



HM Inspectorate
of Probation

An inspection of probation services in:

Manchester North PDU

The Probation Service – Greater Manchester region

HM Inspectorate of Probation, May 2023



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Acknowledgements

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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

Manchester North Probation Delivery Unit (PDU) was led by a competent and proactive leadership team with an outward-looking approach and 'can do' attitude. Probation practitioners were motivated and passionate about their roles but were hamstrung by long-standing resourcing issues which meant some individual workloads were excessive. These workload issues had impacted upon the quality of work and were only now beginning to be resolved following action taken by the leadership team to provide stability and manage the challenges that were in their control.

The PDU had access to an impressive suite of partnership services in the city, supported by unique regional commissioning arrangements which added clear value and flexibility to the work of The Probation Service. The PDU was represented across local partnerships and the strengths that had developed in those relationships supported frontline access to necessary services.

However, it was disappointing to discover that these positive foundations had yet to be consistently reflected in high-quality case management, which was noticeably poor in some areas such as keeping people safe. Consequently, Manchester North PDU has been given an overall rating of 'Requires improvement.'

Assessment activity, one of the keys to good probation practice and to providing an opportunity to understand the individual needs and risk of harm profile at the earliest point, was rated 'Inadequate.' We observed some isolated good assessment practice, but this was not yet systematic, and overall, the PDU did not assess, analyse, and classify risk of harm satisfactorily. This impacted negatively upon all subsequent intervention activity. The efforts made by the PDU to improve the quality of work could be seen in more recent activity relating to supporting desistance and improving case reviewing, which suggested improvements are heading in the right direction.

People on probation reported to us that they did not always feel heard, and the PDU had previously identified similar concerns themselves regarding their own approach to personalising interventions. The PDU had taken proactive action to resolve these issues and work to engage people on probation was a key priority. It was also of note that this was beginning to have an impact in relation to work undertaken with Black, Asian and minority ethnic people on probation, with evidence of better outcomes for this cohort than for the cases of white people on probation which we inspected.

The PDU will be disappointed with the outcome of this inspection as standards and expectations are high within this service. However, the foundations are in place to develop practice rapidly, provided that the resourcing picture continues an improved trajectory.



Justin Russell
Chief Inspector of Probation

Ratings

Manchester North

Fieldwork started February 2023

Score **10/24**

Overall rating

Requires improvement



1. Organisational delivery

1.1 Leadership

Requires improvement



1.2 Staff

Good



1.3 Services

Good



1.4 Information and facilities

Good



2. Court work and case supervision

2.2 Assessment

Inadequate



2.3 Planning

Requires improvement



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.

Manchester North PDU should:

1. improve the quality of work to assess, plan for, manage and review risk of harm and to improve desistance, ensuring that all available information is accessed and utilised, all relevant partners are engaged, and all outstanding training needs related to these areas are addressed
2. ensure consideration is given to the safety of victims when delivering interventions in all instances where required
3. ensure that appropriate activity is always undertaken following domestic abuse or safeguarding enquiries to ensure that risks are followed up and managed appropriately
4. review the efficacy of work with people on probation both before leaving custody and upon release, including the efficacy and availability of services for this cohort
5. ensure managers and staff are clear on expectations regarding the effective management of sickness.

Greater Manchester Region should:

6. consider a more flexible approach to achieving service level targets, if appropriate and defensible, to ensure high-quality work is always undertaken
7. consider the use of the Regional Outcomes Intervention Fund to tackle the gaps identified locally regarding mental health provision for people on probation
8. review arrangements to ensure people on probation from all PDUs feel safe when visiting the Redfern Building and that their views are incorporated into organisational planning when appropriate
9. continue to monitor workforce development planning and work with HM Prison and Probation Service to ensure the PDU has sufficient staffing capacity to undertake high-quality work.

Background

We conducted fieldwork in Manchester North over the period of a week, beginning on 20 February 2023. We inspected 36 cases where sentences and licences had commenced between 18 July –24 July and 15 August–21 August 2022. We also conducted 33 interviews with probation practitioners and held 17 meetings with probation staff and representatives from services delivered by partners.

