



HM Inspectorate
of Probation

An inspection of probation services in:

Cumbria PDU

The Probation Service – North West region

HM Inspectorate of Probation, July 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.

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

We have rated Cumbria Probation Delivery Unit (PDU) as 'Requires improvement'. Despite some positive aspects of leadership and staffing, this has yet to translate into consistent good quality sentence management.

Despite the challenges of geography and rurality Cumbria PDU had a visible and engaging leadership team. There was a clear focus on staff wellbeing. Staff we spoke to were committed and motivated, describing a culture of openness and support across all grades. Staffing is stabilising which will have a positive impact on workloads in the short to medium term. A consistent focus on unpaid work (UPW) delivery has eliminated the backlog of cases and work is now concentrated on reducing barriers to compliance for people on probation. Senior leaders have fostered strong relationships with key partners, strategic priorities were aligned, and contributions in key forums provided valuable direction and scrutiny.

Disappointingly, however, the overall quality of casework we inspected was insufficient. The quality of work to assess and manage risk of harm and to keep other people safe, particularly relating to children and those at risk of domestic abuse, were the areas we were most concerned about. The PDU has taken action to improve processes for obtaining information from police domestic abuse units and children's services; however, these were not consistent. It was also concerning that where information was provided, it was not sufficiently utilised. Professional curiosity by practitioners must be enhanced to inform how risks posed are managed. There were some encouraging indications that work in the latter stages of case supervision was showing some improvement.

Compliance and subsequent enforcement action were inconsistent, and often hindered by interactions with the regional enforcement hub. This included conflicting quality assurance guidance and delays in progressing breach activity. The PDU was also hindered by difficulties in recruiting programme facilitators due to geographical considerations meaning that programmes could not always be offered where they were required.

Senior Probation Officers (SPOs) had reasonable spans of control and provided regular supervision. However, management oversight was ineffective in most cases we inspected. Managers have a critical role to play with newly experienced officers and for those going through training, yet their roles do not provide them with the dedicated time needed to provide the enhanced level of oversight of service delivery needed for new and inexperienced staff.

The leadership team have an understanding of the improvements needed and our findings are reflected in their priorities. Staffing is starting to stabilise and if nationally there is action to provide managers with the capacity to increase oversight of cases, the leadership team will be in a position to drive quality. The foundations and collaborative relationships are in place to enable a greater focus on quality public protection moving forward.



Justin Russell
Chief Inspector of Probation

Ratings

Cumbria PDU

Fieldwork started May 2023

Score **6/27**

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

Requires improvement



2. Court work and case supervision

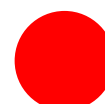
2.1 Court work

Requires improvement



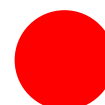
2.2 Assessment

Inadequate



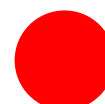
2.3 Planning

Inadequate



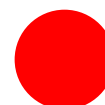
2.4 Implementation and delivery

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.

Cumbria PDU should:

1. ensure domestic abuse and safeguarding information is analysed sufficiently to inform the quality of assessment, planning, and management of people on probation
2. review the focus of management oversight to ensure that risk of serious harm is accurately assessed and proactively managed
3. have an effective process in place to ensure actions set by managers are completed effectively
4. improve planning activity in high-risk cases with particular focus on links to the work of other agencies
5. improve pre- and post-release engagement activity for those in custody to ensure that assessment and plans are timely and meet the needs of those on probation
6. ensure diversity across all protected characteristics is prioritised and barriers for staff and people on probation are fully understood and addressed.

North West region should:

7. review the impact and efficacy of the regional enforcement hub and develop a consistent approach to enforcement quality assurance so that practitioners, court staff and sentencers are confident in the quality of this work
8. ensure middle managers have sufficient capacity to provide the appropriate level of oversight according to the needs of staff members
9. undertake an impact assessment to provide an understanding of how learning and development is reflected in the quality-of-service delivery to inform future learning needs
10. improve completion rates of accredited programmes and structured interventions.

