



HM Inspectorate
of Probation

An inspection of probation services in:
South Tyneside and Gateshead PDU
The Probation Service – North East region

HM Inspectorate of Probation, December 2022



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The role of HM Inspectorate of Probation

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

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

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

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Foreword

This was the first Probation Delivery Unit (PDU) inspection of probation services in South Tyneside and Gateshead since the unification of the Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) and National Probation Service (NPS) in June 2021. We are pleased to be able to report that this PDU has been rated as 'Good' overall, which is the first PDU to have received this positive rating since we commenced this inspection programme of the newly unified service in autumn 2021. In particular, the quality of court work was impressive, and assessment and planning in the majority of casework was strong.

Despite carrying some vacancies, it was positive to see that the staffing picture overall was much healthier than in other PDUs we have inspected to date.

A credible plan is in place for newly qualified Probation Officers (POs) to be placed into vacant posts within the next year, and probation practitioners generally have reasonable caseloads. This backdrop of solid staffing, committed and engaged staff, and a particularly impressive middle-manager group, translated into some encouraging work with people on probation. Our inspection of casework identified a clear pattern of probation practitioners focused on building engagement and planning to address factors linked to desistance from crime.

We were pleased to find that a great deal of work has gone into developing a cohesive, single culture across the two offices of the PDU. Middle managers in particular deserve credit for building a supportive and industrious environment in which to work and a pleasant place for people on probation to report.

Court work conducted within the PDU was especially impressive.

A skilled team of probation practitioners, working under the leadership of a Senior Probation Officer (SPO), are routinely delivering analytical and helpful reports to sentencers. Unlike other areas we have inspected, there was rapid and straightforward access to both police and children's services, which enabled probation practitioners to use information about potential risks from these partners to inform their recommendations and assessments.

Areas that need to be improved include work to manage risk of harm which was consistently less effective than work to engage with people on probation. And while probation practitioners are motivated and passionate about their work, we were concerned that relatively poor practice was concentrated among Probation Services Officers (PSOs) and trainees studying for the Professional Qualification in Probation (PQiP). There is work for the PDU, in collaboration with the region, to enhance the skills of PSOs and assure itself that PQiP trainees are equipped to produce the required standard of work.

At a strategic level, senior leaders need to analyse the diversity needs of people on probation and understand where gaps exist in the provision of services. Clear communication is needed to help staff understand the PDU's vision and priorities, and what relevance these have to their work.

Overall, the PDU should be proud of the outcome of this inspection. The PDU has the capability to deliver on the recommendations made in this report and we trust that it will continue its good work in delivering effective probation practice.



Justin Russell

Chief Inspector of Probation

Ratings

South Tyneside and Gateshead

Fieldwork started October 2022

Score **15/27**

Overall rating

Good



1. Organisational delivery

1.1 Leadership

Good



1.2 Staff

Good



1.3 Services

Requires improvement



1.4 Information and facilities

Requires improvement



2. Court work and case supervision

2.1 Court work

Outstanding



2.2 Assessment

Good



2.3 Planning

Good



2.4 Implementation and delivery

Requires improvement



2.5 Reviewing

Requires improvement



Recommendations

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

South Tyneside and Gateshead PDU should:

1. ensure that priorities are communicated clearly to, and understood by, probation practitioners and middle managers
2. conduct a strategic analysis into the needs of people on probation and develop a strategy for addressing local diversity issues
3. improve contingency planning and delivery on medium and high-risk cases
4. ensure that enquiries into domestic abuse and child safeguarding are made on all cases and used to inform assessments of risk
5. ensure that the interventions necessary to reduce reoffending and risk of harm are delivered in all cases
6. ensure that sufficient arrangements are in place to effectively oversee the quality of casework by PQiP trainees and PSOs.

North East region should:

7. ensure that PSOs have sufficient skills, knowledge and experience to adequately assess, plan, work with and review risk of harm to others.

