



HM Inspectorate
of Probation

HM Inspectorate of Probation

1st Floor, Manchester Civil Justice Centre,
1 Bridge Street West, Manchester M3 3FX
enquiries.HMIProb@hmiprobation.gov.uk

www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmiprobation

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To:

Gabriel Amahwe, Regional Probation Director

cc:

Laura Jones, Inspection Single Point of Contact

Geoff Davis, Head of Operations South Central

Amy Rees, Director General CEO HMPPS

Phil Cople, Director General Operations, HMPPS

Operational & System Assurance Group,

AssuranceIntelligenceTeam@justice.gov.uk;

Ian Blakeman, Executive Director of Strategy, Planning and Performance, HMPPS

npsassuranceteam@justice.gov.uk

Simi O'Neill, Head of Probation Inspection Programme

Yvonne McGuckian, Lead Inspector

Helen Cox, Deputy Lead Inspector

Stephen Doust, Operations Officer (Inspections)

Justin Russell, Chief Inspector of Probation

Dear Gabriel

Thank you for the cooperation we received from you and your teams during the recent review of the Probation Service – South Central. This letter outlines the findings of our review of the regional arrangements designed to support the delivery of effective probation services in the South Central region.

The regional inspection helps to set the context and explain the findings and ratings of the Portsmouth and Isle of Wight, and East Berkshire probation delivery unit (PDU) inspections undertaken in May and June 2023.

Findings are set out to highlight the strengths found in the work of the region and the barriers that are hampering effective probation services taking place, setting out the specific issues faced by the regional leadership team that need to be addressed, to consolidate progress already made and improve frontline probation services.

Regional observations:

At a regional level, we have identified the following key strengths and areas for improvement:

Leadership

The South Central region was created when probation services unified in June 2021, as one of 12 probation regions across England and Wales. This involved the separation of the former South West division of the National Probation Service (NPS) and two Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs), Thames Valley CRC and Hampshire and Isle of Wight CRC, each having different operating models. One CRC did not use the national assessment and recording systems, offender assessment system (OASys) and NDelius, so staff have had to be trained in their use. The region had no infrastructure in place and has had to set up corporate services, community integration, and performance and quality teams.

The geography and make-up of the region is large, varied, and complex. It is aligned to the two distinct policing areas of Thames Valley, and Hampshire and the Isle of Wight Constabularies. In total, the region covers 13 unitary authorities, 19 district councils, and one county council. There are seven local justice areas, with 15 magistrates' courts and seven Crown Courts, and 25 community safety partnerships. There are 13 youth offending teams and 12 safeguarding children's boards.

Delivery of services to some areas presents unique challenges. For example, the Isle of Wight, with ferry crossings, incurs costs and is subject to adverse weather and seasonal demand. Slough, in the East Berkshire PDU, is the most ethnically diverse borough outside of London, with high levels of deprivation.

There are nine approved premises, with the Elizabeth Fry Charity running a service for up to 24 women and eight prisons. The region currently employs around 1,000 people and has an approximate caseload of 13,000. There are seven PDUs within the region, split across two police force areas. Thames Valley has Oxfordshire; Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes; West Berkshire; and East Berkshire PDUs. Hampshire and the Isle of Wight comprises Hampshire North and East; Southampton, Eastleigh and New Forest; and Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight PDUs.

The regional leadership team has worked effectively to create a clear regional structure, aligning the previous organisations, developing a shared culture, and introducing a single operating model. Regional leaders clearly understood the risks to service delivery and were actively trying to mitigate these.

However, the effects of staff vacancies across the service, coupled with the inexperience of a large proportion of staff, led to some mixed practice. The assessment, planning, and delivery of services to keep other people safe was poor overall, some of the worst we have found during our inspection programme. Where staffing was better, we were able to identify areas of improving sentence management, but a more direct focus on risk of harm to others is needed.

