

The quality of service user assessment (probation services)

HM Inspectorate of Probation

Research & Analysis Bulletin 2018/01

SEPTEMBER 2018

HMI Probation is committed to reviewing, developing and promoting the evidence-base for high-quality probation and youth offending services. Our *Research & Analysis Bulletins* are aimed at all those with an interest in the quality of these services, presenting key findings to assist with informed debate and help drive improvement where it is required. The findings are used within HMI Probation to develop our inspection programmes, guidance and position statements.

This bulletin was prepared by Dr Robin Moore, Head of Research, HMI Probation.

We would like to thank all those who participated in any way in our inspections. Without their help and cooperation, the collation of inspection data would not have been possible.

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

© Crown copyright 2018

You may re-use this information (excluding logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence or email

psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

Where we have identified any third-party copyright information, you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication is available for download at:

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation

Published by: Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation 1st Floor Civil Justice Centre 1 Bridge Street West Manchester M3 3FX

The HMI Probation Research Team can be contacted via

HMIProbationResearch@hmiprobation.gov.uk

Contents

| | |
|-----------------------------|----|
| Executive summary | 4 |
| 1. Introduction | 5 |
| 2. Findings | 7 |
| 2.1 Engagement | 8 |
| 2.2 Desistance..... | 12 |
| 2.3 Public protection | 17 |
| 3. Conclusion | 23 |
| References | 25 |
| Annex A: Methodology | 26 |

Executive summary

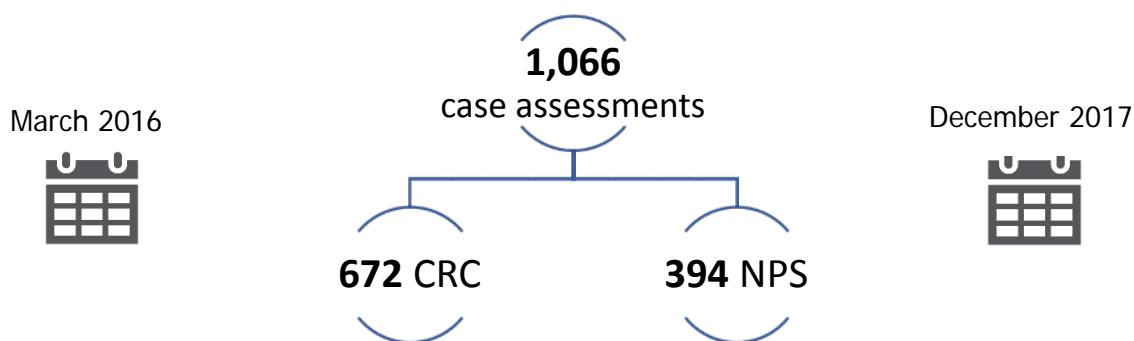
Context

Well-informed, analytical and personalised assessment is the starting point for managing service users, as reflected in the acronym of ASPIRE:



Approach

The findings presented in this bulletin are based upon 1,066 case assessments completed between March 2016 and December 2017. In each case, our inspectors considered key questions relating to the sufficiency of assessment, recording rationales for their judgements alongside notable instances of good or poor practice.



Key findings and implications

- Well-informed, analytical and personalised assessment was more commonly found in cases managed by the National Probation Service (NPS) than Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs). The latter need to ensure that there is sufficient focus within assessment across the key areas of engagement, desistance and keeping other people safe.
- There were clear differentiations in the quality of assessment in terms of: (i) engaging service users and close family members; (ii) reviewing previous records (covering past offending, behaviours and supervision) and assessments; and (iii) obtaining the necessary information and input from other agencies. Giving more consistent attention to these areas will help providers to capture the full range of risks, needs, skills and strengths presented by service users.
- Within CRC cases, there was particular scope for improvement with those service users who had a non-low likelihood of reoffending.
- The divergence in the quality of assessment – between cases retained by the NPS and allocated to CRCs – commenced pre-sentence. The NPS needs to ensure that assessment undertaken at court not only supports sentencing and case allocation, but assists CRC and NPS responsible officers in timely and sufficient assessment and sentence planning following allocation.

1. Introduction

This bulletin focuses upon the quality of probation service user assessment. Well-informed, analytical and personalised assessment is vital to the delivery of a high-quality service for each individual. It helps to ensure that planning focuses upon those areas which are most critical, and that the delivered services sufficiently support desistance and the safety of other people.

Needs or factors linked to offending, often termed 'criminogenic needs', must be understood, as should those needs which are less directly related to offending but are important to the service user's chances of desistance. The desistance literature emphasises the need to pay attention to the individual's legitimate aspirations and to identify and develop personal strengths and skills. Personalisation further requires analysis of the service user's diversity and personal circumstances, and the impact these have on his/her ability to comply and engage with service delivery.

Assessment needs to consider the service user's attitude towards change. Motivation to change is pivotal to desistance and can be assessed using frameworks such as the well-established 'cycle of change' model. Determining the service user's position on the change cycle helps the practitioner to use the right skills and identify the right interventions to enable the individual service user to move forward.