HM Prison and Probation Service should:

11. review the role of the middle manager to ensure they have the right capacity to provide oversight to the increased numbers of newly qualified staff and those going through training
12. provide reliable Wi-Fi across all PDU premises in Cumbria
13. improve access to ViSOR (Violent and Sex Offender Register) vetting and training.¹

¹ ViSOR (also known as National Dangerous Persons' Database) is a national 'Official Sensitive' database that supports public protection by facilitating effective sharing of information and intelligence on violent, sexual, terrorist and other dangerous offenders between the three MAPPAs Responsible Authority agencies, namely the Prison and Probation services and Police Service (including Counter Terrorism Police). ViSOR also contains records of other nominals such as Serious Organised Crime (SOC) and Potentially Dangerous Persons (PDP) and is used by associated partner agencies including NCA (National Crime Agency) and MOD (Ministry of Defence).

Background

We conducted fieldwork in Cumbria PDU over the period of a week, beginning 15 May 2023. We inspected 52 cases where sentences and licences had commenced between 03 October 2022 to 09 October 2022, and 07 November to 13 November 2022. We also conducted 45 interviews with probation practitioners.

Before the unification of public and private probation service providers in June 2021, Cumbria was served by the Cumbria and Lancashire Community Rehabilitation Company and the North West division of the National Probation Service. It is now one of 13 PDUs in the North West region of The Probation Service. It operates from five office locations: Carlisle, Workington, Barrow-in-Furness, Kendal and Penrith. Penrith operates two days a week as a satellite office due to its small caseload.

There are four courts across the county: Workington magistrates' court; Furness and District magistrates' court in Barrow; Carlisle magistrates' court; and Carlisle Crown Court. The court teams are managed within the PDU.

There is one adult male approved premises operating in Cumbria; the Bowling Green, situated next to the Carlisle office.

Until 01 April 2023 the county of Cumbria was divided into six district councils and one county council. Significant local government reorganisation means that the county now operates under two unitary authorities; Cumberland Council and Westmorland and Furness Council. Cumbria Constabulary police the entire PDU area.

Cumbria is the third largest county in England, covering an area of more than 2,600 square miles. Its population of approximately 500,821 is largely rural, and a significant majority identify as white British (97 per cent). This is reflected in the demography of the PDU's staff and caseload.

The total caseload for the North West region was 24,011, with Cumbria PDU's caseload at the date of inspection announcement comprising 851 people on community sentences and 426 people on post-release supervision. There were a further 563 cases in the custodial estate.²

A range of commissioned rehabilitative services (CRS) were delivered across the PDU: The Growth Company for personal wellbeing services; Women's Community Matters and two subcontractors (Women out West and Carlisle Gateway) deliver women's services. St Giles Wise delivers finance, benefit and debt services. Accommodation services are delivered by Interventions Alliance (Seetec). Accommodation is a challenge across the PDU due to a competitive tourism rental sector and limited housing stock.

Accredited programmes are managed regionally. Stand-alone UPW orders are managed by specialist practitioners who are embedded within the PDU but managed at a regional level.

The PDU has operated in 'amber' under the national Prioritisation Framework (PF) since February 2022 (apart from a brief period in May-July 2022 when it operated in green), meaning that some activity had been deprioritised. This is national guidance produced by the probation service to enable local PDUs to manage demand where staff capacity is low.

² These figures have been confirmed by the PDU.

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 the strengths that have been identified, four domain 2 standards were rated as 'Inadequate' which rules out a rating of 'Good' or 'Outstanding' for leadership. This has resulted in a rating of 'Requires improvement' for this standard.

Strengths:

- The leadership of the PDU was underpinned by effective relationships between the Head of PDU and the deputy. Staff and partners understood the vision and key priorities, which were communicated through various forums.
- Leaders had a clear plan to drive quality improvement; while the majority of the domain 2 results were inadequate, there were effective arrangements to understand the issues which formed part of the key priorities of the vision.
- The vision for the PDU was underpinned by a delivery plan, which was aligned with the priorities of the region and local partners. Priorities included strengthening the quality of delivery, engaging with people on probation and returning to delivery against national standards as staffing stabilised.
- Senior leaders were visible and approachable. Leaders understood their visibility was important to staff, given the significant challenge of the PDU being spread across a large geographical area with numerous offices.
- Staff reported a positive culture of support across all teams and grades; inspectors often heard the PDU being described as "a family".
- There were enduring relationships across the strategic partnership. The PDU was described by strategic partners and service providers we spoke to as a "critical friend", which reflected the strength of those relationships.
- In April 2023, a local government reform programme took place. The PDU leadership provided a significant role in shaping the delivery of the reform.

