



HM Inspectorate  
of Probation

An inspection of probation services in:  
**Ealing and Hillingdon PDU**  
The Probation Service – London region

HM Inspectorate of Probation, October 2022



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## Acknowledgements

This inspection was led by HM Inspector Wendy Martin, 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

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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 probation services within Ealing and Hillingdon since the unification of the Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) and National Probation Services (NPS) in June 2021. The overall quality of work delivered to manage people on probation was insufficient across all five of our standards for casework, with the PDU being rated as 'Inadequate'.

Although staff were positive about the support received from managers and senior leaders, these efforts were not translating into sufficient work being delivered with people on probation and to keep communities safe.

In common with every PDU we have inspected to date, staffing levels were insufficient. The overall vacancy rate at the point of the inspection announcement was 21 per cent. Vacancy rates within administrative grades and Probation Services Officers (PSOs) were much worse and particularly acute, and this position is clearly unsustainable. The PSO vacancy rate at the time of inspection was 41 per cent. These critical gaps are significantly impacting not only the quality of work, but also the morale of staff within the PDU which could, if left unchecked, lead to even more staff leaving.

As with other recent inspections we were particularly concerned about the poor quality of work to assess and manage the risks that people on probation may present to the wider community. Only 22 per cent of cases we inspected were sufficient in terms of the services delivered to effectively support the safety of other people and assessments around risk of harm were not much better. A national approach is needed to improve this critical aspect of probation practice.

Resourcing challenges were also apparent to people on probation in this PDU. Over half of those interviewed on our behalf by User Voice said that there were no positives to report about their experience of probation services in Ealing and Hillingdon. This needs to improve.

While there remains much work still to be done and improvements are needed, the leaders of this PDU recognise they are on a journey of recovery from the impacts of both the Covid-19 pandemic and the unification of NPS and CRC services in London in the summer of 2021. While Ealing and Hillingdon PDU is rated as 'Inadequate' overall, there is evidence that the foundations are starting to form to support the required improvement. This will only be possible however, if the appropriate regional and national support is in place to address staffing and other local needs.



**Justin Russell**

Chief Inspector of Probation

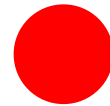
## Ratings

**Ealing and Hillingdon PDU**  
Fieldwork started August 2022

Score **3/27**

**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

2.1 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>

### **Ealing and Hillingdon PDU 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 checks 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 people on probation's risk assessment and sentence plans
6. ensure staff responsible 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.

### **London region should**

8. ensure priorities are clearly communicated and understood by probation practitioners and middle managers.

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

9. consider incentives to improve recruitment and staff retention
10. improve the support provided to sites assessed as 'red' under the Prioritising Probation Framework (PPF)
11. ensure sufficient face-to-face and onsite delivery is undertaken to provide effective supervision and risk management of people on probation.

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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 Ealing and Hillingdon PDU over the period of a week, beginning 15 August 2022 and ending 19 August 2022. We inspected 50 cases where sentences and licences had commenced between 10 January 2022 and 11 February 2022. We also conducted interviews with 37 probation practitioners and gained feedback from a total of 82 people on probation.

The Ealing and Hillingdon PDU is one of 18 PDUs within the London probation region and is managed under the West/North West London probation district. The PDU delivers probation work across three probation offices and two magistrates' courts. It is one of the biggest PDUs in London and covers two London boroughs. This, in itself, presents a number of challenges, not least the fact that it duplicates a lot of partnership meetings both at strategic and operational level. Furthermore, the boroughs differ in a number of ways, with Ealing being more metropolitan and Hillingdon being more suburban. That said, reoffending rates appear similar across both boroughs. Figures for October 2019 to September 2020 indicate proven reoffending rates of 25.8 per cent across Ealing and 26.1 per cent for Hillingdon.