The process of assessment – how it is undertaken – is as important as the outcome. A diverse range of sources of information should be utilised, including court reports, previous records and, in appropriate cases, information gained from other agencies or people who know the service user. This helps to build a rounded view of the individual, capturing the full range of risks, needs, skills and strengths. It is important to ensure that the information is not merely presented but a sufficiently comprehensive analysis of the different factors affecting the service user's life is conducted.

Wherever possible, service users should be meaningfully involved in the process of assessment, building the one-to-one trusting personal relationships which can be a powerful vehicle for change. The concepts of procedural justice, self-efficacy and self-determination are all relevant. Service users should be given a voice and treated with respect. They should be enabled to identify issues and solutions themselves, working out who they want to be and what they want to achieve.

Inspection standards

Our current inspections of probation services are underpinned by standards which are grounded in evidence, learning and experience. In developing the standards, we worked constructively with providers and others to build a common view of high-quality probation services and what should be expected.

Within the standards framework, there is a specific standard on Assessment (set out below).¹

¹ The full standards framework can be found here: <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/about-our-work/our-standards-and-ratings/>.

2.1 Assessment

Assessment is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the service user.

- 2.1.1 Does assessment focus sufficiently on engaging the service user?
 - a) Does assessment analyse the service user's motivation and readiness to engage and comply with the sentence?
 - b) Does assessment analyse the service user's diversity and personal circumstances, and consider the impact these have on their ability to comply and engage with service delivery?
 - c) Is the service user meaningfully involved in their assessment, and are their views taken into account?

- 2.1.2 Does assessment focus sufficiently on the factors linked to offending and desistance?
 - a) Does assessment identify and analyse offending-related factors?
 - b) Does assessment identify the service user's strengths and protective factors?
 - c) Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information?

- 2.1.3 Does assessment focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?
 - a) Does assessment clearly identify and analyse any risk of harm to others, including identifying who is at risk and the nature of that risk?
 - b) Does assessment analyse any specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims?
 - c) Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including past behaviour and convictions, and involve other agencies where appropriate?

2. Findings

The findings presented in this bulletin are based upon the case assessment data from our 'Quality and Impact' inspections, completed between March 2016 and December 2017.² These inspections took place across 14 different police force areas, covering all National Probation Service (NPS) divisions and all Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) owners.³ For the one police force area that was re-inspected (London), the most recent data is used, ensuring that we are presenting the most up-to-date picture. This leaves 1,066 cases, broken down as follows:

- 672 (63%) CRC and 394 (37%) NPS cases
- 156 (15%) cases involving female offenders
- 500 (47%) post-release custody cases
- 177 (17%) high or very high risk of serious harm (RoSH) cases
- 271 (26%) cases eligible for Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)

Across all of these cases, our inspectors considered key questions relating to the sufficiency of assessment, building a picture of its overall quality. In this bulletin, judgements relating to the following questions are set out:⁴

Engagement

- Were barriers to effective engagement sufficiently identified?
- Was the service user's individual diversity sufficiently considered?

Desistance

- Was the pre-allocation assessment in relation to reducing reoffending sufficient?
- Was the post-allocation assessment in relation to reducing reoffending sufficient?

Public protection⁵

- Was the assessment of the risk of harm to the public sufficient?
- Was the assessment of the risk of harm to known adults sufficient?
- Was the assessment of the risk of harm to children and young people sufficient?

Inspector judgements are presented for the sample as a whole and then broken down by the provider (CRC or NPS) and by the service user's demographics (age, gender and ethnicity), type of supervision (community sentence or post-custody) and risk levels (RoSH and likelihood of reoffending – the latter based upon the Offender Group Reconviction Scale (OGRS) score). Logistic regression models have been used to assess which sub-group

² See Annex A for further information about our case assessment approach.

³ In June 2014, 35 self-governing probation trusts were replaced by a new public sector NPS, which has seven divisions, and 21 CRCs owned by eight organisations, each different in constitution and outlook. The NPS advises courts on sentencing all offenders, and retains those offenders who present a high or very high risk of serious harm or who are managed under Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA). CRCs supervise most other offenders presenting a low or medium risk of serious harm – these cases are allocated to them post-sentence by the NPS.

⁴ The inspections took place prior to the introduction of our current inspection standards

⁵ The public protection questions were considered separately for the pre-inspection and post-inspection stages in the most recent Q&I inspections.

differences were statistically significant when accounting for the relationships between these variables.⁶

Inspectors also recorded rationales for their judgements, alongside cases summaries and notable instances of good or poor practice. This information has been used to produce the good and poor practice examples set out below.

2.1 Engagement

Our inspectors considered whether the responsible officer had sufficiently identified all the potential barriers to effective engagement with the individual service user. They sought to establish whether the responsible officer had made consistent and sustained efforts to identify barriers, and whether engagement was appropriate to the individual, and relevant and responsive to the needs of the case.