Areas for improvement:

- The leadership priority to strengthen service delivery was not seen in the cases inspected. The quality of public protection delivery specifically linked to the assessment of domestic abuse and safeguarding was inconsistent.
- Only 42 per cent of staff had been vetted to allow access to ViSOR, with only nine per cent of those having accessed ViSOR training. Nationally more training and vetting is required.

- Although we found evidence of engagement of people on probation, particularly women, this was on a case-by-case basis. Of the people surveyed by User Voice, only 45 per cent felt they had been asked their views about being on supervision. Leaders acknowledged that their local strategic Engaging People on Probation plan was embryonic and will be a focus of the coming business year. Information gathered from this activity should be used to assess accessibility and impact of available services for those being supervised in Cumbria.
- Practitioners were familiar with the PF and the activities that should be prioritised. There was variance however, in how staff were applying the PF in practice. We heard examples of staff completing work that had been deprioritised to facilitate good working relationships with partner colleagues, whilst activity such as referrals to CRS, accredited programmes and structured interventions were not being completed consistently.

1.2. Staff



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

Good

Staffing was stabilising, with an increased number of SPOs recruited beyond the target operating model to reflect the rurality of the PDU. Staff were well engaged and actively contributed to a positive culture.

Strengths:

- Practitioners and administrative staff we spoke to were motivated and committed to doing their best for people on probation.
- Staffing levels were stabilising across most grades. The Probation Services Officer (PSO) grade was fully staffed. The PDU had 6.5 full-time equivalent Probation Officer (PO) vacancies at the point of inspection. Four Professional Qualification in Probation (PQiP) learners were to remain in Cumbria post qualification in June 2023, enabling the PDU to move to green on the PF.³
- Workloads were actively monitored through the workload management board, addressing variations in workloads, sickness and acute pressures. Workloads for administrators were improving, with leaders having addressed resourcing challenges.
- Middle managers had reasonable spans of control and while described as being busy, felt workloads were manageable; our inspectors agreed with this.
- Staff felt able to raise issues with cases or personal concerns with their managers. Most practitioners spoke highly of the support from their managers, including providing support required for their protected characteristics.
- Of those staff responding to our survey, 88 per cent said they received frequent supervision; 79 per cent of staff felt it enhanced the quality of their work.
- A staff engagement and wellbeing forum was in place which was considered a valuable forum and an effective feedback loop between staff and managers. It was a place for staff to share ideas, provide feedback to senior leaders and promote wellbeing. Of the staff who responded to our survey, 55 per cent stated that sufficient attention was paid to wellbeing “always” or “most of the time”.

³ Information provided by the PDU during fieldwork week.

- Leaders were working with the region to develop additional support to Newly Qualified Officers (NQO) post qualification. The SPO currently responsible for managing PQiPs will lead the regional response to onward development of NQOs moving forwards, providing continuity and an understanding of the key learning needs for that group.

Areas for improvement:

- Workloads and caseloads for practitioners were variable; the overall Workload Measurement Tool averaged 106 per cent at the point of inspection. Individual workload figures ranged from 25 to 142 per cent. Those with significantly lower workload figures were newer staff awaiting the necessary training and experience to increase their workload capacity. Of those responding to our staff survey, 80 per cent felt that their workload was not manageable.
- Since the unification of probation services in 2021, 27 per cent of staff have been recruited. Whilst an SPO assurance tracker indicates that 61 per cent of staff have completed all mandatory training, this did not appear to have impacted on staff confidence and competence.
- Management oversight was sufficient in only 38 per cent of the cases we inspected, and we saw several examples of incomplete actions. There was a variable range of experience in the management team. The Head of PDU acknowledged that they had only recently had capacity to provide full oversight in all areas of practice.
- Only 53 per cent of staff responding to our survey said that exceptional work was recognised and rewarded “always” or “most of the time”, despite inspectors having heard positive examples of recognition. We saw no evidence that leaders monitored disproportionality in the way that reward and recognition was used across staff roles or protected characteristics.
- We heard examples of staff diversity needs being addressed when raised individually. We saw less evidence of a strategic approach to monitoring and understanding the experience of those staff who were not white British and closing the data disclosure gap for this group.

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

A number of positive arrangements were in place to make available relevant services and interventions. However, a domain 2 rating of 'Inadequate' for implementation and delivery rules out a rating of 'Good' or 'Outstanding'.