HM Prison and Probation Service should:

8. ensure that commissioned rehabilitative service (CRS) provision meets the needs of people on probation
9. review arrangements for managing and assuring the quality of work done by PQiPs to keep people safe
10. provide further training for probation practitioners on the delivery of approved toolkits and monitor rates of their use
11. carry out repairs to the lift at the South Shields office and install suitable internet connections at both of the PDU's offices.

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

Background

We conducted fieldwork in South Tyneside and Gateshead PDU in the week beginning 17 October 2022. We inspected 35 cases where sentences and licences had commenced between 07 March and 14 April 2022. We also interviewed 23 probation practitioners and gained feedback from 93 people on probation.

South Tyneside and Gateshead is one of seven PDUs in the North East region of The Probation Service. It operates from two offices in South Shields and Gateshead and has a courts team of ten staff which provides services to Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland magistrates' courts. There is one approved premises (Cuthbert House) in Gateshead, which is not managed by this PDU. There are no prisons within the PDU's area. Prior to unification in June 2021, South Tyneside and Gateshead was previously covered by the Northumbria CRC – operated by Sodexo – and the North East NPS (which supervised higher risk cases).

The PDU covers two metropolitan boroughs in Tyne and Wear, with a combined population of 353,083 people². Both boroughs are within the top 20 per cent of local authorities across England that contain the highest proportion of deprived neighbourhoods. The PDU's area is covered by Northumbria Police. Regionally, there are approximately 12,800 people on probation, 1,140 of which are managed by this PDU. Most cases (777) are in the community and the remainder are in custody (363). Some 59 per cent people within the PDU's caseload have a disability. Five per cent of people on probation are black, Asian and minority ethnic. Total recorded crime in the area is slightly above the national average but is lower than the regional average. Proven reoffending is similar to the national average, which is 25 per cent.

The Head of the PDU has been in post since March 2022 and leads a team of seven SPOs. As of 05 September 2022, 92 probation practitioners worked in the PDU, including 18 trainees completing their PQiP. People sentenced solely to an unpaid work requirement are managed by a regional team based outside of the PDU.

Outsourced Commissioned Rehabilitative Services (CRS) suppliers provide interventions in relation to six areas of service: Ingeus for education, training and employment (ETE), personal wellbeing and dependency and recovery; Changing Lives for women's services; Thirteen Group for accommodation; and St Giles Wise for finance, benefit and debt relating to people released from custody.

The PDU is represented on a range of strategic partnerships, including adult and safeguarding boards, local youth justice teams and Local Criminal Justice Boards.

² Office for National Statistics (June 2021). UK Population estimates, mid-2020.

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.

Good

Strengths:

- There is strong leadership particularly by SPOs who have fostered a clear focus on engaging with people on probation. This is reflected by three out of five quality standards for casework being rated either 'Outstanding' or 'Good'.
- Strategic relationships with agencies in the criminal justice system were strong and had improved since unification. As an example, the PDU works collaboratively with HM Courts and Tribunal Service at South Tyneside magistrates' court and regular sentencer liaison meetings take place.
- Leaders had successfully led the merging of operational teams of probation practitioners from legacy NPS and CRC organisations. There was a clear sense of unity and togetherness, and a supportive culture.
- Middle and senior managers in the PDU were visible, accessible and willing to listen.
- Leaders had effectively managed the return to office working following the Covid pandemic while providing staff with flexibility to work from other locations when it was suitable to do so. Probation practitioners reported that it provided flexibility without affecting their ability to conduct quality work with people on probation.
- The PDU had a robust risk register and business continuity plan, both of which comprehensively identify ongoing issues that could affect the quality of delivery.

Areas for improvement

- While the PDU had a clear vision and business plan, this was not fully understood by staff. In the absence of a common understanding of priorities there is a risk of drift in relation to the quality of practice.
- The voices of people on probation did not meaningfully contribute to the PDU's strategy, despite data being available from a regional survey.
- The management of change for administrative staff had not been handled well. Affected staff did not understand the need for change to a new model of working and were concerned about the effect on their office location and professional relationships.
- We found examples of practice being adapted to meet the individual needs of people on probation. However, there was no overarching strategic approach to meeting diverse needs within the PDU.