Strengths

- The region benefits from a shared vision and strategy, which focuses on the development of skills, evidence, and knowledge that are beginning to lay the foundations for good-quality probation practice and services. Leaders are realistic in their planning and have short-, medium-, and long-term plans in place. One of the partners described this as "*balancing their desire to do things right now against when it might be the right time*".

- The vision and strategy has been co-produced, with staff, people on probation, and stakeholders, and central to the plan is a genuine attempt to develop the 'One HMPPS' (HM Prisons and Probation Service) agenda. Links with prisons are strong and probation officers in training, known as PQiPs (undertaking the Professional Qualification in Probation), spend part of their training working in a prison, supporting them to understand the way in which prisons work, critical to managing resettlement cases. This also exposes them to the range of work and potential career development opportunities for the future.
- The commitment to people on probation consultation is impressive and is being used to shape services. To do this, the region has deployed a senior probation officer (SPO) to undertake regular contact with people on probation. This is an excellent example of connecting strategy into genuine operational practice. There are numerous examples of where the value of people's lived experience is bringing about change. Every interview for a senior leader has a person on probation on the panel; they take an active role, and their views are taken into account in appointment decisions. The format of information sharing has changed, so that induction information can be accessed more effectively; this involves the addition of QR codes on leaflets. In the Slough office, work with the regional estates links has resulted in changes to waiting areas, to provide visual information to supplement leaflets. People on probation have attended protected development days, to share views on sentence planning, and as a direct consequence one team had committed to providing a short written summary as part of case manager handovers, to avoid individuals having to repeat their backgrounds.
- Risk to service delivery is understood, the risk register is regularly reviewed, and actions are tracked. The main risks are related to staffing, recruitment and retention, and the high levels of inexperience across operational grades. While there are plans in place for the region to respond to these, further consideration needs to be given at a national level to support recruitment and retention. We expand on this in the staffing section of this letter.
- The coordinated work at the regional level is impressive, with all individuals understanding how they contribute to the shared vision. Regional leaders understand and contribute to the work in their specific areas of responsibility, but also contribute to cross-cutting regional objectives. A strength of the region is its close links with national teams and its ability to influence wider practice. The region is undertaking pathfinder projects and has shared locally developed initiatives, such as the practitioner dashboard, which has been rolled out nationally.
- Governance is generally effective, enabling regional leaders to coordinate activities to meet shared priorities. The performance and quality team has developed a range of measures, so that there is a direct line of sight to the quality-of-service delivery and the impact of activities as part of sentence management.

Areas for improvement:

- The service's ability to improve practice is undermined consistently by the significant workload and spans of responsibility of SPOs and PDU heads. These staff have to translate and operationalise all of the regional plans into meaningful practice. Although well supported, they are not always able to devote the time needed to work

with staff teams to provide the high-quality management oversight and coaching needed by the inexperienced workforce. Further work is needed to assist staff to apply the prioritisation framework (PF) confidently, particularly in areas where staffing is acute. Our findings from the PDU inspections show that a refocus on risk is needed.

- The strategic approach to meeting diverse needs is underdeveloped. There are some good examples of proactive work, including community integration reaching out to faith-based groups, and some limited use of data to identify disproportionality, but this is not used in all practice areas – for example, court outcome. Given the diverse population in Slough, we would have expected to see a more active offer for that community. The Isle of Wight has a distinct identity and needs, and while the profile of this is developing, a separate strategy may be beneficial to thread these through strategic and operational thinking.

Staffing

Staffing is a critical issue for the region, and concerted efforts are made to recruit staff and to develop a culture where staff are valued and supported. There is a significant investment in training and support for staff, to raise the skills and knowledge of an inexperienced workforce. However, for some parts of the region, the difficulties in staff recruitment predate unification, and recruitment is impacted adversely by its proximity to London, where higher rates of pay are achievable. This will be an ongoing problem unless a different approach and support at national level can be reached.

