the person on probation.	Inadequate

Our rating<sup>7</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?	43%
Does assessment focus sufficiently on the factors linked to offending and desistance?	38%
Does assessment focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	12%

Lambeth PDU is rated as 'Inadequate' for assessment as the lowest score out of the three key questions was 12 per cent.

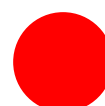
### Areas for improvement:

- There was a lack of meaningful involvement with people on probation regarding the assessment of their risk and need, with their views only being taken into account in 52 per cent of cases. This was supported by what User Voice were told in terms of the lack of engagement between probation practitioners and people on probation.
- Concerningly, the lowest score from the key questions relates to whether there was sufficient focus on keeping other people safe, with this only being demonstrated in a minority of cases. This meant that the necessary arrangements were not in place to manage the risk of harm posed and keep people safe.

<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 at <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/inspections/lambethpdu/>.

- The level of risk of serious harm was only correctly assessed in 29 out of 38 cases. We found that the risk of serious harm was understated, with eight cases being assessed at a higher level of risk of serious harm by inspectors than initially assessed by probation practitioners. This impacts the necessary management arrangements to safely address the risk posed.
- Domestic abuse and child safeguarding enquiries were undertaken in too few cases. Therefore, assessments were made on incomplete information and potential risks to others were not fully considered.

## 2.3. Planning



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

Inadequate

Our rating<sup>8</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?	40%
Does planning focus sufficiently on reducing reoffending and supporting desistance?	31%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	24%

Lambeth PDU is rated as 'Inadequate' for planning as the lowest score out of the three key questions was 24 per cent.

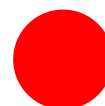
### Areas for improvement:

- Diversity and personal characteristics were insufficiently considered when planning how the sentence would be managed. We did see pockets of good practice to manage individual circumstances. However, these were outweighed by examples of limited flexibility and understanding afforded by the probation practitioner to support an individual's engagement with their order or licence. In part, this was due to high workloads and limited scope for rearranging appointments. There were also wider concerns in respect of probation practitioners knowing how to manage issues of diversity and personal characteristics.

<sup>8</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 at <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/inspections/lambethpdu/>.

- Planning failed to prioritise sufficiently the factors most critical in reducing reoffending and supporting desistance. We saw a lack of quality in assessments overall, including sentence planning, and this had a direct impact on the effectiveness of supervision.
- Contingency planning to manage identified risks was poor. There was insufficient contact with other agencies to support the management of risk of serious harm in 71 per cent of cases. In interviews probation practitioners did not always fully understand the complexities of the cases they were managing, resulting in gaps in practice and safeguarding measures.

## 2.4. Implementation and delivery



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

**Inadequate**

Our rating<sup>9</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'
<b>Is the sentence or post-custody period implemented effectively with a focus on engaging the person on probation?</b>	38%
<b>Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support desistance?</b>	26%
<b>Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?</b>	<b>12%</b>

Lambeth PDU is rated as 'Inadequate' for implementation and delivery as the lowest score out of the three key questions was 12 per cent.

### Areas for improvement:

- There were unacceptable delays in the allocation of cases. This impacted negatively on all aspects of implementation and delivery.
- Over half of the cases inspected had more than one probation practitioner allocated to them since the start of their order or licence, having a negative effect on the working relationship and continuity. Probation practitioners struggled with high levels of allocations and often failed to take into account previous events or behaviour, leading to insufficient management of the case going forward.

<sup>9</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. Full data and further information about inspection methodology is available in the data workbook for this inspection at <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/inspections/lambethpdu/>.



- Involvement of other agencies to address offending behaviour and manage and minimise the risk of harm to others was insufficiently coordinated in the majority of cases, often leaving probation practitioners managing cases in isolation. This is disappointing, given the examples we saw of positive joint working arrangements, including with CRS providers.
- There was an absence of home visits undertaken to inform risk assessments, even where these were deemed necessary for the effective management of risk of serious harm. Home visits allow probation practitioners access to additional evidence and an opportunity to engage with other people in the lives of people on probation, but these opportunities were not utilised.

## 2.5. Reviewing



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

Inadequate

Our rating<sup>10</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>	36%
<b>Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting desistance?</b>	21%
<b>Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?</b>	<b>14%</b>

Lambeth PDU is rated as 'Inadequate' for reviewing as the lowest score out of the three key questions was 14 per cent.

### Areas for improvement:

- Whilst managers were visible in the office and appeared to be in regular dialogue with probation practitioners, management oversight of cases was insufficient, ineffective or absent in 75 per cent of cases. Even where we did see examples of direct instructions from managers to probation practitioners, these actions were often left uncompleted. There was a lack of subsequent follow-up to ensure cases were being managed appropriately.
- There was a lack of engagement with people on probation when reviewing their progress. Barriers to compliance were not explored sufficiently in just under 50 per cent of the cases where it would have been suitable to do so.

<sup>10</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.

- Insufficient attention was paid to both the risk of reoffending and risk of serious harm when reviewing cases. This perpetuates previously flawed initial assessments and means that there remains a lack of understanding of what is required to adequately support people towards change whilst managing the risk of serious harm they pose.
- Evidence of changes in factors relating to risk of serious harm did not trigger sufficient adjustments to the ongoing plan of work in the majority of cases. Which meant that necessary work was not being carried out in accordance with the changes.

## 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%

### Strengths:

- Accommodation status, that is, residing in settled or transient accommodation was positive with 36 out of 41 cases at the start of their order or release on licence having somewhere to stay. Locally there had been positive investment made through both the local authority and Safer Lambeth Partnership in the accommodation provision and also the drive to hit performance targets of ensuring accommodation at the point of release from custody.
- Inspectors assessed that accommodation needs impacted on the offending behaviour in 13 cases. At the point of inspection, improvements to accommodation were seen in six cases, reflecting stability and development of protective factors.

### Areas for improvement:

- Overall, there was limited demonstration of improvements in the factors most closely linked to offending, with improved outcomes only being demonstrated in six of the 41 cases inspected. This was reflective of what was seen across both assessment and planning activity, reaffirming that without appropriate assessment of needs and subsequent planning to support change, positive outcomes are less likely to be achieved.
- Reduction in factors most closely linked to risk of harm to others was also poor. An improvement was only evidenced in four out of 41 cases. At the point of assessment, thinking and behaviour was identified as a relevant

factor in 36 cases. However, sufficient improvement was only seen in six cases.

- There was a slight improvement in the number of people on probation in full-time employment since the start of their supervision. However, the majority of cases either remained unemployed and not engaged in training, or their education, training and employment status was unclear from the records.
- Eight people were convicted of further offences, and in half of the cases inspected, there was insufficient compliance, also demonstrated in 62 per cent of cases not being sufficiently engaged in the delivery of the sentence.

## 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://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/glossary)