The proportions of cases in which the inspectors deemed that the barriers had been sufficiently identified are set out in Table 1. As shown, about four in five (81%) of the NPS cases were judged to be sufficient compared to just over three in five (63%) of the CRC cases. The difference was found to be statistically significant when accounting for the relationships between all the variables. There was a further significant difference for gender, with potential barriers more likely to be sufficiently identified for female service users (77% of all female cases vs. 69% of all male cases).

Table 1: Inspector judgements regarding the identification of barriers to effective engagement

| | | Were barriers to effective engagement sufficiently identified? | | | | | |
|------------------|--------------------|--|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|
| | | All cases | | CRC cases | | NPS cases | |
| | | n | % yes | n | % yes | n | % yes |
| All cases | | 855 | 69.8% | 534 | 63.3% | 321 | 80.7% |
| Gender | Male | 727 | 68.6% | 435 | 61.1% | 292 | 79.8% |
| | Female | 128 | 76.6% | 99 | 72.7% | 29 | 89.7% |
| Age group | 18-20 | 54 | 66.7% | 32 | 62.5% | 22 | 72.7% |
| | 21-24 | 128 | 67.2% | 87 | 63.2% | 41 | 75.6% |
| | 25-29 | 190 | 65.8% | 119 | 61.3% | 71 | 73.2% |
| | 30-39 | 261 | 69.3% | 167 | 62.3% | 94 | 81.9% |
| | 40-49 | 141 | 75.2% | 90 | 66.7% | 51 | 90.2% |
| | 50+ | 79 | 78.5% | 37 | 67.6% | 42 | 88.1% |
| Ethnic group | White | 661 | 70.2% | 427 | 64.4% | 234 | 80.8% |
| | Black | 89 | 69.7% | 43 | 58.1% | 46 | 80.4% |
| | Asian | 37 | 73.0% | 25 | 72.0% | 12 | 75.0% |
| | Mixed | 38 | 71.1% | 21 | 57.1% | 17 | 88.2% |
| | Other | 15 | 53.3% | 8 | 37.5% | 7 | 71.4% |
| Supervision type | Community sentence | 457 | 68.7% | 344 | 65.4% | 113 | 78.8% |

⁶ See Annex A for further information about the analysis.

| | | Were barriers to effective engagement sufficiently identified? | | | | | |
|------------|----------------|--|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|
| | | All cases | | CRC cases | | NPS cases | |
| | | n | % yes | n | % yes | n | % yes |
| | Post-custody | 398 | 71.1% | 190 | 59.5% | 208 | 81.7% |
| OGRS band | Low | 346 | 72.5% | 212 | 63.7% | 134 | 86.6% |
| | Medium | 247 | 67.6% | 159 | 61.6% | 88 | 78.4% |
| | High/Very high | 253 | 68.8% | 156 | 64.7% | 97 | 75.3% |
| RoSH level | Low | 170 | 64.1% | 165 | 63.6% | 5 | 80.0% |
| | Medium | 509 | 67.8% | 355 | 62.8% | 154 | 79.2% |
| | High/Very high | 154 | 83.8% | - | - | 154 | 83.8% |

Inspectors also considered whether the service user's individual diversity was sufficiently considered as part of the assessment process, taking into account a broad range of diversity issues beyond the more clearly-defined protected characteristics (e.g. age, race, and sex). Potential issues included the following:

- Rural situation resulting in limited access to public transport and difficulty attending services and interventions (such as groups or key work sessions).
- Work or caring responsibilities that may prevent the service user accessing the necessary services at particular times.
- Religious or faith issues that may prevent the service user accessing the necessary services on particular days.
- Illness or disability resulting in the service user being unable to access programmes or relevant interventions.
- Educational difficulties resulting in the service user being unable to access programmes or relevant interventions.

The proportions of cases in which the inspectors deemed that diversity was sufficiently considered are set out in Table 2. As shown, about eight out of ten (83%) NPS cases were judged to be sufficient compared to about seven in ten (72%) CRC cases. This difference was statistically significant. There were further significant differences for the service user's age, ethnicity and OGRS band, with diversity issues more likely to be sufficiently considered for older service users (ranging from 67% for the 18-20 age group to 85% for the 50+ age group) and less likely to be sufficiently considered for those with a high likelihood of reoffending (driven by the CRC cases – see Table 2) and those within the 'other' ethnic classification.

