



HM Inspectorate
of Probation

An inspection of probation services in:

Tameside PDU

The Probation Service – Greater Manchester region

HM Inspectorate of Probation, May 2023



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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.

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Foreword

The overall quality of work delivered to manage people on probation needed to improve across the standards we inspected. Consequently, the Tameside Probation Delivery Unit (PDU) has been given an overall rating of 'Requires improvement'.

There were strong strategic relationships in place led by an impressive leadership team who were proactive in engaging key stakeholders and other agencies. Staff were committed and had developed a unified culture with a clear plan to deliver the priorities of the PDU which were aligned with the regional strategy.

However, the strengths at strategic level were not filtering through into the quality of service delivery with people on probation that we saw in individual cases, in particular, in relation to the work to keep people safe. The Probation Officer (PO) vacancy rate in this PDU was 50 per cent and half of staff surveyed did not think their workload was manageable. A blended supervision model was in place to manage workload, but in too many cases a lack of meaningful work had been carried out to address the risk of harm the person on probation might present to others. The management oversight and audit processes in place were not providing the clear direction needed to address offending behaviour and reduce harm. This was no surprise given the resource challenges. The oversight that less experienced staff needed could not be provided consistently by managers as a result of their excessive spans of control.

We were pleased to see the co-location of partner agencies within the PDU offices and probation practitioners working from locations such as the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). This allowed better information exchange for domestic abuse and safeguarding enquiries which had been prioritised for court work. We would expect that this will lead to an improvement of the overall quality of court reports and subsequent assessments by probation practitioners.

A unique aspect of this region is the 'Justice Devolution' model, which has a joint commissioning approach by Greater Manchester Probation Service and Greater Manchester Combined Authority. There were also local innovative projects such as ROOTS to address accommodation issues for people on probation with complex needs in the Tameside PDU. However, this flexibility and range of services had not yet had a positive impact on the cases we inspected. We found the involvement and coordination of services to manage the risk of harm sufficient in only 39 per cent of the cases inspected.

Tameside staff will be disappointed with the overall findings of this inspection given their engagement and strong leadership. However, there are strong foundations in place, and it is hoped this inspection can assist in the improvement of practice.



Justin Russell
Chief Inspector of Probation

Ratings

Tameside PDU

Fieldwork started March 2023

Score **7/27**

Overall rating

Requires improvement



1. Organisational delivery

1.1 Leadership

Requires improvement



1.2 Staff

Good



1.3 Services

Requires improvement



1.4 Information and facilities

Good



2. Court work and case supervision

2.1 Court work

Requires improvement



2.2 Assessment

Inadequate



2.3 Planning

Inadequate



2.4 Implementation and delivery

Inadequate



2.5 Reviewing

Inadequate



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.

Tameside PDU should:

1. ensure interventions and services available locally are utilised to deliver appropriate services to support desistance and risk of harm
2. improve contingency planning for risk of harm management to ensure protection of victims is prioritised
3. increase middle management capacity to ensure sufficient resource is in place to provide enhanced management oversight
4. provide probation practitioners with the knowledge and experience necessary to ensure sufficient analysis can take place to improve the quality of work to keep people safe
5. ensure that diversity information is assessed and analysed to support the desistance of people on probation.

Greater Manchester region should:

6. ensure there are effective arrangements in place for the PDU to deliver a quality service while qualified PO vacancies remain
7. ensure that Probation Services Officers have sufficient training to adequately assess, plan and deliver interventions that address the risk of harm to others
8. reduce waiting times for accredited programmes, particularly Building Better Relationships (BBR).

HM Prison and Probation Service should:

9. ensure PDUs and probation regions are sufficiently resourced with the right staff to protect the public
10. provide all probation practitioners and managers with the necessary training and learning to ensure work to protect the public can be carried out effectively.

Background

We conducted fieldwork in Tameside PDU over the period of a week, beginning 13 March 2023. We inspected 28 cases where sentences and licences had commenced between 01 August 2022 to 07 August 2022 and 22 August 2022 to 28 August 2022. We also conducted 19 interviews with probation practitioners.