Strengths:

- At the point that the South Central region was created, there were no corporate services. However, these have been developed quickly and are now providing very effective support to the region and to PDUs across a range of areas, including staff recruitment and support.
- Staff are deployed flexibly across the region, to take advantage of areas where recruitment is easier, to provide services across all of the region. The roles of regional staff are clear and post holders have a nuanced understanding of how their roles support and complement across the organisation. There are highly skilled staff in the region, but we agree with the region's own assessment that it will take time for the effects of the immaturity of the workforce to reduce.
- Support to develop the knowledge and skills of new staff was underpinned by a clear strategy and plans. The region has developed a strong culture of staff development underpinning the work of the region, setting high expectations of staff to own their learning. There was recognition that the e-learning packages undertaken by staff are the start of process. Effective tracking and monitoring of training take-up was in place, with dashboard information provided to managers to drive an increase in completion rates. There was practical support to help staff navigate training packages, and specific training can be requested based on managers' assessment of need. Following an analysis of needs, the regional has rolled out training on stalking and harassment which has been well received by staff.
- In order to support staff retention, career progression is promoted from an early stage and we found numerous examples where this has been supported, including

the use of sideways moves, to broaden staff's experience and to give longer-term career prospects. This includes providing PQiPs with periods of work in prisons, providing them with the experience of sentence management both in custody and the community. Corporate inductions now include a focus on resettlement and offender management in custody.

- Staff engagement is a strength. A series of listening events have been established and feedback has resulted in changes, and is shaping learning and development.
- In order to support SPOs, a new framework and induction have been implemented, following consultation with staff. The region has had 18 new SPOs since last September, 10 being newly promoted. Having listened to the experience of this staff group, training in tools for supervision and performance management has been provided.
- Staff engagement starts at the recruitment stage, with staff from all corporate functions and operational teams across the region attending local recruitment events, particularly in areas where the community may not think that probation work is an option for them. Pre-interview sessions are provided to outline roles and responsibilities, so that applicants understand the jobs they are applying for. The region works hard to mitigate the long period it can take for new staff to go through vetting and recruitment processes. Contact is established and maintained, to make sure that candidates and newly appointed staff are kept informed of the process. Monitoring of vetting times shows an average time of 13.5 weeks, plus notice periods, from the closure of recruitment campaigns to the first day for new staff in the office.
- It was clear that the region is focused actively on the recruitment and retention of staff, and data is used to provide live staffing information to leaders and managers. The region uses live-time systems to track available resource and to plan ahead as much as possible. Our PDU inspections showed that better-quality engagement and desistance work can be achieved when staffing allows, and the movement of the community integration team from a 73 per cent vacancy rate to being fully staffed has allowed them quickly to influence partners and service delivery.
- Early interventions are used to respond to identified hotspots, including looking at the reasons that staff leave the service and providing additional support to promote wellbeing, reduce stress, and develop resilience. While the region is doing as much as it can at local and regional levels, and to work with HMPPS, to resolve staffing issues, some factors remain outside of its control.

Areas for improvement:

- Recruitment is an ongoing priority for the organisation. Discussion with managers, staff, and partners highlighted the impact of the difficulties faced in the region, in recruiting and retaining staff. The effects of staff shortages are visible in all aspects of work and are also experienced by partners. Despite significant work undertaken by the workforce development group, ably drawn together by the head of corporate services, staffing shortages remains the biggest threat to service delivery.
- To be clear, difficulties in attracting staff are common across most probation regions, but for South Central there are long-standing issues for the Oxfordshire and

Berkshire PDUs which predate the unification of services. The proximity of parts of the region to London, and good transport links mean that prospective employees can gain better pay with London weighting than working in the South Central region.