Manchester North is one of nine PDUs within Greater Manchester region. There are four prisons in the catchment area. Whilst there was a magistrates' court and a Crown Court within the boundary of Manchester North, oversight and resourcing of these courts was undertaken by staff who were not part of the PDU and so we have not inspected court work in this inspection. At the point of inspection, the PDU was supervising a total caseload of 1,979. Of this caseload 33.3 per cent was assessed to be high or very high risk of serious harm. Forty-six per cent of the caseload was from a Black, Asian and minority ethnic background, which was much higher than the average for the region (22 per cent). Only 56 women were being supervised by the PDU, partially due to allocation arrangements put in place at the point of unification in June 2021 with all females being allocated to another PDU. These arrangements have recently changed and the PDU anticipates that this number will rise. There were 89.82 full-time equivalent staff in post overseeing arrangements in the PDU.

Manchester North itself was a complex area of both the city, the region and, indeed, the country. Residents experience significant difficulties, reflected negatively within published indices of deprivation. For example, most areas of north Manchester are routinely in the most deprived 10 per cent in England and residents experience nine fewer year in good health than the England average. Crime rates are increasing in Greater Manchester as a whole, rising from 113.2 to 128.5 per 1,000 population between September 2021–September 2022. The PDU badges itself as an "inner city PDU."

There is a strong partnership approach in the PDU, facilitated by a unique set of commissioning arrangements in Greater Manchester region focused around a 'Justice Devolution' model. These arrangements entail a joint approach to commissioning services by both Greater Manchester Probation Service and Greater Manchester Combined Authority. These arrangements allow Manchester North to benefit from more flexible commissioning arrangements with a range of locally focused stakeholders, including voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations. Services can be commissioned where an identified criminogenic need cannot be met through a programme requirement, structured intervention, or community sentence treatment requirement.

In addition to links with the local authority, the PDU had strong relationships with several other partners, including the Greater Manchester Police and the Community Safety Partnership (CSP).

Manchester North PDU, and the wider region, have not utilised the national Prioritisation Framework to manage operational pressures but instead manage staffing and workload via a combination of activity such as blended (face-to-face and phone) supervision arrangements, and, as part of the refreshed quality improvement strategy to support staff in delivering and prioritising interventions, a detailed 'minimum expectation' guidance (MEG). Practitioner adherence to the MEG is routinely audited, the outcomes of which provide the PDU with a wealth of management information on which to base service development activity.

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

Despite positive findings for this standard, poor domain two scores mean leadership cannot be rated higher than 'Requires improvement.'

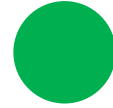
Strengths:

- The PDU Head had a thorough understanding of the challenges within the PDU and was working systematically to address these with an outward-looking, proactive approach. Positive strategic relationships were in place and having a positive impact in translating the PDU's vision into operational delivery across several organisations. Both middle managers and external partners had a good understanding of the PDU's goals and their own role in contributing to them.
- The PDU Delivery Plan was aligned with the regional plan and had been well crafted to ensure it was easily understood and operationalised. There was a strong focus on performance, and expectations from the leadership team were high. All plans were reviewed regularly by the leadership team.
- Arrangements were in place to identify emerging risks supported by effective local and regional governance arrangements, and we saw evidence of proactive business continuity and risk review activity.
- Staff were consulted in the design, implementation, and review of new ways of working. There were attempts by the PDU to work with staff in developing operational delivery, facilitated by a passionate engagement lead who acted as a conduit between leaders and PDU staff.

Areas for improvement:

- The PDU focus on performance did not override the expectation for high-quality work. However, messaging around this relationship had not always landed with staff effectively and was not always clearly understood, meaning we sometimes saw a focus on achieving targets rather than quality.
- There was evidence that the views of people on probation were actively sought to develop delivery plans. However, User Voice feedback was not universally positive, and many individuals did not feel their views were always sought. This was backed up by staff who responded to our survey, 42 per cent of whom agreed. The PDU approach needs further evaluation to provide assurance that engagement with people on probation is always meaningful.