London probation region are responsible for the supervision of almost 40,000 people on probation at any one time. This represents approximately 10 per cent of the national probation caseload. At the point this inspection was announced in May 2022, the Ealing and Hillingdon PDU was responsible for the management of a total of 807 people on probation subject to community orders and 739 people on probation subject to licence supervision. Almost half of the caseload are from black, Asian and minority ethnic groups (46 per cent), with just over six per cent being female.

The PDU head was previously employed by the NPS as head of the same local area for some 18 months. For many regions, this would be considered relatively new. However, for London, we were told that this was considered experienced. The deputy PDU head had been in the post since November 2021, having previously worked for the CRC in the area. Together, therefore, they brought a breadth of experience to the PDU.

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 pandemic restrictions, there continues to be a significant business risk around levels of staffing.

At the point of inspection, and since June 2022, Ealing and Hillingdon PDU was operating under 'red' status on the PPF. They had previously operated as an 'amber' status since February 2022. Red status 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 as well as those with imminent and escalating risk of harm and services to Court. Ealing and

Hillingdon PDU, at the time of the inspection announcement, had a 21 per cent vacancy rate. Concerningly, the rates were 34 per cent for Senior Probation Officers (SPOs), 64 per cent for PSOs, 53 per cent for court staff and eight per cent for Probation Officers (PO), some of the critical grades delivering frontline services.

# 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:

- The strong relationships at a senior level within the PDU were supported by effective arrangements with key strategic partners. This was proving useful in working across partnerships and they were well respected in these forums.
- The PDU head had made a significant effort to address HR issues that had been evident for some years, with a new priority in the delivery plan focusing on professionalism. This has been addressed robustly with support from the PDU management team.
- Despite the clear resourcing challenges faced by this PDU, leaders were developing positive foundations on which to build, and strengthening relationships with external partners. Though the impact of these actions were not seen in the cases we inspected, we encourage the leadership to continue creating opportunities and drive tangible improvements in practice.

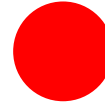
### Areas for improvement:

- As a result of the staffing shortages, there was little evidence that the PDU was managing the demand for services to an acceptable level, reflected in the domain two ratings of 'Inadequate'.
- The culture of the PDU was not cohesive; court staff felt separated from the PDU, and practitioners reported feeling disconnected with the region. Some offices have changed little in their staffing profile since unification and there is further work required to fully integrate the teams.
- The PDU had been assessed as 'red' status since June 2022 and 'amber' status previously. Changes in the regional leadership team meant a consistent level of enhanced support and oversight was not in place, though it was stabilising at the time of inspection. While senior and middle managers were clear about what should be prioritised under the prioritising probation framework (PPF), inspectors heard some staff were reluctant to adhere to it as they felt it compromised the quality-of-service delivery.
- The court teams were under resourced, a common theme with other areas of the business. Sentencers surveyed reported a lack of confidence in the quality of reports received, with absence of information, inconsistency in quality of reports and staff not always present in courts. This was further demonstrated by the domain two data for court work being assessed as 'Inadequate'.



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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:

- Many staff in the PDU had been in their posts for some time and there was some sense of camaraderie despite the significant challenges faced. Most staff reported receiving frequent supervision (13 out of 17) in our staff survey.
- The workforce adequately reflected the diversity of the local population in terms of ethnicity, however, in common with much of probation delivery, it was over-represented by women and lacking people with lived experience.
- Senior PDU leaders were largely described as accessible and visible, and staff reported feeling supported, within the caveat of unmanageable workloads. The reward and recognition process had been utilised regularly as a way of thanking staff working in the challenging environment in which the PDU finds itself.