Tameside is one of nine PDUs in the Greater Manchester region of The Probation Service. They operate from one office in Ashton-under-Lyne with women on probation accessing a nearby women's hub. Before probation services were unified in June 2021, Tameside was covered by Cheshire and Greater Manchester Community Rehabilitation Company, operated by Purple Futures and by the North West National Probation Service. Tameside has a magistrates' court and the head and deputy of the PDU had responsibility for probation court services across the Greater Manchester region. Accredited programmes and stand-alone unpaid work (UPW) orders were managed regionally.

Tameside is a metropolitan borough in the east of Greater Manchester, with a population of 231,100. The crime rate in Tameside is lower than the Greater Manchester average at 122 per 1,000 population. Tameside has socio-economic challenges with 13.4 per cent of residents living in income-deprived households. The caseload of the PDU broadly represents the ethnicity of the area, with 85.5 per cent of Tameside residents identifying as 'White' in the 2021 census. At the point of inspection, the PDU was managing a caseload of 1,183, with 457 of these being assessed as high or very high risk of serious harm. Approximately 10 per cent of the caseload were female.

The staffing target of the PDU was 56.45 full-time equivalent (FTE) but the staff in post at the time of inspection was 38.06 FTE. POs were operating at an average of over 120 per cent on the workload measurement tool.

There was a joint approach to commissioning by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and Greater Manchester Probation Service. This allowed regional partners to be accessed by people on probation through the Greater Manchester Integrated Rehabilitative Services (GMIRS) provision. There was also flexibility to commission local services in Tameside, such as Jigsaw Housing. Strong relationships had also been developed with the local authority, Greater Manchester Police and sentencers in court.

Greater Manchester Probation Service had not utilised the national Prioritisation Framework to manage staff vacancies and workload pressures. Their approach was through blended supervision arrangements in which people on probation were managed by phone and face-to-face appointments, depending on risk and need. There were further workload management arrangements detailed in a refreshed quality improvement strategy. A minimum expectations guidance (MEG) used as a checklist for staff was also in place.

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

In this inspection, four domain two standards were rated 'Inadequate' and one 'Requires improvement'. We identified several areas of effective management where, despite significant barriers, progress was being made, which supported a rating for leadership of 'Requires improvement' rather than 'Inadequate'.

Strengths:

- The leadership of this PDU were open, with consideration of staff wellbeing and an energy to drive improvements, against the backdrop of vacancies and the need to build staff skills and experience.
- There was a clear plan to deliver the vision and priorities of the PDU which aligned with the regional strategy. The leadership team was visible within the PDU and set the tone of a collaborative culture.
- Staff were positive about their experiences of leadership, which was illustrated in the survey responses: 97 per cent of staff thought the organisation prioritised quality and adherence to evidence; the open culture, constructive challenge and encouraging ideas was viewed positively by 97 per cent; and communication and implementation of change was viewed favourably by 87 per cent of staff.
- Relationships with strategic partners from the local authority and police were strong, resulting in positive initiatives, including probation practitioners co-located with the MASH and an established process for domestic abuse enquiries. This is also illustrated by local relationships leaders had developed that led to co-located services for women.
- There was an active risk register in place. Tameside also had a local business continuity plan overseen by business managers with suitable contingencies.
- The leadership team planned and sequenced communication forums to ensure regional and local messages were delivered appropriately. This included an operational, performance and quality meeting, and a business manager meeting. The operational staff all attended the same PDU team meeting on a monthly basis for consistency of messaging.
- In our survey with sentencers, 21 responded and all reported positive relationships with the PDU.

Areas for improvement:

- Despite the positive leadership, this had not fully translated into sufficient practice in the cases inspected. All the standards for casework were assessed as 'Inadequate' with court work rated as 'Requires improvement'.