- Thames Valley was described by a stakeholder as “*the most complex non-metropolitan borough in the country*”. The area faces many of the difficulties of recruitment in London – a buoyant job market and employee mobility, but without the benefit of payment weighting. Work with the national workforce group resulted in a geographical payment to aid recruitment, but the positive effects of this were removed when the last pay award was granted.
- At the time of the review, South Central had six PDUs identified as amber sites and one as green under the PF. As we have found elsewhere, a lack of probation officers, and other inexperienced staff across the region are the main reasons for this. The PF is a national system, and does not currently provide sufficient support to manage risk of harm to others.
- Regional projections show that staffing levels are not likely to be achieved until 2025. Despite the continued efforts of the region, it is difficult to see how recruitment and retention issues can be improved without a different approach from the Ministry of Justice to reduce the disadvantage faced by the region by being so close to London, where there is the benefit of being able to offer geographical financial payment weighting.
- At the time of the regional review, there were 123.8 probation officer vacancies and only 40 newly qualified officers. A new target staffing formula added 55.5 extra probation officer vacancies. An additional complexity is the large proportion of staff who are new to their roles – 26 per cent of SPOs had been in post for less than one year. Just under a third of probation services officers were within their first 12 months of service, with most having been in post for under nine months.

Services and interventions

The region benefits from a community integration team, which, now fully staffed, is beginning to influence the delivery of partnerships and services. The region uses data to inform its understanding of offending-related factors, and the service need is clearly identified.

The provision of services is mixed. We found some positive examples of targeted specialist services, but commissioned rehabilitative services (CRS) are not used sufficiently well. Monitoring and governance arrangements are being developed and there are routine strategic partnership meetings to discuss needs and influence provision.

Key strengths:

- Arrangements for unpaid work (UPW) were improving. Recruitment of staff to the UPW team has increased capacity to progress work, and there is a clear action plan in place to increase provision, with a range of UPW placements, especially at weekends. The regional UPW strategy has resulted in an increase of initial assessments from 30 per cent to just over 70 per cent in the last year; although performance is not yet at the target level, there has been a steady and consistent improvement.

- The Community Accommodation Service Tier 3 accommodation funding is established and the partnership with Portsmouth City Council has resulted in the provision of specialist accommodation. However, in other areas of the region, sourcing accommodation remains difficult. There are high referral levels and the region has delivered focus groups between staff and accommodation providers, as staff were losing confidence in the service, and also for Ingeus to hear directly from staff where the provision was not currently meeting needs and expectations.
- Co-commissioning with the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), local authorities, and an imminent co-commission with the NHS is starting to provide services for people on probation. There are some good examples of innovation, including the use of a consultation event for black, Asian, and minority ethnic people on probation, with partner agencies. This has informed grant applications and encouraged partners to consider the specific needs of this group.
- The region commissions 33 services, including some for veterans, an important area of work, given the prevalence of forces in the region. Eighty-four per cent of the commissioning budget has been utilised.
- The region had worked proactively to support NHS commissioning of mental health treatment requirements (MHTRs) for Berkshire and Oxfordshire courts during the last 12 months. In addition, local community substance treatment requirement (CSTR) delivery groups had focused on improving the take-up, effectiveness, and impact of local CSTR provision. A region-wide CSTR steering group shared best practice and identified emerging themes and issues. This approach has received positive feedback and been instrumental in achieving some of the best MHTR uptake in the country, and has identified the need for additional resources in Berkshire.

Areas for improvement:

- The dependency and recovery contract is not operational in Thames Valley, despite the efforts of the region to progress this. This means that provision in the region is variable across the two PCC areas. However, following feedback from public health commissions regarding potential duplication in services, the region is now exploring redirecting these funds into other areas of unmet need.
- Initial starts on UPW have increased, but completion rates have remained at around 40 per cent, well below the target of 68 per cent. However, at the time of the inspection, a third of UPW cases had outstanding hours beyond 12 months.
- A key source of risk information is drawn from OASys assessments. The findings from our PDU inspections highlight a potential flaw that not all risk factors are incorporated into OASys assessments, and risk is not always assessed accurately. Therefore, any data reports resulting from analysis may not show the full risk profile across the region, potentially underestimating needs.
- There is an average delay of 13 weeks in starting rehabilitation activity requirements.
- There are difficulties in providing accredited programmes. For non-sexual offending programmes, there was a low completion rate of 36 per cent, for the period between March 2022 to February 2023. Interventions for sexual offending are below target; in February, performance was at 57 per cent, against a target of 70 per cent.