### Areas for improvement:

- Staffing levels were insufficient. At the time the inspection was announced, the total PDU vacancy rate was 21 per cent and rose to 40.1 per cent during the fieldwork. The concern being that the majority are in roles providing frontline services. In our staff survey, all the 19 respondents said staffing levels were 'not that' or 'not at all sufficient'.
- During the twelve months prior to the announcement of this inspection, 16 per cent of staff had left the PDU. Staff we spoke to described a churn of staff, largely due to workloads or staff leaving for better-paid positions in partner agencies.
- The duty rota system across offices was a source of frustration among staff. They reported that at least one of the three days they were in the office was taken up with duty tasks rather than focusing on their own caseloads.
- Cases were not always held by staff with the appropriate experience and training. Legacy CRC staff without appropriate training to supervise those convicted of sexual offences were allocated such cases, and Newly-Qualified Officers (NQOs) were allocated extremely complex and challenging cases, within six months of qualification.
- Sickness levels across the PDU were slightly higher than the regional average, with 18 days lost to sickness per person per year. Sickness levels led to an even greater burden on the PDU given the already stretched resources.

### 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:

- The PDU had excellent levels of referrals to Commissioned Rehabilitative Services (CRS) across all relevant pathways. They were performing particularly well when compared across other London PDUs, with 919 referrals between June 2021 and June 2022, resulting in 202 completions and a further 415 instances where interventions were ongoing.
- PDU staff had a good awareness of the range of services available and understood the referral processes. Other local services were plentiful, with strong strategic relationships, particularly in the borough of Ealing.
- Of the 37 interviews conducted about the inspected cases, 29 probation practitioners (78 per cent) said they had access to appropriate services, in-house, or through other agencies, to meet the needs and risks of individuals.
- There was an embedded process in place to support those transitioning from youth to adult provision. Women's services under the CRS model, delivered by Minerva, were well regarded by staff and partners with high referral rates.
- In our User Voice survey of people on probation, only a third said they had received appropriate services from probation.
- Strategic relationships with most partners were reported positively, both by the PDU leaders and external partners. The PDU head and deputy had an active role in a range of multi-agency forums. Where resources were an issue and prevented attendance at meetings, measures were in place appropriately supporting partnership work.

#### Areas for improvement:

- Despite CRS referrals and access to other services, the results of this were not seen in the management of desistance and risk of harm in the cases inspected. Given the suite of services available, it was disappointing that there was little meaningful intervention work being undertaken. In 64 per cent of these cases, services did not effectively support desistance.
- Referrals need to be monitored, ensuring required services are being delivered and analysed through assessments and reviewing practice.
- The provision of services outside of CRS are not consistent across the PDU and subsequently, the strategic and operational relationships are less well developed in Hillingdon than in Ealing.
- Relationships with the Metropolitan Police to manage the risk of harm and share key risk information were challenging and not unique to this PDU.

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## **Resettlement work**

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### **Strengths:**

- Reviewing by probation practitioners in post-release cases evidenced a better level of meaningful involvement and engagement with the person on probation than community cases did. Which reflects the priority outlined in the PPF that should be given to people being released from custody.

### **Areas for improvement:**

- Too often, there was insufficient contact with cases prior to their release from custody, despite this being a key opportunity to start the period of supervision well and set a good foundation for further work.
- Over a quarter of cases did not have appropriate pre-release contact when it was required and almost a third (32 per cent) did not have elements of the sentence commenced promptly enough. This was further supported by comments in our interviews with probation staff and with people on probation. We heard that on many occasions people on probation had turned up on their day of release from custody, yet they had not been expected or contact planned.
- In over a third of post-release cases assessed (39 per cent), 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.
- The quality of work delivered in resettlement cases, was similarly poor across the board to community cases. Once released, the level of priority shifted to others being released or other areas.
- In almost half (43 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.

## 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:

- The offices, while not ideal, provided three separate sites (and two courts) for people on probation to access. Over half of those people on probation surveyed said they felt that probation was accessible.
- Some staff reported that having improved IT (e.g. their own laptops) and the hybrid working arrangements had a positive impact on their workload and work/life balance. Staff have access to mobile phones and laptops which support remote working. Most probation practitioners work in the office for three days per week, where they focus on contact with people on probation, and this arrangement supports collaborative working with colleagues.
- Policies and guidance are coordinated and reviewed appropriately at local and regional level. Policies are stored on the service's EQuIP/intranet platform and all staff have easy access to them. However, some staff suggested that they did not find the navigation of the system particularly user friendly.
- In our survey of staff, when asked whether change was communicated and implemented effectively, of the 17 people who participated 15 answered 'always' or 'most of the time'.