Strengths:

- PDU leaders had strong relationships with police, substance misuse commissioners, the Youth Justice Service, CRS and third sector providers. We heard evidence of good working relationships between operational staff and police colleagues, especially with the Integrated Offender Management (IOM) scheme/Management of Violent and Sexual Offenders (MOSOVO) staff.
- The range of UPW placements within the PDU increased post pandemic and staff continued to seek to expand this offer. Feedback from the beneficiaries of UPW projects was positive. Of unemployed people with an UPW requirement, 20 per cent were completing education and training, with an ambition to increase this figure.
- UPW had a 60 per cent compliance rate, with no backlog. An UPW improvement group – chaired by the Deputy Head of PDU and attended by UPW operations managers, placement coordinators, SPOs and relevant practitioners – reviewed compliance, and barriers to engagement. As a result, compliance had increased by six per cent per month against a target of three per cent per month. This was a positive area of innovation.
- IOM had been refreshed and there was effective joint working between the police, local authority and probation. All top 10 domestic abuse nominals are considered for adoption in to the 'free' cohort, providing a focus on this group. There have been significant reductions in the number of acquisitive offences committed by the IOM cohort, and the financial cost of those offences because of effective management.
- Women's CRS were delivered from three dedicated women's centres in Carlisle, Barrow and Whitehaven. Other professionals were working from the centres, providing a holistic offer, and probation staff were co-located at the Carlisle and Whitehaven location. Many services were co-commissioned with the Police and Crime Commissioner and other partners. We heard positive outcomes from the Pathways project, particularly for women. This was a bespoke provision by Remedi to deliver out-of-court disposals in Cumbria. An evaluation of this provision was part-funded by the PDU. This evaluation showed that out of 179 referrals for women, 163 received deferred cautions and 16 received deferred charges. Participants can engage in rehabilitative activity and signposting, with an 81 per cent success rate for completions. The Head of PDU was on the out-of-court disposal panel and scrutiny was valued by partners.

- The Regional Innovation Outcome Fund (ROIF) was used to commission services based on localised need. One such example is 1Clic, a co-commissioned project with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner which had reduced the number of county drug lines operating in Cumbria from nine to zero.
- Due to a rise in the number of people on probation in Workington requiring intervention, the PDU submitted a business case for use of local premises for programme delivery. This aimed to address the barriers accessing public transport at the main office, and increase engagement and compliance.
- All sentencers surveyed spoke highly of the service delivered at court to assist sentencing and decision-making.

Areas for improvement:

- Not all CRS referrals were maximised. We heard from several CRS providers that their referral volumes were lower than anticipated. Although finance, benefit and debt referrals were slowly increasing, volume and accuracy of referrals to ETE remained an issue. Just 15 per cent of these referrals were identified as a high level of complexity. This was having a detrimental impact on the level of ETE intervention available to people on probation.
- Other providers described poor-quality referral information, particularly about risk and practitioner clarity about the complexity assigned to a referral, impacting on the time allocated to work with an individual.
- Accommodation referrals were significantly oversubscribed, but outcomes relating to housing support were poor. There was a lack of understanding from practitioners about who to prioritise for this service and we heard a sense of frustration as a result. Efforts had been made by providers to overcome barriers and increase referrals by delivering briefings and having a presence in teams, but this had yet to yield results.
- Only 54 per cent of people on probation we surveyed felt they had access to services relevant to their needs.
- There were only 53 accredited programme completions between April 2022 and March 2023. Just three of these related to the Thinking Skills Programme despite thinking and behaviour being a significant need evidenced in the PDU treatment needs analysis. An interventions action plan was in development to address these issues but had not yet commenced.
- Structured interventions were not being maximised. There were 68 referrals over a 12-month period across the suite available. There were 18 completions, giving a completion rate of 26 per cent. Regional arrangements to allocate programme facilitators in the PDU had not sufficiently considered the geographical spread. This meant that in some offices, there was no facilitator, and this hindered staff making referrals.
- Enforcement activity was less positive. Sentencers and court staff reported poor-quality enforcement. This was a joint activity with the regional enforcement hub.

Resettlement work

There is one prison in Cumbria, HM Prison Haverigg, located in the south-west of the county. This is a category D adult male prison. However, 65 per cent of people released from custody to be supervised in Cumbria are released from prisons in the North East region of The Probation Service.