Information and facilities

The region made a deliberate decision to prioritise performance management and quality assurance as an underpinning strategy to support staff and develop skills. The use of analysis and production of management information through the dashboard is impressive and will, over time, support quality improvements. The stated aim of the region is to provide consistent, effective, and accessible performance data and management information, to identify and embed organisational learning, and to support quality assurance and quality improvement activity across the South Central Probation Service. Structures and systems are in place to achieve this, but the region's ability to achieve this is affected by workload pressures as a result of staff shortages and the ability of managers to consolidate learning and translate this into effective sentence management.

- A range of methods has been devised to share learning. Staff were positive about the bi-monthly learning, effectiveness, and accountability panels (LEAPs), and monthly accountability meetings. These share all audit, inspection, Serious Further Offence (SFO), complaint, deaths under supervision, and regional case assessment tool learning information with senior leaders. This is then cascaded to staff in mini-LEAPs. PDU development sessions have been undertaken, responding to issues that come from audit and review, and from staff requests. It was really positive to note that these sessions were inclusive, and that staff from approved premises and prison offender management teams had attended.
- The provision of accountability packs is agreed and these are shared across the PDUs and region, intended to provide a shared dataset, so that everyone is clear about performance measures. The region is generally well sighted on its performance, but some aspects of practice would benefit from a more direct line of sight, including outcomes for people with protected characteristics.
- There are excellent links with national estates, and health and safety teams. There is a comprehensive estates strategy and significant work is ongoing to move some staff to better offices. It was positive that the collaboration between national and regional teams took the perspective of people on probation into account.
- Human resources processes are used effectively to address performance concerns, and quality development officers and practice tutor assessors are well utilised to inform these processes, and are supporting SPOs and individual practitioners.
- There is a considered and active strategy to manage and filter the volume of national policy-related change and communication through the region into PDUs. Senior managers had a good understanding of the impact of continual change on staff and their ability to implement change. Despite this, staff are still overwhelmed with the amount of information they must work through and understand.

Areas for improvement:

- We heard various examples of learning from when things go wrong but this needs to be expanded, so that sentencers understand how they can contribute to improvements and understand the learning from serious case reviews.
- There was significant evidence of delivery of learning and development activity. We heard examples of additionality to mandatory e-learning, in an effort to consolidate

knowledge. However, PDU inspection data indicates that this is not yet fully translating into high-quality risk-focused delivery at the front line.

- We have concerns about the effectiveness of some information-sharing arrangements. Staff are confused about information sharing, and partners have reflected that this has been, and continues to be, a barrier to effective working. Although efforts have been made to implement processes enabling safeguarding and domestic abuse enquiries in this region, the quality of information received is often insufficient to inform risk assessment and management. Partners report that they are not always informed of critical changes to risk of harm to others, and this limits their ability to respond and support the safety of other people.

Statutory victims contact

From the two inspected PDUs, 11 inspected cases had an offence which was eligible for victim contact scheme arrangements; of these, five victims or their families had opted into the scheme. We reviewed these case records, to look at whether initial contact with victims encouraged engagement with the victim contact scheme, whether information and communication exchange supported the safety of victims, and if pre-release contact allowed victims to make appropriate contributions to the conditions of release. We also interviewed the regional public protection manager who had the strategic lead for victims. Staffing levels in the victim's team have improved recently, with the appointment of five new victim liaison officers (VLOs).