Table 2: Inspector judgements regarding the account taken of individual diversity

| | | Was the service user's individual diversity sufficiently considered? | | | | | |
|------------------|--------------------|--|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|
| | | All cases | | CRC cases | | NPS cases | |
| | | n | % yes | n | % yes | n | % yes |
| All cases | | 1,057 | 76.4% | 663 | 72.4% | 394 | 83.2% |
| Gender | Male | 902 | 75.7% | 541 | 71.0% | 361 | 82.8% |
| | Female | 155 | 80.6% | 122 | 78.7% | 33 | 87.9% |
| Age group | 18-20 | 60 | 66.7% | 35 | 74.3% | 25 | 56.0% |
| | 21-24 | 153 | 72.5% | 105 | 66.7% | 48 | 85.4% |
| | 25-29 | 234 | 73.9% | 145 | 71.7% | 89 | 77.5% |
| | 30-39 | 306 | 76.1% | 194 | 70.1% | 112 | 86.6% |
| | 40-49 | 184 | 81.5% | 117 | 76.9% | 67 | 89.6% |
| | 50+ | 117 | 85.5% | 64 | 82.8% | 53 | 88.7% |
| Ethnic group | White | 822 | 76.9% | 527 | 73.2% | 295 | 83.4% |
| | Black | 107 | 80.4% | 54 | 74.1% | 53 | 86.8% |
| | Asian | 45 | 77.8% | 31 | 74.2% | 14 | 85.7% |
| | Mixed | 47 | 76.6% | 29 | 72.4% | 18 | 83.3% |
| | Other | 19 | 42.1% | 10 | 30.0% | 9 | 55.6% |
| Supervision type | Community sentence | 561 | 76.3% | 424 | 74.1% | 137 | 83.2% |
| | Post-custody | 496 | 76.6% | 239 | 69.5% | 257 | 83.3% |
| OGRS band | Low | 463 | 80.1% | 284 | 75.4% | 179 | 87.7% |
| | Medium | 304 | 76.0% | 198 | 74.2% | 106 | 79.2% |
| | High/Very high | 280 | 71.8% | 175 | 67.4% | 105 | 79.0% |
| RoSH level | Low | 225 | 76.9% | 217 | 77.0% | 8 | 75.0% |
| | Medium | 630 | 74.8% | 431 | 70.1% | 199 | 84.9% |
| | High/Very high | 177 | 82.5% | - | - | 177 | 82.5% |

Engagement: Good practice examples

Matt was a 32-year-old White British male. He received a Suspended Sentence Order for two sexual assaults, two assaults and a witness intimidation offence. All offences were committed against his partner at the time; now his ex-partner. He had a learning disability and difficulties with speech. The responsible officer recognised these needs during the initial assessment and sought guidance from a speech and language therapist about the optimum method of working. There was clear evidence of adopting a tailored approach to meet Matt's needs in terms of how the work would be delivered and in ensuring that understanding would be checked and learning reinforced.

Lauren was a 20-year-old Black British female, sentenced to a 12-month Community Order for possessing a blade. She had no previous convictions. She was recorded as disabled due to a number of issues, including rheumatoid arthritis, asthma, eczema and allergies. She had already had one hip

replacement, was taking a variety of medicines and reported finding it difficult to sit down for long periods of time. The responsible officer demonstrated genuine interest in Lauren, and a clear understanding of her practical, personal and emotional needs (for example, ensuring that they met on the ground floor of the office to help with access to the building). The disability issues were clearly identified in the initial assessment, and this contributed to a suitable unpaid work placement being identified.

Jason was a 28-year-old White British male. He had received a 12-month Suspended Sentence Order for offences of assault, assaulting a PC and criminal damage. There was a history of similar offences (12 previous convictions in total), along with past drug and alcohol use issues. As a child, he had been the victim of a sexual assault and had been in the care system. The responsible officer was able to build upon the trusting relationship established through a previous sentence, generating a positive level of engagement. He had a good understanding of Jason's numeracy and literacy difficulties, other behavioural issues, and the often-difficult context of his life. This was reflected within the initial assessment and in recognising the need to adapt interventions.

Engagement: Poor practice examples

Adam was a 26-year-old White British male. He had received an eight-month custodial sentence for threats of criminal damage against his former partner, with previous instances of domestic abuse against partners and breaches of restraining orders and non-molestation orders. He had been diagnosed with adult attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and there were some complications with administering his medication and evidence of him appearing frustrated. The responsible office failed to reflect upon these frustrations and did not make the necessary adjustments to accommodate Adam's needs. Adam did not complete any self-assessment questionnaire, having arrived at the office late, and he was not offered another opportunity to complete.

Amir was a 43-year-old male from Nepal. He was a first-time offender, sentenced to a Community Order for a domestic violence assault on his wife. At the pre-sentence stage, there was no consideration of cultural issues or Amir's childhood in terms of exploring his values regarding women. Post-sentence, no further assessment was completed. While he appeared to have reasonable spoken English, there was no real consideration as to whether he would be able to understand some of the conceptual material in the Building Better Relationships Programme. This was highlighted in one of the later programme entries where a tutor queried whether Amir was taking on board the material due to the language barrier.

Paul was a 58-year-old White British male. He had committed an offence of robbery and was on licence, having spent five years in custody. Neither the fact that he was in his late 50s or that he had been in custody for five years were reflected in the assessment. The responsible office had not considered that Paul might feel isolated in the community and that he might need help in building up social networks, for example thorough linking with community projects.