### Areas for improvement:

- In our survey of probation practitioners 12 out of 17 said that they felt that appropriate attention was given to their safety at work. However, while on site, staff reported feeling unsafe working in the Acton building, it being the only one of the five delivery sites without a security presence.
- Two of the three main sentence management sites were in a poor state of repair; however, the Uxbridge building is managed by HM Courts & Tribunals Service, and therefore facilities management is not in the remit of the PDU. In some instances, staff talked about issues with the front door in Hillingdon and lift facilities in Ealing which gave concern in terms of safety and accessibility.
- Staff were aware of local and regional briefings and communications, but most we spoke to felt that these did not meet their needs or provide opportunity for questions, particularly the case for regional communications.
- Staff and partners noted that the location of the PDU, on the edge of the London region, presented some challenges to the retention of staff, due to increased travel times and the cost of commuting from other areas of the capital.
- Information was not always exchanged with partners and other key stakeholders as necessary, nor were information requests always completed by staff of the appropriate grade. Case administrators regularly undertook police and children's services enquiries without the necessary information to

understand what information was being requested. Staff were particularly frustrated by the challenges of requesting domestic abuse information from the Metropolitan Police. Some probation practitioners had stopped carrying out what they considered to be a time-intensive process, knowing the information would not be provided. This raised 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

User Voice, working with HM Inspectorate of Probation, had contact with 82 people on probation, supervised by the PDU. Response rates from people who identified as being from Black, Asian groups broadly represented the overall PDU caseload (approximately half). Women, however, were overrepresented in the User Voice sample. Approximately 20 per cent were from women compared to their representation of six per cent in the overall caseload.

### Strengths:

- Probation practitioners were largely accessible to people on probation with over half of respondents (56 out of 82) being able to contact their probation practitioner when needed. The majority of respondents said they were able to have conversations in private with their probation practitioner when required (75 out of 82).
- Probation offices appeared appropriately accessible in terms of travel and safety, 57 out of 82 said that their office was accessible, and 70 out of 82 said that they felt safe. Almost half of respondents who felt that they need to access services said that probation had enabled them to do so (27 out of 60).

### Areas for improvement:

- There was a lack of engagement with people on probation. Sixty-two out of 82 respondents did not feel their views had been asked for, and the PDU recognised that this was an area of development. Their views were not used to determine what services were delivered. This was a missed opportunity to appropriately consider the needs of those best placed to give a view.
- Over half of those asked said that there were no positives about their experience of probation services in Ealing and Hillingdon (43 out of 82).
- There was a sense in our responses from people on probation that they were all too aware of the resourcing issues within the PDU and this had an impact on their supervision. One said, *"they don't want to listen to my issues because that will give them work"* and another said, *"officers are sick all the time. Why is that? Are they overworked and can't cope? Employ more of us"*.
- Inconsistent reporting arrangements and seeing different officers were both themes identified as being frustrating for some respondents. This respondent was indicative of many similar views when they said, *"all I get is my next appointment which then get[s] changed last minute anyway sometimes for days and times they know I can't do but they book them in anyway."*

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## **Diversity and inclusion**

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### **Strengths:**

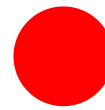
- Diversity was managed at a regional level, the Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging roadmap for 2023 is supported by the 2021/22 plan. The Bridging the Divide committee meets monthly, and involves diversity and inclusion leaders and champions, and each protected characteristic has a senior leader allocated.
- The current workforce in Ealing and Hillingdon PDU adequately reflects the diversity of the local population in terms of ethnicity.
- The PDU lead said that, as a black staff member, they had been particularly encouraged to apply for a senior management role, and he felt the region was very focused on the diversity needs of staff.