1.2. Staff



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

Good

Strengths:

- Staff across all grades were generally motivated, committed to delivering good practice and proud of the work they do. We found examples of probation practitioners using their skills and knowledge to support and challenge people on probation.
- Staffing levels were good and are projected to meet target levels by autumn 2023. Although overall absence due to sickness was high, levels of short-term absence were low.
- The workforce adequately reflected the diversity of the local population.
- We found most people on probation had had one or two probation practitioners during their sentence. This reflected good management of allocations to minimise disruption to engagement.
- Several existing staff were undertaking PQiP training and a recruitment campaign was underway for additional PSOs.
- Most probation practitioners had reasonable workloads. A handful in each team were above full capacity according to workload management data. However, the PDU was operating at less than full capacity overall, and in our interviews with staff 88 per cent had caseloads under 40.
- An off-site administrative hub had been used to maintain the provision of service despite a shortage of administrative staff in the PDU.
- There were formal and informal opportunities for staff to raise concerns and provide feedback to leaders.

Areas for improvement

- The SPO who line manages PQiP trainees had an unreasonably large team to lead. We found that work to keep people safe by PQiP trainees was often poor and less effective than work by qualified POs³.
- Some probation practitioners told us that the frequency of their supervision with a line manager was insufficient and they were not receiving feedback on the quality of casework.
- Some PSO grade practitioners did not feel they receive sufficient training after being appointed. Our inspection of cases found that the quality of work conducted by PSOs to keep people safe was relatively poor.
- Probation practitioners generally expressed concern about being expected to work with toolkits, because they felt unfamiliar with the content and the approach to delivery.

³ The findings relating to POs, PSOs, and PQiPs have not been subject to a relative rate index analysis, which is test used to compare rates of incidence.

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:

- In 32 out of 34 cases we inspected, the practitioner felt that there was a sufficient range of services that they could access. Of the 93 people on probation we surveyed, 75 per cent felt that they had access to the services they need.
- Police officers were co-located in both Gateshead and South Tyneside. They work closely with practitioners who manage Integrated Offender Management cases. This enables joint working with people on probation and supports clear communication.
- The Personality Disorder Pathway provided probation practitioners with expert one-to-one consultation and the opportunity to co-work with neuro-diverse people on probation.
- Information sharing arrangements with CRS providers had improved following upgrades to the 'Refer and Monitor' system. Providers are able to access information about risk of harm to others and undertake joint work with probation practitioners.
- Some partners, such as the emotional wellbeing and ETE CRS providers, had access to probation buildings, which promotes joined-up working.
- We found good quality one-to-one interventions to support desistance were being carried out and recorded clearly by probation practitioners.

Areas for improvement:

- There had been insufficient analysis of the individual needs of people on probation, and how that should shape the delivery of services at a strategic level, including using the Regional Outcome and Innovation Fund (ROIF).
- The performance of CRS providers was mixed. The accommodation contract in particular was widely regarded by probation practitioners and leaders we spoke to as being ineffective.
- Too few practitioners used local services to support desistance. Referrals were 70 per cent of the expected volume for personal wellbeing and ETE.
- The involvement and coordination of other agencies to manage risk of harm were not sufficient in 49 per cent of cases we inspected.
- In the last 12 months, only 20 per cent of those sentenced to an accredited programme requirement completed all the sessions. Some people who were unable to join a programme were assigned to complete alternative toolkits with practitioners instead. However, there were no recorded completions of this work.
- No referrals had been made to structured interventions, despite these being made available for lower-risk individuals who do not meet the criteria for participation on an accredited programme.

- Only 61 percent of people were completing unpaid work within 12 months.
 - There were no women-only unpaid work placements and only a handful of women were engaged with mixed-sex placements. The absence of women-only unpaid work limits the use of unpaid work as a sentencing option.
-

Resettlement work

Strengths:

- Planning was generally focused on issues linked to risk of harm and most plans made links to other relevant agencies.
- Reviews were documented in 65 per cent of the cases we inspected and were informed by intelligence from other agencies in 71 per cent of cases.
- Referrals to services most likely to reduce reoffending were linked to good planning: 76 per cent of cases we inspected made reference to involving local services during planning for post-release supervision.