- Management oversight was insufficient in 57 per cent of the cases inspected. Concerningly, risk of harm concerns were not always identified.
- The MEG audits were inconsistent in addressing concerns that were identified in the cases that were inspected.
- At a leadership level, the PDU was not sufficiently equipped with the resources and capacity needed to undertake the necessary oversight of case management. Against the challenge of stabilising the PDU following significant change, the leadership team have been stretched to meet a range of competing demands.

1.2. Staff



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

Good

Strengths:

- A regional objective of the service redesign was to 'improve productivity, effectiveness and presence in court'. At the time of the inspection the court team were fully staffed, and the sentencer survey results were positive about the access to the advice they receive in Tameside magistrates' court.
- The PDU had four different teams located in one office location. There was a positive culture that had been developed, which led to a one-team approach.
- The case administration staff group benefited from recent recruitment to make temporary roles permanent. They reported this had a positive impact on their workload and ability to support probation practitioners. The tone of positive engagement and respect for all was set by an experienced receptionist.
- The staff attrition rate was eight per cent, and the sickness absence rate was 10.3 days per annum, which was lower than the regional average. Sickness absence was actively monitored by the PDU.
- To alleviate staff shortages, there was a targeted approach offering overtime payments which was appreciated by staff. Staff seconded to the youth justice service were temporarily returned and a Probation Operational Delivery system introduced.
- Staff at all grades stated they received regular supervision and felt supported in their roles. Structures were in place to undertake regular high risk case review meetings led by the head and supported by a representative from the Multi Agency Public Protection team, providing oversight of serious cases. The Integrated Offender Management team held daily briefings to share intelligence and monthly multi-agency forum meetings and case conferences.
- The PDU held all-staff meetings to ensure messaging was consistent and shared at the same time.
- The reward and recognition process was fully embedded and welcomed by staff who received both individual and team awards.
- Of the cases inspected, 64 per cent had the same practitioner since the start of their order or licence and 32 per cent had two probation practitioners. This provided continuity for people on probation to develop working relationships.
- Staff training was increasing face-to-face delivery instead of online. Staff reported this approach to be more responsive to their learning style.
- The staff survey results stated that 91 per cent of staff considered they had the right skills and experience for the cases they had been allocated. Eighty-one per cent also reported they had regular supervision, enhancing the quality of work.

- The staff survey response showed that 91 per cent considered there was a culture of learning and continuous improvement. Of the probation practitioners interviewed, 74 per cent stated they had the necessary knowledge and skills to manage the case most of the time, with 26 per cent saying they always have the skills necessary.
- There were development opportunities available with examples of talent management and mentoring for staff with protected characteristics.
- The Professional Qualification in Probation (PQiP) trainees were supported in their role and there was active management of their workload and learning opportunities.

Areas for improvement:

- Despite workforce planning being actively managed and escalated to the regional process, the PDU had a shortage of the PO grade.
- The overall vacancy rate in the PDU was 32.6 per cent. The staff group impacted most was the PO grade which had 10.8 staff in post against a target of 22.2. This resulted in POs being consistently over 120 per cent on the workload measurement tool.
- The staff survey stated that 50 per cent of staff did not think their workload was manageable and 78 per cent considered the staffing level insufficient.
- Senior Probation Officers described their workload as 'busy' and it was difficult for them to consistently be fully engaged with their lead role responsibilities. This was illustrated in the cases inspected, where we found that there was a lack of effective management oversight in 57 per cent of cases inspected.
- The diversity of the staff group did not reflect the local population. The workforce was predominantly white females with, only two male POs and one male PQiP trainee within the PDU.

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

In rating this standard, the effective arrangements in place, including devolved arrangements, to develop, commission and make available relevant services and interventions were considered against the domain two rating of 'Inadequate' for implementation and delivery. The strengths recognised have led to the overall rating of 'Requires improvement' for services.