1.2. Staff



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

Good

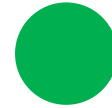
Strengths:

- The PDU implemented a combination of blended supervision, a refreshed quality improvement strategy and MEG to develop a comprehensive suite of workload management arrangements.
- Staffing levels and workloads were reviewed monthly. Workload analysis reports facilitated further discussion at Greater Manchester region's Workforce Planning Board to consider actions required to manage resources. Alongside this was a comprehensive discussion of emerging workload issues in a regular quality and performance meeting to facilitate a fair distribution of cases.
- Retention rates had been impacted by internal promotions and role moves, reflecting a positive culture of staff development. No Professional Qualification in Probation trainees had withdrawn from training programmes, which was found in other probation regions inspected.
- The Probation Operational Delivery structures model had been introduced to streamline working in the PDU. We saw evidence of positive impact on caseload management, sometimes driven by the efficient and engaged case administrator team.
- The learning and development offer was developing, and it was positive to see support from quality development officers and encouragement of face-to-face development. The development of a thorough Probation Services Officer (PSO) training package by the PDU was reflected by the higher quality of work seen in domain two cases held by PSOs.
- Morale was positive and staff recognised that managers were trying to make improvements to improve staff wellbeing.

Areas for improvement:

- Staffing levels did not always support the delivery of a high-quality service and were the main reason for deficits noted during inspection. The PDU's headcount was increasing but we saw evidence that some staff members were holding excessive workloads, with 50 per cent of staff who responded to our survey saying their workload was not manageable. The overall vacancy rate at the time of inspection was 12.3 per cent. This included 10.6 per cent for case administrators, 33.8 per cent for Probation Officers (POs) and 13.1 per cent for PSOs.
- Although average levels of sickness per practitioner had reduced (13.2 days when the inspected case sample commenced), rates have recently been excessive (20.1 days a year on average), and managers are only now beginning to address this sufficiently. Staff recognised that sickness was an issue but did not feel confident it had been well addressed despite the PDU's clear attempts to focus on staff wellbeing.

1.3. Services



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

Good

Strengths:

- Services were commissioned via Greater Manchester Integrated Rehabilitative Services. The regional community integration management team were managing 20 contracts for this PDU. Governance arrangements were robust, and the commissioning landscape was managed effectively, providing the basis of a superior quality and flexible offer of service provision.
- There were good local links with the Community Safety Partnership (CSP), and bespoke local funding and activity to address key priorities related to reoffending – such as accommodation – was in place. Activity was robustly monitored against comprehensive outcome data at the CSP Board.
- The Welfare Hub was an example of innovative multi-agency practice. While an evaluation was still in its initial stages, arrangements were comprehensive.
- Accredited programme provision was sufficient, with programme starts and completions above target and waiting lists not excessive. Additionally, there was a clear upward trajectory with unpaid work delivery; backlogs had reduced significantly, and hours delivered across the city had also risen. The quality of standalone unpaid work cases inspected was judged positively.
- The approach to Integrated Offender Management was producing positive outcomes. Interventions were facilitated by a range of engaged services, underpinned by effective communication. The introduction of Operation Vigilant had increased the levels of consistent police and probation oversight of this cohort.
- Activity to gather the voice of people on probation via commissioned Revolving Doors was given an appropriate level of priority.

Areas for improvement:

- The CSP's understanding of, and response to, local health needs was underdeveloped. Additionally, mental health provision was poor and, whilst attempts were being made to address this, gaps in provision remain an area of concern.
- Activity undertaken by commissioned services was not consistently viewed positively by practitioners despite data indicating sufficient referral activity was undertaken.
- Arrangements to ensure domestic abuse/safeguarding checks and enquiries with partners were in place (domestic abuse enquiries were made in all but three cases) but information was not always utilised or followed up by practitioners when required.

Resettlement work

Strengths:

- Review activity by the PDU to engage people on probation and support their desistance needs was undertaken well in six of the seven resettlement cases inspected. This indicated that there was a satisfactory degree of efficacy in the PDU's approaches to reassessing need upon release from custody and determining the progress or challenges that individuals face when subject to licence.
- Sufficient resettlement services were delivered to address accommodation needs in four of the six relevant resettlement cases inspected. This appeared to reflect the overall efficacy of the approach taken locally by the homeless prevention team and the Community Accommodation Service Tier 3, who were achieving good outcomes; the high percentage of high risk of harm people on probation being housed outside of the inspected cohort is impressive.

Areas for improvement:

- Activity across our standards that related to assessment, planning and implementation and delivery was not of a sufficient standard and was carried out to a lower quality than that of individuals subject to a community sentence. This gap in quality will need to be reviewed by the PDU in more detail to determine if deficits exist in specific offers of support provided to resettlement cases whilst they are in custody.
- Activity by the Community Offender Manager did not lead to proportionate levels of contact with the person on probation prior to release in any of the inspected cases. Activity to address key issues of desistance and risk was not done well in a large majority of cases pre-release either, thus reinforcing our assessment that the most positive work undertaken with this cohort is post release.
- Staff within the PDU were aware of Offender Manager in Custody requirements but expressed some frustration at the efficacy of recording arrangements as they were not always contributing to the evidencing of successful outcomes. Inspectors found proactive work by practitioners was not always measured, for example when work was conducted early, only to be scored negatively when performance tables were released, as activity took place 'outside' of time limits. This reinforced concerns raised within domain one activity where practitioners told us that issues like this sent confusing messages about the importance of targets over quality.