Strengths:

- Ninety-two per cent of resettlement cases had a formal written review of actions to implement the sentence compared to 38 per cent in community cases. These reviews focused on supporting compliance and engagement.
- A Health and Justice Partnership Coordinator had been appointed in the PDU focusing on driving improvements in this area, as well as maximising the use of community sentence treatment requirements as an alternative to custody.

Areas for improvement:

- Engagement with those in custody and identification of their factors linked to desistance and offending was less robust than those on community sentences. The PDU was aware that prison to community offender manager handover was an area for improvement. Pre-release contact with those in custody was proportionate in six of the 11 relevant resettlement cases we inspected and, due to issues of geography, was often by telephone.
- Whilst engagement was largely a strength in this PDU, those subject to licence were less well engaged in assessment and planning activity than those subject to community sentences.
- Key resettlement and desistance needs were addressed pre-release in six of the 12 resettlement cases we inspected. Whilst seven of the cases we inspected had accommodation services delivered pre-release, there were gaps in the delivery of substance misuse and mental health services both pre-release and at the point of transition into the community.
- Domestic abuse enquiries were made in less than half of resettlement cases. Only one third of cases had children's safeguarding enquiries made.

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

Despite the geographical challenges in Cumbria, estates were in accessible locations. Improvements were required however, in the way that the PDU utilised data and feedback from those it supervised to inform service delivery.

Strengths:

- Buildings were accessible and largely positive working environments. Premises including older buildings such as Kendal had been refurbished.
- Of the staff who responded to our survey, 74 per cent reported that sufficient attention was paid to their safety, and to action and learning following incidents.
- Practice development days were embedded across the PDU, providing protected learning time for staff. Themes were selected through the staff engagement forum and from quality improvement intelligence provided to senior leaders from audit and performance data.
- An embedded Quality Development Officer to support both team and individual development was considered beneficial by all grades. Of the staff who responded to our survey, 81 per cent said that a culture of learning and continuous improvement was actively promoted. Staff welcomed the use of Microsoft Teams across the PDU to connect, given the geographical distance.
- A monthly Serious Further Offence (SFO) meeting tracked completions of action plans. The PDU requested that individual SPO management oversight actions identified in two SFOs were broadened to include the wider middle management team and support consistency in this area.

Areas for improvement:

- Following HM Inspectorate of Probation's multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) thematic report (2022), the management board had begun to collate and analyse diversity information across the MAPPA cohort to ensure they are sighted on any issues of disproportionality. However, we saw limited evidence that the PDU used a similar approach across the rest of its people on probation.
- Although Wi-Fi was available across the PDU it was unreliable. Staff have access to systems via wired cables, but less flexibility to use laptops away from those cables.
- Some staff reported that using the MS Teams channel as a means of regional communication can be overwhelming.
- The lift in the Barrow-in-Furness office was broken, meaning that any practitioner with accessibility issues would not be able to work in the main office.

- Learning from SFOs was shared in various forums and leaders planned to develop quarterly publications incorporating learning from SFOs and domestic homicide reviews. However, was not in place at the time of inspection.
- The limited progress in engaging people on probation means that leaders were not clear enough about the impact and effectiveness of services.

Feedback from people on probation

User Voice, working with HM Inspectorate of Probation, had contact with 61 people on probation as part of this inspection. This included: a small number of women; people aged between 18 to 50+; and over a third of people spoken to disclosed they had a disability. Respondents who identified as white made up 92 per cent of those contacted. Forty-three per cent reported they were subject to a community sentence and 56 per cent were subject to post-sentence supervision.

Strengths:

- Of those surveyed by User Voice, 76 per cent said they were able to contact their probation practitioner when needed, with 82 per cent being able to have conversations in private with them.
- Sixty-six per cent of respondents felt safe accessing the probation office.
- Just over one third of respondents described their relationship with their probation practitioner as being a good aspect of their probation experience.

“My PO and I formed a good relationship and I’ve had the same one throughout.”

Areas for improvement:

- Only 54 per cent of respondents reported that probation had helped them access the services they need.
- Just 56 per cent of respondents stated they could access services in their local area and only 56 per cent said they could access services in a reasonable time.
- Less than half of those surveyed (45 per cent) felt they had a say in how the service is run.

“No, I’m afraid I don’t. Is that a thing that they take suggestions – I’ve not heard of that?”