Strengths:

- The arrangements to commission and develop services at a strategic level were impressive. The devolution arrangements provided local influence and autonomy to commission services to meet demand and need promptly.
- The GMIRS offer was documented and accessible. The number of referrals into these services in Tameside PDU increased from 40 in January 2022 to 107 in January 2023.
- Local needs were also addressed with the ROOTS programme. This was an accommodation provision to Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangement and Integrated Offender Management (IOM) cases with complex needs co-commissioned with Tameside local authority and Jigsaw Housing.
- Accredited programmes were running at 145 to 150 per cent of pre Covid-19 levels. Although programmes were not delivered in the PDU, the travel time was under 30 minutes, with daytime, evenings and weekend provision.
- A range of UPW projects were available, including women-only and individual placements. The backlog of 561 cases regionally was subject to monitoring. UPW compliance had increased to 65 per cent from 34 per cent in December 2021. The number of education, training and employment (ETE) delivered UPW work hours had increased from 148 in August 2022 to 699 in January 2023. This had been driven by linking in with education providers such as Myerscough college.
- Co-location of services was in place with several partners at the Tameside office. This was reciprocated with some probation staff spending part of their working week at partnerships such as the MASH and the women's centre. The women's centre was an accessible facility that had a diverse menu of services available, including substance misuse services, Citizens Advice, legal services, a health worker, domestic abuse support and early years support.
- The accommodation and CAS3 commissioned service provision for prison leavers led to 90 per cent of those without accommodation being housed, reducing homelessness.
- Links with the mental health nurse allowed probation practitioners to develop other contacts to address specific needs for autism and ADHD.

- The User Voice survey of people on probation found that three out of four of those that needed help accessing services received the support they needed.
- Probation practitioners stated during inspection interviews they always had access to services 53 per cent of the time or most of the time in 42 per cent of cases.
- There was a comprehensive analysis regarding referral rates into services as well as retention and identified needs for the PDU.
- IOM was an embedded process with strong partnership arrangements, with information shared promptly between police and probation.
- Relationships with the police had led to positive arrangements to share information; domestic abuse enquiries were done in 92 per cent of the court reports inspected. There was an established process for three-monthly checks embedded within PDU practice.

Areas for improvement:

- Although partnership services, such as substance misuse, were located in the PDU office, we found an inconsistency in contacting them in a timely manner or maintaining appropriate contact.
- The use of services to protect others did not translate into casework. In only 39 per cent of cases inspected did delivery of services support the safety of other people.
- There is a training package available for toolkits, but we found they were inconsistently used. Some staff expressed a lack of confidence in using them and there was no evidence of quality feedback if they did.
- Waiting times to access accredited programmes were not appropriate, with four months for the Thinking Skills programme and five months for BBR.

Resettlement work

Strengths:

- Work in Tameside to support people released from custody on licence was developing reasonably well. The short sentence function team worked with individuals sentenced to less than 20 months, while those serving longer sentences fell under the model of Offender Management in Custody. Staff were employed at a regional level in each of the four prisons falling under the responsibility of Greater Manchester Probation Service and they undertook the basic custody resettlement screening of all prisoners in the weeks leading up to release. The two main prisons serving Tameside were HMP Forest Bank and HMP/Young Offender Institution Hindley.
- Although our case sample only included seven people released on licence, in all but one the community offender manager ensured a proportionate level of contact with the prisoner before release. In all the cases the requirement of the licence started promptly, or at an appropriate time. In most cases, pre-release work was facilitated by the community offender manager with the prisoner via video link or face-to-face contact.
- Under the short sentence function, those released should receive an enhanced level of contact and support with up to four contacts each week, including partner agencies and the PDU's link worker, designated for one day a week to Tameside, for the first four weeks of their licence. We saw some evidence of this with the level and nature of contact being sufficient to reduce reoffending and support desistance in all seven of the cases we reviewed and the implementation and delivery of services effectively supporting the person on probation's desistance in five out of the seven cases.
- Enforcement action was taken in all relevant licence cases.