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.

Good

Strengths:

- The office was accessible to staff and people on probation, and the facilities available provided a good base to deliver interventions. Activity was undertaken at other appropriate locations if required. Alterations to improve the working environment had been made at the request of staff.
- MEG auditing procedures provided a significant bank of useful management information which was systematically shared and discussed with practitioners. Audit and review activity was utilised to ensure a focus on relevant risk issues and there was some congruence between the priorities identified by the PDU and our own findings.
- Learning from Serious Further Offences (SFOs) was a standard agenda item internally at management meetings, and information was shared appropriately with staff. Additionally, partner agencies noted that there were forums to review reports when things had gone wrong. Recent national SFOs have already been discussed and reviewed at the Reducing Reoffending Board.
- The OPEN system is available to all staff and was used to help prioritise and track completion of key work tasks and service level measures. Administrators were competent in taking the lead to monitor these systems.

Areas for improvement:

- The accuracy of management information was potentially affected by the tension between practitioners achieving targets and undertaking meaningful quality activity. Managers and practitioners did not always have a shared understanding and there was a risk that the analysis of audit and review activity may not be fully understood consequently.
- A third (16/48) of people on probation who User Voice spoke to did not feel safe attending the office. This is significantly more than in other PDUs inspected nationally. Several people on probation also expressed concerns about travel arrangements; more so than User Voice has identified in other regions, including areas with greater rurality.

Feedback from people on probation

User Voice, working with HM Inspectorate of Probation, had contact with 51 people on probation as part of this inspection, including 46 face-to-face surveys and three in-depth interviews. All but one person on probation was male and 69 per cent were white. A disability was self-reported by 21 per cent. Four per cent said they were unsure what sentence they were subject to.

There were several strengths noted about the experiences of people on probation but also a lack of consistently positive feedback, with only 21 out of 48 (45 per cent) who were asked if they were happy with their overall experience replying positively. This was lower than the national average noted across regions inspected thus far (66 per cent). The rationale for this low score was due to several factors, not least: sometimes unrealistic expectations on the part of some responders; many wanted monthly appointments or telephone contact for example, which may well be out of kilter with assessed levels of risk and need. The PDU's attempts to deliver a business-as-usual model via regular face-to-face blended supervision may therefore be one that needs to be understood more fully by people on probation following the difficulties of unification and Covid-19 to ensure maximum engagement.

Strengths

- People on probation in Manchester North had positive opinions of their PO and issues mostly arose only when there had been frequent changes or relationship difficulties with the practitioner:

“My probation officer has kept great track of my employment and has been a staple in making sure that I’m comfortable with employment and works great around my work patterns.”

- Two in three people on probation could access services they need. Ninety-five per cent said they had been able to access services relevant to need and this was reflective of the positive picture identified within our inspection of the ‘services’ standard:

“I’ve been helped with housing, and they gave me a phone and I have had some good advice and they have been helpful.”

Areas for improvement

- Two in three people did not feel their voice was heard. They wanted to be asked about their probation experience. This reflected our own assessment that the PDU's strategy for engaging people on probation was still developing.
- People wanted a less chaotic experience in the Redfern Building, particularly on Mondays and Wednesdays. As a result of the high footfall and encounters with individuals from their personal life, people felt unsafe. People reported that they often come across others they would rather avoid.

“Keeping away from people I used to know is difficult.”