Key strengths:

- The first letter to the victim was personalised appropriately, considering the nature of the experience of the victim and any diversity issues in all but one relevant case.
- In all cases, appropriate initial contact was made with the victim soon after sentence. The initial letter provided enough information to allow victims to make an informed choice about whether or not to use the scheme.
- Clear information was given to the victim about what they could expect at different points in a sentence in all but one relevant case. The victim was referred to other agencies or services, or was given information about available sources of help or support, in four of the five relevant cases. In one case, we noted that the victim was able to share dates that would have been difficult for them.
- In the cases we assessed, VLOs had been invited to the multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) case reviews, but we were informed that there had been difficulties where information obtained by the VLO had not been utilised in the OASys assessments. This has been fed back to SPOs.
- In all five relevant cases, the concerns of the victim were addressed, and attention was paid to their safety when planning for release. This included victims being able to contribute to decision-making.
- Careful consideration is given to who is best to speak and support children who are the victims of serious offences, and joint work is undertaken with parents and social workers as needed.

- The culture of work with victims has shifted and there has been an increased focus on ongoing contact and providing victims with increased opportunities to opt into the scheme at key points of the sentence, including in preparation for the prisoner's release.
- There has been a regional focus on the effects of harassment and stalking, and this has included statutory victim contact cases.

Key areas for improvement:

- Recording of the protected characteristics of victims was sufficient in three cases and recorded only partially in seven further cases. The necessary information is not always provided by victims when requested, and the absence of this information has the potential to limit the response to individual victims and makes analysis of the equality of outcomes more difficult.
- More is needed to be done to inform the victim about what action they could take if they receive unwanted contact while the perpetrator is in prison; we found that this had been done in only two of the five cases.
- VLOs are not included in information sharing from the parole board and are reliant on the community offender manager in sharing this with them. This has the potential to delay information being provided to victims.
- No contact arrangements were used in eight cases, but the victim was informed of these in only four.

Serious Further Offence reviews

The SFO team is part of the performance and quality team. It is staffed with four reviewing managers and one complaints manager. Those who inspectors spoke to described the volume and pace of the role/team to be demanding and felt that the current resource model did not account adequately for the volume and breadth of work. The team has seen an increase in SFOs over the past year, from 21 in 2021/2022 to 30 in 2022/2023. The team is also taking forward complaints, deaths under supervision, and some formal investigation work under the conduct and disciplinary/performance and capability policies.

Between 21 March 2022 and 21 March 2023, HM Inspectorate of Probation and HMPPS quality assured 16 SFO reviews. Of these, one was found to be outstanding, eight received a composite rating of 'Good', and seven received a composite rating of 'Requires improvement'. The key practice themes identified mirror many of the findings of the PDU inspections across the region, including the insufficient quality of risk assessments, the need for practitioners to demonstrate more professional curiosity and be responsive to emerging risk factors, a lack of reviewing in response to changes of circumstances or increased risk concerns, and the need for improved management oversight.

The reviewing managers and band 6 leads described a sound understanding of the offence type and learning derived from the SFOs. Engagement with PDUs is completed via LEAP and 'mini-LEAP' sessions, through protected learning days, supporting newly qualified officers, and contributing towards learning/action planning meetings, which were spoken of positively. Reviewing managers were keen to do more to share learning from SFOs and support the development of staff but have felt unable to do so due to workload demands.

The SFO leads provided a good overview of the main areas of learning drawn from SFOs. Reviewing managers are responsible for sourcing updates on the action plans set from each SFO; however, they all described challenges with driving forward actions aimed at addressing the national systemic or procedural issues identified. Concerningly, it was acknowledged that these actions can prove difficult to embed due to other pressures, and that time is needed to consolidate learning fully.

Summary

In our PDU inspections, Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight was rated as 'Requires improvement' and East Berkshire was rated as 'Inadequate'.

The South Central region worked quickly to establish some core functions and to integrate a wide range of working practice at unification. There is a clear underpinning drive to develop one HMPPS, and we found examples of how strategy and practice are beginning to improve relationships between prisons and community sentence managers.

There is strong leadership at regional level, with shared aims and objectives, and excellent links with national and other regional leads. The region is well sighted on its performance and quality, and drives innovation, some of which is supporting national practice developments.