Areas for improvement:

- Work focusing on the assessment and management of risk of harm to others required further attention. Despite pre-release contact and good levels of engagement upon release, in only half the relevant cases did the community offender manager address the key risk of harm needs before release, and in only three of the seven cases did the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people upon release. However, this was no worse than for cases managed on community orders.

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 PDU learning strategy was guided by the monthly operation, performance and quality meetings. The set agenda includes Serious Further Offence learning and performance discussions.
- There was a calendar of workshops available to staff to update their knowledge on a variety of topics linked to their work. These included mental health sessions, trauma-informed approaches and working with diversity.
- Staff had access to 'Hive', the regional communications platform. This contained information on learning resources, working practices and guidance. It also had links for staff support and human resources as well as diversity information. This was highlighted as a positive and accessible system by staff.
- OPeN is a system that is accessible to all grades of staff to monitor their workload. This allowed both line managers and probation practitioners to monitor targets and organise their diary.
- Partnership agencies co-located in the office allowed probation practitioners to have informal discussions and expedited referrals.
- The office was accessible, with relevant information in reception. One of the five interview rooms was furnished to facilitate the interviewing of people with neurodiversity needs.
- The PDU head developed a link with a criminal justice mental health social worker. They provided advice and training to staff on mental health issues, how to access relevant services, as well as attending multi-agency meetings.
- The survey completed by User Voice found that the majority of people on probation interviewed felt safe accessing the office – 71 per cent strongly agreed and 18 per cent agreed. The staff survey stated that sufficient attention to their safety was always paid or most of the time in 84 per cent of those that responded.
- Wi-Fi was available in the office via ethernet. There are plans to go over to the government Wi-Fi system within the two months following the inspection.

Areas for improvement:

- Only 2.6 FTE Quality Development Officers (QDO) were in post across the region against a target staffing model of seven. This inevitably impacted on the level of quality assurance available. The QDO covering Tameside PDU was to be deployed into sentence management to cover staff shortages.
- Although staff were made aware of improvements needed following MEG audits to enhance quality, this did not always highlight the issues identified in the cases inspected.

Feedback from people on probation

User Voice, working with HM Inspectorate of Probation, had contact with people on probation as part of this inspection. Of these, 46 per cent reported that they were being supervised having been released from a prison sentence, and 52 per cent were subject to a community sentence. The respondents were largely representative of the caseload demographics in terms of ethnic diversity but females were underrepresented.

Strengths:

- People on probation generally felt safe accessing the probation office (89 per cent) and were able to have private conversations with their probation practitioner (77 per cent).
- Despite seeing a limited deployment of services in the cases inspected, three in four respondents to User Voice felt they had been helped to access services they needed.

“I got into a course with stepwise, and it’s been really helpful. They want to give me a bus pass to travel there, and I have got a mental health worker.”

- When discussing their experience with User Voice, the most common positive response by people on probation was the relationship with the probation practitioner. In our inspection findings, an effective working relationship was a strength in 75 per cent of the cases inspected.

“They are a friendly bunch here, and my probation worker is great. I can open up to her and share challenges I may have.”

Areas for improvement:

- There was an overall sense from User Voice findings that the challenges regarding workloads for some staff were being felt by people on probation. The main issue identified by respondents were the long waiting times for appointments and 32 per cent could not think of any positives with their experience on probation.

“Time is the issue, I turn up on time and never get seen at that time. They just need to respect the appointment times. Sometimes they don’t communicate with each other that well, as I am fairly set this is the only issue for me but it seems like such a waste of time.”

- People on probation felt probation services had asked for their views about being on supervision in only 40 per cent of responses. This corresponds with the findings of the inspection in which the individual was sufficiently engaged during the initial assessment in 11 out of 28 cases. One respondent noted:

“It was a challenge to get there, they were okay, but I didn’t find it useful and it was all very one way.”