Areas for improvement:

- Under the OMIC model, prison officers and probation practitioners should work together on community reintegration before the prisoner is released. There was insufficient evidence that this was happening: only 44 per cent of resettlement cases had a handover meeting between the Prison Offender Manager and Community Offender Manager prior to release; and important resettlement issues were not fully identified in 4 out of 14 cases we inspected.
- In some cases, too much emphasis was placed on promoting engagement and not enough on prompt enforcement. We found that appropriate enforcement action had only been taken in half of relevant cases, which could have put others at risk of harm.
- When people were recalled to custody, we found too few examples (5 out of 9 cases) where sufficient attempts to re-engage had taken place. This contrasts with the strong focus on engagement we saw on community-based cases.
- Despite assessments for resettlement cases generally being good quality, the use of restrictive licence conditions such as non-contact with specific victims was not always used. This raised concerns that SPOs might not have full assurance that probation practitioners are taking reasonable measures to protect others from harm.

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:

- A majority of the 93 people on probation we surveyed (89 per cent) felt safe when visiting offices in the PDU and there were no evident concerns about uncontrolled health and safety hazards in the buildings during our fieldwork.
- Most staff (17 out of 24) who responded to our survey said that sufficient attention was paid to their safety.
- Probation practitioners use ICT systems to blend working from home and in the office without it affecting their ability to work with people on probation.
- The 'JitBit' ticketing system was being used effectively to cover administrative tasks when the local team in the PDU lacked capacity.
- The South Shields office was a bright and welcoming place to work and for people on probation to use.
- Policies and guidance were published on the regional intranet and circulated by leaders locally. Staff understood where to access regional guidance documents and had full access to the intranet.
- There were effective information-sharing arrangements with children's services and the police. Probation practitioners were able to make safeguarding and domestic abuse enquiries and received responses promptly.

Areas for improvement:

- There was limited evidence that checks are conducted to make sure changes to practice outlined in the quarterly learning briefing are adopted.
- Neither office within the PDU had wireless internet or sufficient wired connections. Staff routinely used mobile devices for connection to the internet, which is not appropriate for permanent use.
- The region had introduced 'Boost', which is a digital tool to help middle managers and probation practitioners set reminders and view outstanding tasks. However, it was not widely used and we saw little evidence of it affecting practice.
- Some people on probation had long journeys to reach the office, particularly those who live in western Gateshead. People on probation who responded to our survey said that travelling to appointments can be costly. The PDU had plans to open smaller hubs to make services more accessible, but these had not progressed.
- The lift at South Shields office had been out of order for several months and there was no lift at the Gateshead office. Although adjustments had been made to enable people with limited mobility to use the ground floor, it meant some probation practitioners were isolated from their teams.

Feedback from people on probation

User Voice, working with HM Inspectorate of Probation, had contact with 93 people on probation as part of this inspection. All the respondents were men and 99 per cent were white.

Strengths:

- The survey results suggested that combining work from home and the office had not affected probation practitioners' ability to see and respond to people on probation. A large majority of respondents (87 per cent) were able to contact their probation practitioner when needed. Similar numbers (86 per cent) of people on probation who responded to User Voice were offered appointments at a convenient time.
- There were positive responses about the quality of support offered by probation practitioners. Most people on probation (66 per cent) either agreed or strongly agreed that they were happy with the overall support they had received. One respondent said his probation practitioner has:

"been really good, I got sent on a course and it's been good. I like her 'cause she treats me like a person – some people are too quick to judge me but that doesn't happen here."

- All the people interviewed had a positive experience of induction. That indicates work by middle managers to foster a focus on engagement is translating into practice which promotes compliance with the sentence. One person for example, said the induction was:

"very good, she [the probation practitioner] explained the process and how we were going to work together to sort things."

Areas for improvement

- The survey confirmed that there would be value in understanding the voice of people on probation and their circumstances better. None of the respondents felt they had a say in how probation was run, and only one person knew how to make a complaint.