2.2 Desistance

Inspectors considered whether the overall assessment in relation to reducing reoffending was sufficient at the point immediately preceding allocation to the NPS or CRC, encompassing assessment undertaken as part of pre-sentence inquiries and the case allocation process. At this pre-allocation stage, the NPS had the responsibility for assessment in all cases.

Inspectors sought to establish not only that an assessment had been made, but that it was of sufficient quality to:

- enable the accurate allocation of the case to the CRC or NPS; and
- assist the assigned responsible officer in timely and sufficient assessment and sentence planning following allocation.

Attention was given to whether:

- there had been sufficient assessment to identify the issues relevant to the individual's offending;
- the issues identified were, on balance, the right issues;
- there was a clear indication of what was to be addressed by the sentence;
- there was an indication of how this was to be addressed and the intended outcome; and
- there was an indication of the service user's level of motivation and response to any previous orders or licences.

In addition, inspectors considered whether assessment reflected the views of the service user and whether information from other organisations was sought and/or used where relevant.

The proportions of cases in which the inspectors deemed that the assessment was sufficient pre-allocation are set out in Table 3. As shown, four in five (80%) cases which were subsequently retained by the NPS were judged to be sufficient compared to just over three in five (63%) cases allocated to CRCs. This difference was statistically significant. There was a further significant difference for the service user's OGRS band, with the assessment less likely to be judged sufficient for those with a non-low likelihood of reoffending.

Table 3: Inspector judgements regarding the pre-allocation assessment in relation to reducing reoffending

| | | Was the pre-allocation assessment in relation to reducing reoffending sufficient? | | | | | |
|------------------|--------------------|---|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|
| | | All cases | | CRC cases | | NPS cases | |
| | | n | % yes | n | % yes | n | % yes |
| All cases | | 1,052 | 69.4% | 663 | 62.9% | 389 | 80.5% |
| Gender | Male | 898 | 69.3% | 542 | 62.0% | 356 | 80.3% |
| | Female | 154 | 70.1% | 121 | 66.9% | 33 | 81.8% |
| Age group | 18-20 | 59 | 66.1% | 34 | 58.8% | 25 | 76.0% |
| | 21-24 | 151 | 65.6% | 104 | 62.5% | 47 | 72.3% |
| | 25-29 | 235 | 70.2% | 147 | 63.9% | 88 | 80.7% |
| | 30-39 | 306 | 65.4% | 195 | 57.9% | 111 | 78.4% |
| | 40-49 | 184 | 70.1% | 118 | 62.7% | 66 | 83.3% |
| | 50+ | 114 | 83.3% | 62 | 77.4% | 52 | 90.4% |
| Ethnic group | White | 819 | 70.1% | 528 | 62.7% | 291 | 83.5% |
| | Black | 105 | 71.4% | 52 | 61.5% | 53 | 81.1% |
| | Asian | 45 | 73.3% | 31 | 74.2% | 14 | 71.4% |
| | Mixed | 47 | 53.2% | 30 | 56.7% | 17 | 47.1% |
| | Other | 19 | 63.2% | 10 | 60.0% | 9 | 66.7% |
| Supervision type | Community sentence | 561 | 68.8% | 424 | 63.4% | 137 | 85.4% |
| | Post-custody | 491 | 70.1% | 239 | 61.9% | 252 | 77.8% |
| OGRS band | Low | 462 | 75.1% | 283 | 68.6% | 179 | 85.5% |
| | Medium | 302 | 64.9% | 199 | 60.3% | 103 | 73.8% |
| | High/Very high | 278 | 66.2% | 174 | 58.6% | 104 | 78.8% |
| RoSH level | Low | 228 | 64.9% | 220 | 65.9% | 8 | 37.5% |
| | Medium | 625 | 67.8% | 429 | 61.5% | 196 | 81.6% |
| | High/Very high | 175 | 81.7% | - | - | 175 | 81.7% |

Inspectors then considered whether the overall assessment in relation to reducing reoffending was sufficient within an appropriate time following allocation to the NPS or CRC. At this stage, responsibility for assessment resided with the provider to which the case had been allocated.

Attention was given to whether the timing and content were sufficient to identify the right factors and facilitate a prompt start to work towards the identified objectives. Key considerations included the following:

- Was there timely assessment following allocation of the case?⁷

⁷ Whether assessment was judged to be timely was linked to the circumstances and nature of the case, and not on any set timescale. For example, for an individual known or believed to pose a significant risk of harm to others, or likelihood of imminent reoffending, the expectation was that the process of assessment should be underway within a week of sentence or prior to release on licence.

- Did assessment reflect the views of the service user?
- Was there clear identification of offending-related factors?
- Was information from other organisations sought and/or used where relevant?

The proportions of cases in which the inspectors deemed that the assessment was sufficient post-allocation are set out in Table 4. As shown, four in five (80%) NPS cases were judged to be sufficient compared to about two-thirds (66%) of the CRC cases. This difference was statistically significant. There was a further significant difference for the service user's OGRS band, with the assessment less likely to be judged sufficient for those with a high likelihood of reoffending (driven by the CRC cases – assessment was deemed sufficient in 61% of these cases; see Table 4).