Diversity and inclusion

Strengths:

- The PDU head and staff had a good understanding of the diversity of the local population, by breaking down local data and exploring the impact of rurality on people accessing services.
- Mentoring opportunities were available for staff with protected characteristics, which was illustrated through opportunities made available to shadow interviews and prison work for development.
- The service offered for women considered a range of diversity issues such as childcare and links with the Polish and the traveller community to enhance their experience.
- There was a range of commissioned and non-commissioned services detailed in the GMIRS brochure that addresses a diverse population and protected characteristics. These included services addressing mental health for those from an ethnic minority background and support for EU nationals from Central and Eastern Europe who are subject to probation supervision.

Areas for improvement:

- The information on disproportionality was not accessible via the performance equality tool. This did not allow for adjustments in services to be actioned using information such as rates of breach and recall.
- In the inspected caseload, the assessment of women with regard to drawing on sources of information was worse than that of males. The same practice was also noted when assessing factors linked to offending and harm.
- In 64 per cent of the cases in inspection, the protected characteristics of the person on probation were not sufficiently analysed to consider the impact on engagement. This resulted in the delivery of services not being responsive to the individual 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.

Requires improvement

Our rating¹ 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?	58%

Strengths:

- The oversight of court work and relationships with sentencers contributed to effective processes being implemented to inform sentencing.
- Meaningful engagement between individuals and staff preparing court reports was undertaken in 10 out of 12 cases. This meant people on probation were positively involved in the process.
- Mechanisms to obtain domestic abuse information worked effectively at court, with enquiries made with the police in 92 per cent of reports. All but one enquiry had been returned prior to sentencing. This ensured appropriate information was available when considering proposals for the court.
- In 10 reports being prepared there were indicators of concerns towards children. In nine of these cases, relevant enquiries were made with children's social care services.
- In a large majority of reports, there was appropriate consideration given to the individual's personal circumstances and diversity information. In all cases inspected, we found a suitable proposal had been made to court.

Areas for improvement:

- In three out of the 12 reports, risk of harm factors were not sufficiently considered. This included an insufficient analysis of previous offending behaviour.
- Despite safeguarding and domestic abuse enquiries being made, the information related to risk of harm was not sufficiently analysed in 33 per cent of reports.

¹ 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 on our website.](#)

2.2. Assessment



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

Inadequate

Our rating² 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?	39%
Does assessment focus sufficiently on the factors linked to offending and desistance?	57%
Does assessment focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	29%

Tameside PDU is rated as 'Inadequate' for assessment as the lowest score out of the three questions was 29 per cent. Concerningly, this relates to whether there was sufficient focus on keeping other people safe.

Strengths:

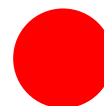
- Most assessments (71 per cent) meaningfully involved the person on probation. Information had been gathered on their views and personal circumstances to inform future work as part of their order or licence.
- The PDU had strengthened information sharing with the police, which was reflected positively at the assessment stage, where 75 per cent of domestic abuse enquiries were appropriately undertaken.

Areas for improvement:

- Assessment work in the cases inspected was undertaken at a time when the PDU was adjusting to the unification and carrying practitioner vacancies, the impact of which was seen in the quality of assessments.
- Assessments did not consistently consider (two in three cases) how motivated and ready individuals were to engage with the sentence which had negatively impacted the focus on engagement.
- In only 11 out of 28 cases was a sufficient analysis of the harm posed to actual and potential victims undertaken. Over half the cases did not clearly identify relevant factors linked to the risk of harm towards others. These gaps remained absent from plans to address the risk of harm.

² 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 on our website.](#)

2.3. Planning



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

Inadequate

Our rating³ 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?	64%
Does planning focus sufficiently on reducing reoffending and supporting desistance?	75%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	43%

Tameside PDU is rated as 'Inadequate' for planning as the lowest score out of the three questions was 43 per cent.

Strengths:

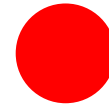
- In nearly two-thirds of the inspected cases (64 per cent), probation practitioners recognised the individual needs of the person on probation, ensuring the plans created were personalised and meaningful to the individual.
- In most cases, probation practitioners prioritised the most important factors linked to reducing the likelihood of offending. This led to the appropriate agencies being identified so that people on probation could access the services needed.