Diversity and inclusion

Strengths:

- There were examples from our inspection of casework which showed that probation practitioners were adapting their practice to reflect the individual needs of people on probation. We saw examples of probation practitioners considering mental health and disabilities during their planning and implementation of work.
- There was protected time at both of the PDU's offices for women on probation to report without men on probation being present.
- There were very low numbers of children transferring from the Youth Offending Service (YOS) to The Probation Service after reaching age 18. Decisions about whether to transfer were made jointly between YOS and the PDU based on maturity and the needs of the young person rather than on rigid applications of adulthood.
- The Personality Disorder Pathway provided consultation to probation practitioners who were working with relevant neuro-diverse people on probation. It also enabled probation practitioners and people on probation to work jointly with professionals from the pathway.
- The profile of staff at the office reflected the proportion of black, Asian and minority ethnic people on the PDU's caseload.

Areas for improvement:

- There was an absence of strategic planning in relation to diversity issues, priorities and disproportionalities. It was unclear how diversity shapes the delivery of services within the PDU.
- The effectiveness of CRS for women was unclear and there had not been any evaluation of the service at PDU level.
- The ROIF had not yet been considered in relation to improving provision for neuro-diverse and mentally unwell people. There was an over-representation of women among probation practitioners when compared against the profile of people on probation.

2. Court work and case supervision

2.1. Court work



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

Outstanding

Our rating⁴ 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?	78%

We used professional discretion to upgrade the score for court work from 'Good' to 'Outstanding'. That is possible because the score was within two per cent of the boundary for outstanding and, overall, we found excellent report writing practice combined with high levels of sentence confidence in the probation team.

Strengths:

- In 89 percent of cases we inspected, enquiries were made with the police in relation to domestic abuse and with children's services, and a response received before sentencing took place.
- Almost all the reports we saw meaningfully involved the person due to be sentenced. The quality of recommendations to the court were good: appropriate proposals were made in 89 per cent of cases, which meant sentences were more likely to be commensurate with the offence and relevant to the needs of the person on probation.
- All the reports we inspected considered factors appropriately in relation to offending. That reflected the feedback from sentencers in our survey, all of whom indicated that reports were sufficiently analytical and supported the court's decision-making.
- Record keeping for oral reports was good. We found examples of written records being used to document what information was drawn upon and what recommendation was made to the court. Good quality records are useful for probation practitioners conducting initial assessments at the start of a sentence.

⁴ 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.

Areas for improvement:

- The person on probation's motivation and readiness to change was insufficiently analysed in 44 per cent of cases. As a result, there was a possibility that sentencers were not always fully aware of issues which could have a bearing on the defendant's future compliance.

2.2. Assessment



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

Good

Our rating⁵ 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?	77%
Does assessment focus sufficiently on the factors linked to offending and desistance?	91%
Does assessment focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	60%

The lowest score for assessment is for keeping people safe. However, scores for engagement and desistance were impressive and our inspection found good quality analysis of victim safety and risk, drawn from a sufficient range of sources. Professional judgement, which can be used when the lowest score is within five percentage points of the next rating band, was applied to uplift the overall rating for assessment from 'Requires improvement' to 'Good'.

Strengths:

- Most assessments (71 per cent) were sufficiently focused on harm caused to victims. That enabled probation practitioners to make accurate assessments about risk in 94 per cent of cases we inspected.
- Assessments mostly considered the personal circumstances of the person on probation. We saw good examples of probation practitioners considering how health, maturity and language would affect engagement with the sentence.

Areas for improvement:

- Some probation practitioners had not made enquires with the police or children's care during the assessment. Sometimes, we found that information relating to risk was not verified or followed up with other agencies. That meant that in some cases, relevant information about risk of harm could have been missed.

⁵ 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.

2.3. Planning



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

Good

Our rating⁶ 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?	77%
Does planning focus sufficiently on reducing reoffending and supporting desistance?	83%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	74%

South Tyneside and Gateshead PDU is rated as 'Good' for planning. We found sufficient practice in a reasonable majority of cases across all three of the key questions above.