### **Areas for improvement:**

- The PDU management team recognised that in an environment of competing priorities and a lack of staff, there had been insufficient focus on work on diversity in terms of both staff and those under probation supervision.
- While diversity data is available regionally, the PDU had yet to fully understand its impact on their own PDU, including issues of disproportionality in relation to referrals, breaches, and engagement.
- In 45 per cent of the cases we assessed, assessment did not analyse the protected characteristics of the individual and consider the impact of these on their ability to comply and engage with service delivery.
- In 45 per cent of cases inspected, planning did not take sufficient account of the diversity factors of the individual which may affect engagement and compliance.

## 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>2</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?	29%

#### Strengths:

- There was evidence of some court reports being appropriately personalised and that they had considered a variety of information sources sufficiently well. Most reports inspected explored individuals' motivation and ability to change sufficiently well, allowing individualised proposals to be considered.
- In the majority of reports, we assessed (15 out of 16), the individual was meaningfully involved in the preparation of the report, and their views were considered. Consideration of diversity needs, and personal circumstances was better in court work than in other areas of case management, with this being seen in almost two-thirds of the inspected reports.

#### Areas for improvement:

- Many reports failed to sufficiently analyse information when available, leading to sentencing proposals based on limited analysis.
- Appropriate domestic abuse and safeguarding enquiries were often not made, and where they were, were not always returned at the point of sentence. Without this, it was questionable that all sentences were appropriate.
- Resourcing issues were evident within court teams, resulting in poor service delivery and sentencers lacking confidence, demonstrated in the overall rating of 'Inadequate'. While only small numbers of sentencers responded to our survey, when asked "How well do probation staffing and workload levels in court support the delivery of a high-quality service for people on probation?"; four out of six sentencers said "Not that well" or "Not at all well".

<sup>2</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 annexe](#).



## 2.2. Assessment



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

Inadequate

Our rating<sup>3</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?	50%
Does assessment focus sufficiently on the factors linked to offending and desistance?	48%
Does assessment focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	26%

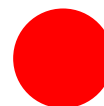
Ealing and Hillingdon PDU is rated as 'Inadequate' for assessment as the lowest score out of the three key questions was 26 per cent. Concerningly, this lowest score relates to whether there was sufficient focus on keeping other people safe, with this only being demonstrated in a small minority of cases, regardless of sentence type.

### Areas for improvement:

- Overall assessments were poor. Half of the cases did not engage the person on probation well (50 per cent) or focus sufficiently well on desistance (52 percent). Without strong assessments and a full understanding of risk and need it is difficult to know what probation practitioners were focusing on throughout the period of supervision.
- Almost three quarters of cases did not appropriately assess or identify risk factors for the person on probation, and thus insufficient focus was given to this key area of work.
- Child safeguarding and domestic abuse information sharing did not always take place when it should have. This was largely because of challenges with information sharing with Police. While one reason is ineffective relationships with other agencies, some staff were no longer making the enquiries. Where information exchange did take place, it was not appropriately analysed or used to inform assessments in too many cases.
- Assessments form the basis on which future work should be undertaken. In the absence of appropriate assessments, it is perhaps unsurprising that this led to poor delivery of work throughout in the inspected cases.

<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 annexe](#).

## 2.3. Planning



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

Inadequate

Our rating<sup>4</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?	52%
Does planning focus sufficiently on reducing reoffending and supporting desistance?	62%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	40%

Ealing and Hillingdon PDU is rated as 'Inadequate' for planning as the lowest score out of the three key questions was 40 per cent. As with all areas of our case inspection, the lowest score relates to whether there was sufficient focus on keeping other people safe. However, for planning this was demonstrated more often than for assessing, reviewing and implementation and delivery.

### Strengths:

- While still rated as 'Inadequate', in our inspected cases, plans were the strongest area across all three key questions, when compared to assessment, implementation and delivery and review, regardless of sentence type.
- The majority of plans appropriately considered the individuals motivation and ability to change with a focus on supporting desistance.
- Approximately half of the plans appropriately engaged the person on probation and considered their diversity and individual needs sufficiently well.