Diversity and inclusion

Strengths:

- The 2021 Census data indicated that 98 per cent of Cumbria's population is white British and this was reflected in the population of people on probation and the workforce. Three per cent of the workforce stated they are from black or minority ethnic backgrounds. The workforce comprises 83 per cent women, which is an overrepresentation compared to the broader population.
- There was a mixed age and sexual orientation across all grades of staff. 16 per cent of the caseload in Cumbria were women and we saw a positive response in terms of the provision that was available. There was access to a female-only UPW placements and where groups were mixed, placement coordinators risk assess participants carefully to manage risk to women.
- In the female cases we inspected, 88 per cent of assessments focused sufficiently on the factors linked to offending and desistance compared to 53 per cent for men.
- Requirements started promptly in 88 per cent of female cases compared to 70 per cent of males.
- There were arrangements in place, which we saw in UPW, to respond to neurodiversity.
- There was sufficient provision for 18–25-year-olds, with a PO seconded to the Youth Justice Service and holding some transition cases. There was ambition from leaders to improve this delivery through the development of 18–25 specialisms across the PDU and plans to target some ROIF spending for this cohort.

Areas for improvement:

- Whilst the cohort of people on probation from a black and minority ethnic background was very small in Cumbria (three per cent), it remains important that leaders and practitioners understand the unique experiences that this group might face in such a predominantly white location.
- Twenty-three per cent of staff had not disclosed their ethnicity. This was a significant data gap. We found insufficient evidence that leaders understood the reasons for non-disclosure beyond the Single Operating Platform system used to record this data, being a barrier.
- Forty-nine per cent of people supervised in Cumbria disclosed having a disability. We heard about complex health-related needs such as drug use, suicide rates, mental health prevalence and waiting lists. The PDU was not maximising the use of Community Sentence Treatment Requirements to address these issues.
- The broken lift in the Barrow-in Furness office meant that any staff with mobility considerations were likely to be unable to access the practitioner office on the first floor.

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 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?	61%

We assessed 18 reports; 11 were short-format reports, and seven were oral reports with a written record. The necessary enquiries were not taking place to inform sentencing, which is why professional discretion was not applied to increase this rating to 'Good'. Data provided by the PDU showed a low level of enquiries recorded, despite assurances from leaders.

Strengths:

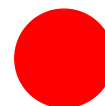
- The person on probation was meaningfully involved in the preparation of all but one report that we assessed. There was analysis of motivation to change and a consistent focus on the diversity needs of the individual.
- Reports considered a range of factors related to the likelihood of reoffending in 15 cases.

Areas for improvement:

- Domestic abuse enquiries should take place in all reports to ensure all information was considered. Only nine reports had a pre-sentence police domestic abuse enquiry, and one report drew on existing information (56 per cent).
- Nine reports had indications of domestic abuse. One report had a police enquiry made after court which could not inform sentencing. Three reports did not have any enquiries. In four out of nine reports where domestic abuse concerns were identified, sufficient information was not obtained.
- There were 12 reports with indications of child safeguarding concerns. Five of these reports had no enquiries and in one report, the response was received after sentence. Therefore six out of 12 reports where child safeguarding concerns were identified did not contain sufficient information.
- Four reports did not sufficiently consider the impact of the offence on victims.

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 on our website.](#)

2.2. Assessment



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

Inadequate

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?	60%
Does assessment focus sufficiently on the factors linked to offending and desistance?	58%
Does assessment focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	25%

Cumbria PDU is rated as 'Inadequate' in this area due to the quality of assessments in relation to keeping people safe being sufficient in only 25 per cent of cases.

Strengths:

- Engagement of people on probation was the strongest area of assessment activity in casework, particularly in community cases where 70 per cent of cases inspected were sufficient. Inspectors saw examples, including health and caring responsibilities, being explored to reduce barriers to compliance.
- Practitioners were analysing motivation and the readiness of people to change, which was particularly evident in all eight assessments of women.

Areas for improvement:

- Domestic abuse enquiries were not made at the point of assessment in 50 per cent of cases we inspected. One third of cases did not have child safeguarding enquiries made. The PDU has subsequently implemented a process to request domestic abuse and child safeguarding information in all cases, which was encouraging. However, in those cases we inspected, when these enquiries were made, information received did not always contribute to an accurate risk assessment. Inspectors disagreed with practitioners' risk assessments in almost a quarter of cases.
- Assessments had insufficient consideration of broader information such as past behaviour, previous convictions and information from other agencies in 60 per cent of cases.
- In 26 out of 43 cases where there was an actual or potential victim, assessments did not adequately analyse the risks that individuals posed.