Table 4: Inspector judgements regarding the post-allocation assessment in relation to reducing reoffending

| | | Was the post-allocation assessment in relation to reducing reoffending sufficient? | | | | | |
|------------------|--------------------|--|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|
| | | All cases | | CRC cases | | NPS cases | |
| | | n | % yes | n | % yes | n | % yes |
| All cases | | 1,052 | 71.2% | 663 | 66.1% | 389 | 79.9% |
| Gender | Male | 899 | 71.5% | 541 | 66.5% | 358 | 79.1% |
| | Female | 153 | 69.3% | 122 | 63.9% | 31 | 90.3% |
| Age group | 18-20 | 60 | 73.3% | 35 | 65.7% | 25 | 84.0% |
| | 21-24 | 151 | 75.5% | 103 | 71.8% | 48 | 83.3% |
| | 25-29 | 237 | 68.8% | 148 | 62.8% | 89 | 78.7% |
| | 30-39 | 301 | 65.8% | 192 | 59.4% | 109 | 77.1% |
| | 40-49 | 185 | 74.1% | 119 | 70.6% | 66 | 80.3% |
| | 50+ | 115 | 79.1% | 63 | 76.2% | 52 | 82.7% |
| Ethnic group | White | 816 | 71.1% | 526 | 65.4% | 290 | 81.4% |
| | Black | 105 | 79.0% | 52 | 75.0% | 53 | 83.0% |
| | Asian | 46 | 67.4% | 32 | 68.8% | 14 | 64.3% |
| | Mixed | 48 | 64.6% | 30 | 63.3% | 18 | 66.7% |
| | Other | 19 | 68.4% | 10 | 60.0% | 9 | 77.8% |
| Supervision type | Community sentence | 560 | 69.8% | 424 | 65.8% | 136 | 82.4% |
| | Post-custody | 492 | 72.8% | 239 | 66.5% | 253 | 78.7% |
| OGRS band | Low | 461 | 75.7% | 283 | 69.3% | 178 | 86.0% |
| | Medium | 304 | 69.1% | 201 | 68.2% | 103 | 70.9% |
| | High/Very high | 276 | 67.8% | 172 | 61.0% | 104 | 78.8% |
| RoSH level | Low | 225 | 69.8% | 217 | 70.0% | 8 | 62.5% |
| | Medium | 628 | 69.1% | 431 | 64.0% | 197 | 80.2% |
| | High/Very high | 174 | 81.6% | - | - | 174 | 81.6% |

Desistance: Good practice examples

Phil was a 28-year-old White British male, sentenced to a Suspended Sentence Order for a dwelling burglary. He had a history of substance misuse linked to emotional wellbeing and self-identity issues; he identified as gay and had previously struggled due to harassment by others. At the pre-sentence stage, the fast delivery report prepared for the court included the appropriate level of detail and analysis, with a logical proposal based on the assessment. It was clear that time had been taken to make checks, liaising with other agencies, and to review current records. The post-sentence assessment was comprehensive and analytical, with clear input from Phil. It was recognised that since the offence he had made significant progress in addressing his substance use, engaging with a rehabilitation provision, and had built a strong support network, becoming involved in services as a peer mentor and facilitator.

Gary was a 44-year-old white British male with an extensive history of offending and non-compliance linked to his misuse of drugs (27 previous convictions), drinking and occasional aggressive behaviour. He was partially sighted and had problems with his mental functioning, possibly due to acquired brain injury and depression. Having been recalled to prison following exclusion from an Approved Premises for being drunk and aggressive, the responsible officer arranged for a social care assessment to be undertaken in prison, with the support of Shelter. Gary was released back to the Approved Premises, and a comprehensive assessment was completed with full analysis of offending factors and identification of the work required in relation to accommodation, alcohol consumption and attitudes to offending. A substance misuse specialist social worker was appointed to address Gary's care needs. As he was now assessed as homeless, vulnerable and in priority need, he was allocated supported housing by the local authority and a package of integrated care and support was put in place to try to settle him in the community.

Chloe was a 44-year-old female of mixed ethnic origin subject to an 18-month Suspended Sentence Order for common assault, criminal damage and assaulting a PC. Her offending was triggered through her alcohol use (six previous convictions); Chloe described herself as an alcoholic. She had a problematic childhood with her mother whom she had previously assaulted and she was abusive towards her partner who had children from a previous relationship. A pre-sentence assessment was completed to ensure suitability for a rehabilitation placement, appropriately involving Chloe. The case was allocated to a female responsible officer who had previously supervised Chloe. Historical information was drawn on for the post-sentence assessment, with good analysis of the areas linked to offending behaviour and the factors that triggered harm being caused. The responsible officer was also aware of protective factors and developed a good relationship with Chloe's partner. Consequently, appropriate sentence plan actions were set, including completion of a residential detox for Chloe's alcohol use and follow-up support.