Diversity and inclusion

Strengths:

- There was a clear approach to 'Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging' (EDIB) in the PDU, driven by a comprehensive EDIB Roadmap focusing on both people on probation and staff, and on the development of local governance arrangements via the EDIB committee. Support for the PDU in delivering this agenda from the region was facilitated by a competent regional EDIB lead who regularly links in with the management team and releases an impressive and detailed 'comms package' to staff monthly.
- Case-level data indicated that engaging people on probation was done noticeably better for minority ethnic groups than for white individuals.
- Specialist women's provision was sufficient and there were female-only reporting spaces away from the Redfern Building. It was positive to see that women can access a range of welfare support from the women's centre.
- We saw examples of positive practice of support for staff with protected characteristics or specific needs. For example, the PDU has several female staff experiencing menopause symptoms. There was no guidance nationally regarding support with recommendations from occupational health assessments, so the PDU escalated this to the EDIB committee who subsequently escalated to a national level to secure a workload measurement allowance in line with relevant occupational health recommendations.
- There had been a clear response to the 2020 HMI Probation Race Thematic focusing on activity such as race surveys for staff and feedback around development.

Areas for improvement:

- Assessments of people on probation's personal circumstances were done well in a reasonable majority of cases inspected, but assessment of protected characteristics was undertaken well in only a minority of cases.
- Data provided by the PDU indicated that 23 per cent of the PDU workforce were from Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups whilst 46 per cent of people on probation had a similar background. Seventy-four per cent of the workforce were female compared to only three per cent of women on probation. There was an obvious potential disconnect. The PDU was aware of this though and promisingly, of the 31 individuals recruited in the last 12 months in the PDU, 27 have been male and 10 are from a Black, Asian and minority ethnic background. There was also expectation that wherever possible there was a panel member from a Black, Asian and minority ethnic background on recruitment panels.
- The PDU was aware of the potential issues posed by the busy reception area for people on probation with vulnerabilities such as neurodiversity, but arrangements to ensure they feel safe and comfortable in this environment seemed to be less clear. The reception area was a bustling and potentially intimidating space, particularly for a person reporting for the first time whose needs have yet to be fully identified, explored, and understood.

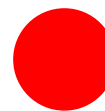
2. Court work and case supervision

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

Not rated

This standard was not inspected. There is no court located within Manchester North and there were no pre-sentence reports prepared within the inspected PDU.

2.2. Assessment



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

Inadequate

Our rating¹ 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?	56%
Does assessment focus sufficiently on the factors linked to offending and desistance?	58%
Does assessment focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	33%

Manchester North PDU is rated as 'Inadequate' for assessment as the lowest score out of the three key questions was 33 per cent. This lowest score relates to whether there was sufficient focus on keeping other people safe.

Strengths:

- The quality of assessment activity for standalone unpaid work cases to engage people on probation and keep others safe was assessed to be of a higher quality than that of the non-standalone unpaid work cases inspected.

Areas for improvement:

- Assessments undertaken by the PDU took a strengths-based approach that focused on positive factors in only 18 of the 31 relevant inspected cases, and this may reflect feedback from people on probation that they did not always feel heard by the PDU.
- Assessment of risk of harm to others was undertaken poorly and this was reflected by the fact that an appropriate identification and analysis of risk was only undertaken in seven of the 31 cases required.
- Although practitioners' classification of risk of serious harm was reasonable in 27 cases, we judged that, taking all factors into account, the classification of low risk was overestimated, and the classification of medium and high risk underestimated by the PDU. This impacted on the PDUs understanding of the risk profile of the inspected cohort.

¹ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band. [Full data and further information about inspection methodology is available in the data workbook for this inspection on our website.](#)

2.3. Planning



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

Requires improvement

Our rating² 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?	61%
Does planning focus sufficiently on reducing reoffending and supporting desistance?	64%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	47%

Manchester North PDU is rated as 'Requires improvement' for planning. Although the lowest score was 47 per cent, this was within the percentage range for professional discretion to be considered. The ratings panel applied professional discretion to increase the rating for planning from 'Inadequate' to 'Requires improvement' due to the evidence that a wider suite of more positive planning activity was taking place within the PDU.

Strengths:

- There was emerging evidence that the PDU had acknowledged some deficits in developing a personalised approach following their own reviews and audits. Consequently, there were 'green shoots' indicating that personalised planning activity was developing, and we saw consideration of diversity factors in 24 plans and consideration of personal factors in 25.

Areas for improvement:

- Planning activity reflected the prioritisation of offending-related factors identified in assessments to develop and support desistance for the individual in only 14 of the relevant 26 cases inspected.
- Contingency planning for people on probation who posed a risk of harm to others was sufficient in only seven of 27 cases that required one; this may be related to the misclassification of cases assessed as a low risk of serious harm.
- Practitioners made appropriate links to the work of other agencies involved with the person on probation and any multi-agency plans in only 13 of 27 relevant cases which involved other agencies. Some deficits in plans were amplified by the gaps in mental health provision noted in our rating of our 'Services' standard.