Strengths:

- Overall, the quality of planning was strong, which prepared for the effective delivery of services. In most of the casework we inspected, probation practitioners considered how the requirements of the sentence would be delivered. That meant the pattern and type of planned contact was appropriate for most people on probation.
- Sentence planning generally identified what services would help behaviour change. Probation practitioners widely prioritised the most important issues linked to reducing the likelihood of reoffending.
- We found good planning to keep people safe. In 80 per cent of cases, sufficient attention had been paid to addressing risk of harm. A high proportion of which identified the use of appropriate restrictive measures to control risks to others.

Areas for improvement:

- Too few plans outlined sufficient contingency arrangements which could result in probation practitioners being unprepared in the event of a person's risk to others escalating.

⁶ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. Full data and further information about inspection methodology is available [in the data workbook](#) for this inspection.

2.4. Implementation and delivery



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

Requires improvement

Our rating⁷ 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?	74%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support desistance?	66%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?	60%

South Tyneside and Gateshead PDU is rated as 'Requires improvement' for implementation and delivery, with the lowest score relating to keeping people safe.

Strengths:

- There was a strong focus on engaging with people on probation during their sentence. Contact was typically sufficient to maintain good relationships.
- Home visits were frequently carried out, often with other agencies such as the police. This helped to gain insight into the lives and risk presented by people on probation.

Areas for improvement:

- Appropriate enforcement had been taken in only 13 of 21 relevant cases we inspected. That suggests that the balance was sometimes too heavily weighted towards engagement and desistance at the expense of public protection.
- Concerningly, non-contact licence conditions had only been used in 40 per cent of relevant cases. As a result, some victims could have been exposed to risk of harm.
- Most people on probation in this PDU are medium risk but we were troubled to find that work to keep people safe for those cases was often insufficient (58 per cent). Across all cases, coordination of agencies to manage risk was insufficiently managed in 12 of 29 we inspected.

⁷ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. Full data and further information about inspection methodology is available [in the data workbook](#) for this inspection.

2.5. Reviewing



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

Requires improvement

Our rating⁸ 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?	86%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting desistance?	77%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	60%

South Tyneside and Gateshead PDU is rated as 'Requires improvement' for reviewing. As with all of the other standards across Domain Two, keeping people safe was the lowest scoring key question.

Strengths:

- In general, we found that when reviews were done, people on probation were meaningfully involved in reviewing their progress. That is good practice which will have encouraged people on probation to take ownership of their desistance from crime.
- We found examples of probation practitioners changing their plans and referring to other agencies when the lives of people on probation changed. Work was often focused on supporting long-term desistance from crime.

Areas for improvement:

- Disappointingly, information from other agencies was not used to inform reviews of risk of harm sufficiently in just over half of cases. Opportunities to fully understand risk may therefore have been missed.
- Worryingly, the management of risk of harm was not always effective when circumstances changed. In less than half (29 per cent) of cases we inspected, probation practitioners did not adjust the plan of work following a change in risk of harm.
- When risk did change, too few (43 per cent) written reviews were conducted, on either the DELIUS or OASys system. As a result, opportunities to strengthen assessments based on recent intelligence and events may have been missed.

⁸ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table.

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'
Do early outcomes demonstrate that reasonable progress has been made, in line with the personalised needs of the person on probation?	66%

Strengths:

- Sufficient compliance was achieved in 77 per cent of cases, which is a reflection of the strong engagement scores seen across other standards.
- Encouragingly, offending either reduced or remained unchanged in 89 per cent of the cases we inspected. Just three cases were associated with an increase in offending, and most of the cases were not charged or convicted for a new offence within the timeframe of our inspection.

Areas for improvement:

- We were concerned that high levels of compliance could be disguising instances where enforcement would have been a proportionate response to increased risk.
- A reduction in factors most closely related to risk of harm to others had only taken place in 49 per cent of cases. That corresponds with our findings that work to protect others from harm is relatively weak.
- There were too few cases (51 per cent) where factors closely related to offending had improved. That included issues such as accommodation, ETE and family relationships.

Annexe one – Web links

Full data from this inspection and further information about the methodology used to conduct this inspection is available [in the data workbook](#) for this inspection.

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/)