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. Concerningly, there was a lack of focus on actions that could protect potential and identified victims.
- Less than half of cases sufficiently considered the protective factors of the person on probation. By failing to consider potential sources of support, key elements of desistance were missing to support desistance.
- The most critical risk of harm factors were not prioritised in 12 out of the 26 relevant cases, with many being a result of a lack of focus on safeguarding and intimate relationship concerns.

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.](#)

2.4. Implementation and delivery



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

Our rating⁴ 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?	71%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support desistance?	46%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?	39%

Tameside PDU is rated as 'Inadequate' for implementation and delivery. Two out of the three scores would have resulted in an Inadequate rating, with the lowest score being the delivery of services to support the safety of others.

Strengths:

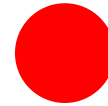
- In 75 per cent of cases inspected, there was sufficient focus on maintaining working relationship with individuals. Proactive contact was made where there was a risk of non-compliance, and a flexible approach was taken to enable people to complete their sentence.

Areas for improvement:

- In half of relevant cases, the coordination of other agencies involved in managing the risk was not sufficient. Inspectors found instances of information either not being shared or, when it was, not being used as part of the delivery of work with the person on probation.
- In too few cases, key individuals for the person on probation were not engaged to support either desistance or reduce harm. We found that in some cases little was known about family members or partners that could have a positive influence or be potential victims.
- Not enough work was completed with people on probation to support their desistance. Services to support rehabilitation and reduce the likeliness of reoffending were not always utilised, despite this being part of planning.

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. [Full data and further information about inspection methodology is available in the data workbook for this inspection on our website.](#)

2.5. Reviewing



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

Inadequate

Our rating⁵ 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?	71%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting desistance?	54%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	39%

Tameside PDU is rated as 'Inadequate' for reviewing as the lowest score out of the three questions is 39 per cent.

Strengths:

- Reviewing was undertaken well when an individual's engagement and necessary adjustments were considered to initial plans of work. We saw examples where practice was changed to account for diversity needs.
- Compliance and engagement levels were considered in 61 per cent as part of reviewing activity to consider barriers to engagement with the sentence.

Areas for improvement:

- When reviewing the risk of harm posed by individuals, probation practitioners were not involving both the person on probation and any key individuals in their life enough. This was a missed opportunity to improve engagement and gather up-to-date information for the review process.
- The management of risk of harm was not always effective when circumstances changed. In less than half of relevant cases, probation practitioners did not adjust the plan of work following a change in risk of harm.
- Critical information from agencies was too often missing from reviewing. Inspectors found examples of cases where further disclosures on relationships and child contact did not result in appropriate checks and professional curiosity.

⁵ 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?	32%

Strengths:

- None of the people on probation were homeless during the period of inspection; housing support was recognised as a strength within the PDU.
- In 23 out of 28 cases there had been no further charges or convictions. Enforcement action, such as breach and recall to custody, was undertaken in 10 out of 14 cases where it was required.

Areas for improvement:

- Early outcomes demonstrated that sufficient progress had only been made in nine out of 28 cases. While it is acknowledged that some orders and licences were in their early stages, this figure is disappointing.
- There were too few cases (25 per cent) where factors closely related to offending had improved. That included relationships, lifestyle, ETE, and thinking and behaviour.
- A reduction in factors most closely related to risk of harm to others had only taken place in 15 per cent of cases. That corresponds with our findings that work to protect others from harm was an area of weakness.
- Although there was a comprehensive offer of services, we saw limited deployment of these in our inspected cases. For example, of the 15 cases where drug misuse was linked to offending, only five appeared to have made progress in the area.

Annexe one – Web links

Full data and further information about inspection methodology is available in the data workbook for this inspection [on our website](#).

A glossary of terms used in this report is available on our website using the following link: [Glossary \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://justiceinspectorates.gov.uk)