² 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 on our website.](#)

2.4. Implementation and delivery



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

Our rating³ 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?	61%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support desistance?	58%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?	47%

Manchester North PDU is rated as 'Requires improvement' for implementation and delivery. Although the lowest score was 47 per cent, this was within the percentage range for professional discretion to be considered. The ratings panel applied professional discretion to increase the rating from 'Inadequate' to 'Requires improvement' on the evidence of considerable positive activity undertaken within other areas of case work that were not covered in the cases identified for inspection and this had led to positive service delivery.

Strengths:

- In a large majority of instances (31 of the 36 inspected cases) we saw genuine efforts by the PDU to enable individuals to complete their sentence, which included the use of a flexible approach that took account of personal circumstances. This again reflected the developing and deliberate wider approach by the PDU to personalise activity more thoroughly and they have started to hold 'compliance' meetings to facilitate this ambition. If enforcement was required, practitioners made sufficient efforts to re-engage post enforcement action in 18 of the relevant 24 cases inspected.

Areas for improvement:

- Despite a wide range of services and organisations available locally to deliver interventions, the coordination of service delivery to address desistance and risk-of-harm factors was undertaken well in only 10 and eight cases, respectively. The insufficient level of practitioner led co-ordination may

³ 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 on our website.](#)

reflect the impact of previous resourcing difficulties on capacity to undertake this activity.

- There needed to be greater consideration of activity to protect actual and potential victims in the cases inspected. Sufficient attention was only visible in 15 of the 29 cases where there were actual or potential victims.

2.5. Reviewing



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

Requires improvement

Our rating⁴ 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?	81%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting desistance?	75%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	56%

Manchester North PDU is rated as 'Requires improvement' for reviewing as the lowest score out of the three key questions was 56 per cent. This lowest score relates to whether there was sufficient focus on keeping other people safe.

Strengths:

- When reviewing progress with people on probation, staff ensured there was a sufficient focus on supporting compliance and engagement in a large majority of cases. This reflected the previously noted efforts to develop a more personalised approach to interventions, and it was positive to note there were meaningful, written reviews in 26 of the 30 cases that needed them.
- There was evidence that this developing personalised approach across the PDU was beginning to impact upon practitioners' understanding of the needs of the people they were supervising. This was evidenced by the fact that reviews identified and addressed changes in factors linked to offending behaviour, with necessary adjustments to work being made in 17 of the 24 cases where this was required.

Areas for improvement:

- Worryingly, reviewing activity did not identify changes in factors related to risk of harm in 13 of the 25 cases where inspectors had identified a change in risk factors. Furthermore, despite some efficacy noted in the PDU's development of personalised approaches, this was not reflected in reviewing activity where risk of harm was key; people on probation were meaningfully involved in only 12 of 27 relevant cases.

⁴ 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?	51%

Strengths:

- Overall, outcomes for people on probation from a Black, Asian and minority ethnic background were significantly better than for their white counterparts. Within the cohort we inspected, 73 per cent (eight out of 11) Black, Asian and minority ethnic people on probation demonstrated that reasonable progress had been made, compared with 37 per cent (seven out of 19) of white people on probation. This statistic was reflected by the fact of the 11 Black, Asian and minority ethnic people on probation who we inspected, only one demonstrated an increase in offending.
- There was no new record of people on probation being charged or convicted in 28 of the inspected cases overall, related to a noticeable improvement in individual's motivation to change where this had been identified as a relevant protective factor; we saw an increase in motivation to change in all 13 cases where it had been identified as key.

Areas for improvement:

- Across the overall inspected cohort, apart from thinking and behaviour, we saw minimal improvements in other individual factors related to offending, such as finance, benefits and debt, or substance misuse. The quality of probation practitioners' work within some of the cases we inspected will explain the negativity of some of these disappointing findings. However, this apparent lack of progress also triangulates with feedback from practitioners interviewed for domain one, that activity by commissioned services was not always producing successful outcomes, despite reasonable levels of referral. Both the PDU and region may wish to investigate further.
- The inadequate quality of work undertaken to address risk of harm that has been noted in domain two inspection activity is reflected in outcome data. We noted that a reduction in factors most related to risk of harm to others was clearly visible in only two cases.

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 annexe 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)