Recruitment and retention are the biggest risk to service delivery, and some cases are in line with the picture we see nationally. However, for some parts of the region, the difficulties in staff recruitment predate unification and have been known about for years. Despite the best efforts of the region, it is difficult to see how these issues can be resolved without a different approach and support at national level, to attract staff. High levels of inexperienced staff are also having a negative effect of the delivery of case management in the inspected PDUs. Plans are in place to provide support and development, but SPO workload is too broad, and at present they do not have capacity to provide effective ongoing management oversight, designed to improve the quality of work with people on probation.

Work to assess, plan for, and manage risk of harm to others is not sufficient and improvements are needed urgently to increase the accuracy of assessments in the East Berkshire PDU, and then respond to these appropriately.

We would like to commend the work you are undertaking to work with people on probation and give them a meaningful opportunity to shape practice and to improve services. It is clear that the written strategy has translated into active work, committed to at a regional and PDU level.

Our recommendations from the inspected PDUs are set out in annexe one. I look forward to receiving your regional action plan in due course, outlining the implementation of our recommendations. I wish you and all your staff well in undertaking this work.

Yours sincerely



Justin Russell

Chief Inspector of Probation

Annexe one – Recommendations

Set out below are the recommendations arising from the inspection of PDUs in this region.

Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight

Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight PDU should:

1. increase middle management capacity to ensure sufficient resource is in place to provide enhanced management oversight
2. ensure interventions and services available locally are utilised to deliver appropriate services to support desistance and address the risk of harm
3. improve the quality and impact of work to manage the risk of harm and to keep actual and potential victims safe
4. ensure that appropriate processes are in place to obtain and assess child safeguarding and domestic abuse information.

South Central region should:

5. reduce waiting times for accredited programmes, particularly Building Better Relationships (BBR)
6. review the use and referral rates of CRS contracts to ensure they are meeting the needs of people on probation.

HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) should:

7. ensure PDUs and probation regions are sufficiently resourced to protect the public
8. ensure all probation offices have reliable Wi-Fi access.

East Berkshire

East Berkshire PDU should:

1. improve the quality of casework to keep people safe
2. review the effectiveness of their concentrator model
3. liaise with the police and children's social care teams to resolve the issues relating to the quality and timeliness of responses to domestic abuse and safeguarding enquiries
4. increase the use of interventions and services to support the desistance of people on probation
5. ensure that people on probation requiring support to address substance misuse issues are promptly referred to the relevant treatment agency
6. ensure all probation practitioners are aware of the diversity and inclusion toolkit and know how to use it.

South Central region should:

7. ensure sufficient attention is paid to managers' welfare and professional development
8. work with NHS England to improve the capacity of mental health treatment requirement provision to meet demand and improve timeliness of intervention.











HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) should:

9. improve the incentives offer for staff to increase retention rates
10. ensure that senior probation officers (SPOs) have sufficient capacity and resources to improve the quality and effectiveness of management oversight, particularly in relation to cases assessed as high risk of serious harm, and where there are domestic abuse and safeguarding concerns
11. ensure there are mechanisms for assessing people on probation's literacy and numeracy skills at the start of their sentence.

Annexe two – PDU ratings

Set out below are the ratings of the PDUs in this region. More detail about the reasons for the ratings is available in the PDU reports, which are published on our website:

[HMI Probation - Home \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmi-probation/)

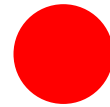
Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight		Score	6/27
Fieldwork started May 2023			
Overall rating	Requires improvement		
1. Organisational delivery			
1.1	Leadership	Requires improvement	
1.2	Staff	Requires improvement	
1.3	Services	Requires improvement	
1.4	Information and facilities	Good	
2. Court work and 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	

East Berkshire PDU
Fieldwork started June 2023

Score **3/24**

Overall rating

Inadequate



1. Organisational delivery

1.1 Leadership

Inadequate



1.2 Staff

Inadequate



1.3 Services

Requires improvement



1.4 Information and facilities

Good



2. Court work and case supervision

2.2 Assessment

Inadequate



2.3 Planning

Inadequate



2.4 Implementation and delivery

Inadequate



2.5 Reviewing

Inadequate