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 on our website.](#)

2.3. Planning



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

Inadequate

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?	56%
Does planning focus sufficiently on reducing reoffending and supporting desistance?	58%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	31%

Cumbria PDU is rated as 'Inadequate' for this area as planning activity to keep people safe was sufficient in less than one third of cases.

Strengths:

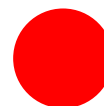
- There was a positive focus on engaging people on probation, with 67 per cent of plans having taken their views into account.
- Plans completed by PSOs were of a slightly better standard than those completed by POs.

Areas for improvement:

- Only 37 per cent of cases inspected sufficiently addressed and prioritised factors linked to risk of harm.
- Over half of plans did not contain constructive or restrictive interventions to manage risk of harm, and contingency planning was insufficient in 63 per cent of cases.
- Whilst strategic links with partners were strong, and practitioners reported good working relationships with the police, this did not translate into effective risk management planning for those assessed as the highest risk. Of significant concern was the finding that out of six high-risk cases we inspected, none had a sufficient focus on planning to keep people safe. Only half of these plans made adequate links to the work of other agencies.
- Although practitioners identified diversity factors at the assessment stage, plans did not always sufficiently consider ways to reduce any associated barriers to engagement.

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 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 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?	62%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support desistance?	54%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?	37%

Cumbria PDU is rated as 'Inadequate' for implementation and delivery. We found insufficient evidence that interventions and services were delivered consistently to reduce risk of reoffending and harm.

Strengths:

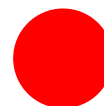
- Requirements of the sentence started promptly in 73 per cent of cases inspected.
- Practitioners were responsive to individual circumstances, demonstrating flexibility to enable completion of sentences in 86 per cent of cases inspected.

Areas for improvement:

- Risks of non-compliance were identified and addressed in 52 per cent of cases, but appropriate enforcement action was not taken in almost a quarter of cases. We heard about several issues with the regional enforcement hub which negatively affected practitioner and sentencer confidence in progressing effective breach work.
- There were a range of services for people on probation in Cumbria. However, fifty per cent of staff interviewed felt they did not have sufficient access to services to meet the needs and risks of individuals. Fifty-one per cent of cases we inspected were not in receipt of sufficient service delivery to support desistance.
- Not enough attention was given to protecting actual and potential victims, which was judged insufficient in 32 out of 45 relevant cases.

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 on our website.](#)

2.5. Reviewing



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

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?	73%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting desistance?	60%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	44%

Cumbria PDU is rated as 'Inadequate' for reviewing. While there was an increase in scores linked to reviewing of work to keep people safe, this was not consistent across the cases inspected.

Strengths:

- People on probation were involved in reviewing their compliance and engagement in 73 per cent of inspected cases, increasing to 86 per cent for UPW cases.
- Reviewing practice was better for women on probation than for men. Work to engage women in reviews of compliance and engagement was sufficient in 100 per cent of female cases compared to 70 per cent of men. Reviews supported desistance in 75 per cent of female cases compared to 58 per cent of men.

Areas for improvement:

- Reviewing did not sufficiently identify changes in factors linked to risk of harm and adapt plans accordingly in 25 out of 40 relevant cases.
- Information from other agencies involved in managing risk of harm was not sufficiently utilised when reviewing in 21 out of 40 relevant cases.
- Although there was a slightly improved focus on keeping people safe in reviews compared with other aspects of casework, this was still insufficient in too many cases that we inspected.

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?	42%

Strengths:

- In 38 out of 52 cases there was no record of any further charges or convictions since the start of the order or licence being inspected.
- We noted a 17 per cent reduction in reoffending in the case sample.
- Six out of eight people improved their sense of non-criminal identity.

Areas for improvement:

- Inspectors found sufficient compliance in too few cases (64 per cent).
- As noted, planning in all high-risk cases we inspected was insufficient. It was therefore perhaps unsurprising that reasonable progress made by people assessed as high risk was significantly lower (at 33 per cent) than those assessed as low risk (at 73 per cent).
- In only eight out of 30 cases was an improvement made where alcohol misuse was linked to risk of harm.
- In only two out of 21 cases was an improvement made in drug misuse where there was a link to risk of harm.

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