### Areas for improvement:

- Too often, plans did not sufficiently consider contingency arrangements to respond to changes in risk or other incidents. In 23 out of 43 cases inspected where we assessed this was required, it was absent or insufficient. Which meant if something went wrong, contingency plans were not effective.
- Plans often failed to consider how other agencies could and should be involved in the delivery of work both to reduce reoffending and even more importantly, to manage risk of harm.

<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 annexe](#).

## 2.4. Implementation and delivery



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

Our rating<sup>5</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?	38%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support desistance?	36%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?	22%

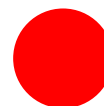
Ealing and Hillingdon PDU is rated as 'Inadequate' for implementation and delivery as the lowest score out of the three key questions was a woeful 22 per cent. As with all areas of our case inspection, the lowest score relates to whether there was sufficient focus on keeping other people safe.

### Areas for improvement:

- Some low and medium risk of harm cases were managed via a duty rota system, where contact was inconsistent, and no meaningful work undertaken. These cases were not allocated to an individual practitioner and largely came from staff who were on long term sick or had left. Some work had been undertaken to reduce these numbers. However, with impending further resignations, it was likely that this cohort of cases would grow further.
- Home visits were not completed often enough, despite the significant contribution that they can make in the identification of risk factors and engagement of individuals. While it is recognised that under the PPF such visits were not prioritised, they would have benefited from being undertaken.
- Almost a third of the cases inspected had more than one probation practitioner allocated to them since the start of their order or licence. This impacted negatively on both the working relationship and continuity. Probation practitioners struggled with high levels of allocations and often failed to consider previous events or behaviour when allocated new cases, leading to insufficient management of the case going forward.
- Too often, cases had not received the appropriate level of management oversight to support both the probation practitioner, and ultimately the person on probation. In 30 out of the 42 cases where we assessed that management oversight was required, it had not happened.

<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 annexe](#).

## 2.5. Reviewing



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

**Inadequate**

Our rating<sup>6</sup> for reviewing is based on the percentage of cases we inspected being judged satisfactory against three key questions:

Key question	Percentage 'Yes'
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the compliance and engagement of the person on probation?	46%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting desistance?	36%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	<b>26%</b>

Ealing and Hillingdon PDU is rated as 'Inadequate' for reviewing as the lowest score out of the three key questions was 26 per cent. As with all areas of our case inspection, the lowest score relates to whether there was sufficient focus on keeping other people safe.

### Areas for improvement:

- Reviewing did not sufficiently focus on keeping other people safe in almost three-quarters of cases. This may, at least in part, be due to a greater focus being given to higher-risk cases and other areas of case management under the PPF. Low and medium risk cases formed the majority of the overall cohort of inspected cases.
- While a formal review is not always needed to demonstrate a review of work undertaken, it was disappointing to find that in 26 out of 40 cases where it was required, no written review had been completed.
- People on probation were not routinely involved in a review of the work undertaken, and this was not evident in over half of cases. This was a missed opportunity to take stock of progress made, acknowledge positive change, and engage the person on probation in the identification of future work.

<sup>6</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>	36%

### Strengths:

- Relationships with other agencies, to support desistance through access to mainstream services, were reported positively by both probation and service providers.
- Compliance was positive in nearly two thirds of cases inspected, this was often evidenced through the individual's levels of engagement and motivation to comply with requirements and appointments.

### Areas for improvement:

- Despite positive relationships between probation and local services, this had not translated into positive outcomes for people on probation in Ealing and Hillingdon.
- Local 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. Early outcomes did not demonstrate sufficient progress in 20 of 50 inspected cases.
- Inspectors identified the needs and risks of individuals from the point of sentence, finding that in almost half of the inspected cases (24 out of 50), there had been no progress in 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 seen in too few cases (30 of 50 cases).
- The PDU was not appropriately managing the enforcement of cases in too many cases. Breach action was not taken as appropriate in almost half of the cases where it was assessed that it was required.

## 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, using the following link:

[Ealing and Hillingdon PDU Data Workbook](#)

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)