Robert was a 25-year-old White British male who had received a 24-month custodial sentence for possession of class A drugs with intent to supply. He had no previous convictions. The pre-sentence report was of good quality, clearly outlining areas linked to offending behaviour. Following release from custody, the responsible officer completed a thorough and detailed assessment of Robert's offending behaviour. Through appropriate engagement with Robert, the responsible officer demonstrated a good understanding of his life, identifying other motivational factors for offending than were known at the time of sentencing. There was a clear reflection of how to build upon protective factors and challenge the triggers and motivations for offending. All of this understanding and analysis was used to tailor sentence planning objectives and to set achievable and relevant goals, ensuring that Robert was able to return to his previous employment.

Desistance: Poor practice examples

David was a 39-year-old White British male sentenced to 45 months in custody for possessing cocaine with intent to supply. He stated that this was to fund his cocaine use – he was using 3/4 times per week while out drinking and socialising. He had eight previous convictions, all acquisitive in nature and committed for similar reasons. The assessment completed on his release from custody was wholly inadequate, failing to make any links between drug use/finances and David's offending behaviour. Consequently, sentence planning did not target the right areas.

Stephen was a 41-year-old White British male, sentenced to a Community Order for a violent domestic abuse offence. He had a lengthy criminal history including violence, drugs, acquisitive offending, motoring and domestic abuse. Now no longer living with the victim, he could only see his children through a contact centre. An oral report had been completed at the pre-sentence stage, but there was no information available. The post-sentence assessment was not fit for purpose, with a single line of text for each potential offending-related factor. For thinking and behaviour, it was stated: "no problems understanding other people's feelings". The consequent sentence plan had one vague objective.

Michael was a 38-year-old White British male sentenced to a Community Order. His offending had commenced a few years previously when his marriage broke down and he had lost his job. He had become homeless and had started using heroin. At the pre-sentence stage, a fast delivery report was completed which failed to adequately assess the clear issues presenting in the case, notably drug misuse, with a recommendation for a Rehabilitation Activity Requirement rather than a Drug Rehabilitation Requirement. The post-sentence assessment was better, highlighting that drug misuse was the main issue, leading to an appropriate focus in sentence planning. But protective factors were not well considered, particularly in relation to mental health. Michael had struggled with mental health problems and self-disclosed psychosis and self-harm. He was seeing a community psychiatric nurse, but there was no objective to encourage him to continue these meetings.

2.3 Public protection

Inspectors considered the sufficiency of the assessment of the risk of harm presented by the service user and in particular whether it identified the right factors linked to public protection matters.⁸ Attention was given to whether sufficient attention had been given to the following:

- the circumstances of the case and in what context harm is likely to occur
- past and current assessments and analysis of previous and current offending
- past and current pre-sentence reports
- the list of previous convictions
- information from previous orders where applicable
- information provided by the service user, family members or other professionals
- prosecution statements
- police call-out information
- information from other agencies involved with the case
- the indicators for a possible increase in risk
- who might be at risk
- how any Protective Orders will be monitored and enforced, and who else might be involved in the process.

The risks presented to different groups should have been identified and analysed. Table 5 focuses upon the assessment of the risk of harm to *the public* in general, setting out the proportions of cases in which the inspectors deemed this to be sufficient. As shown, 86% of NPS cases were judged to be sufficient compared to 78% of the CRC cases. This difference was statistically significant. There was a further significant difference for the service user's OGRS band, with the assessment less likely to be judged sufficient for those with a non-low likelihood of reoffending.

⁸ Inspectors considered the assessment of **all** risk of harm posed by the service user, not only risk of **serious** harm, since even those individuals assessed as **low risk** do not necessarily pose **no risk**. The Inspectorate's position is that work to manage and reduce risk of harm should take account of all potential risks, whatever their level or degree of seriousness. Any risk of harm is, by definition, something that should be responded to and not ignored. We thus look to see that this has been recognised and responded to appropriately.

Table 5: Inspector judgements regarding the assessment of the risk of harm to the public

| | | Was the assessment of the risk of harm to the public sufficient? | | | | | |
|------------------|--------------------|--|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|
| | | All cases | | CRC cases | | NPS cases | |
| | | n | % yes | n | % yes | n | % yes |
| All cases | | 1,058 | 81.1% | 667 | 78.0% | 391 | 86.4% |
| Gender | Male | 902 | 80.6% | 544 | 76.7% | 358 | 86.6% |
| | Female | 156 | 84.0% | 123 | 83.7% | 33 | 84.8% |
| Age group | 18-20 | 60 | 76.7% | 35 | 74.3% | 25 | 80.0% |
| | 21-24 | 153 | 79.1% | 105 | 74.3% | 48 | 89.6% |
| | 25-29 | 234 | 81.6% | 146 | 80.1% | 88 | 84.1% |
| | 30-39 | 306 | 79.7% | 194 | 76.8% | 112 | 84.8% |
| | 40-49 | 185 | 84.3% | 119 | 79.8% | 66 | 92.4% |
| | 50+ | 117 | 82.9% | 65 | 80.0% | 52 | 86.5% |
| Ethnic group | White | 821 | 81.0% | 528 | 78.2% | 293 | 86.0% |
| | Black | 106 | 84.9% | 54 | 79.6% | 52 | 90.4% |
| | Asian | 46 | 84.8% | 32 | 81.3% | 14 | 92.9% |
| | Mixed | 48 | 75.0% | 30 | 70.0% | 18 | 83.3% |
| | Other | 19 | 73.7% | 10 | 80.0% | 9 | 66.7% |
| Supervision type | Community sentence | 563 | 81.5% | 426 | 78.9% | 137 | 89.8% |
| | Post-custody | 495 | 80.6% | 241 | 76.3% | 254 | 84.6% |
| OGRS band | Low | 462 | 85.9% | 284 | 83.5% | 178 | 89.9% |
| | Medium | 307 | 77.5% | 201 | 74.1% | 106 | 84.0% |
| | High/Very high | 278 | 77.7% | 175 | 74.9% | 103 | 82.5% |
| RoSH level | Low | 229 | 79.9% | 221 | 80.5% | 8 | 62.5% |
| | Medium | 632 | 80.9% | 433 | 76.7% | 199 | 89.9% |
| | High/Very high | 175 | 83.4% | - | - | 175 | 83.4% |

Table 6 focuses upon the assessment of the risk of harm to *known adults*, setting out the proportions of cases in which the inspectors deemed this to be sufficient. As shown, 85% of NPS cases were judged to be sufficient compared to 74% of the CRC cases. This difference was statistically significant. There was a further significant difference for the service user's OGRS band, with the assessment less likely to be judged sufficient for those with a non-low likelihood of reoffending.

Table 6: Inspector judgements regarding the assessment of the risk of harm to known adults

| | | Was the assessment of the risk of harm to known adults sufficient? | | | | | |
|------------------|--------------------|--|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|--------|
| | | All cases | | CRC cases | | NPS cases | |
| | | n | % yes | n | % yes | n | % yes |
| All cases | | 825 | 77.8% | 513 | 73.7% | 312 | 84.6% |
| Gender | Male | 699 | 77.3% | 414 | 72.5% | 285 | 84.2% |
| | Female | 126 | 81.0% | 99 | 78.8% | 27 | 88.9% |
| Age group | 18-20 | 46 | 80.4% | 25 | 72.0% | 21 | 90.5% |
| | 21-24 | 110 | 77.3% | 74 | 73.0% | 36 | 86.1% |
| | 25-29 | 187 | 72.7% | 116 | 69.8% | 71 | 77.5% |
| | 30-39 | 239 | 76.2% | 147 | 72.1% | 92 | 82.6% |
| | 40-49 | 152 | 80.9% | 101 | 77.2% | 51 | 88.2% |
| | 50+ | 89 | 86.5% | 48 | 81.3% | 41 | 92.7% |
| Ethnic group | White | 608 | 77.0% | 388 | 73.7% | 220 | 82.7% |
| | Black | 101 | 82.2% | 51 | 74.5% | 50 | 90.0% |
| | Asian | 42 | 88.1% | 29 | 82.8% | 13 | 100.0% |
| | Mixed | 40 | 70.0% | 24 | 62.5% | 16 | 81.3% |
| | Other | 18 | 77.8% | 9 | 77.8% | 9 | 77.8% |
| Supervision type | Community sentence | 428 | 75.5% | 317 | 71.9% | 111 | 85.6% |
| | Post-custody | 397 | 80.4% | 196 | 76.5% | 201 | 84.1% |
| OGRS band | Low | 355 | 83.1% | 210 | 77.1% | 145 | 91.7% |
| | Medium | 242 | 74.0% | 158 | 70.9% | 84 | 79.8% |
| | High/Very high | 221 | 74.7% | 140 | 73.6% | 81 | 76.5% |
| RoSH level | Low | 172 | 79.7% | 164 | 79.3% | 8 | 87.5% |
| | Medium | 498 | 75.1% | 341 | 70.4% | 157 | 85.4% |
| | High/Very high | 142 | 83.8% | - | - | 142 | 83.8% |

Table 7 focuses upon the assessment of the risk of harm to *children and young people*, setting out the proportions of cases in which the inspectors deemed this to be sufficient. As shown, 86% of NPS cases were judged to be sufficient compared to 74% of the CRC cases. This difference was statistically significant. There was a further significant difference for the service user's RoSH level, with the assessment less likely to be judged sufficient for those with a medium RoSH (driven by the CRC cases – assessment was deemed sufficient in 69% of these cases; see Table 7).

Table 7: Inspector judgements regarding the assessment of the risk of harm to children and young people

| | | Was the assessment of the risk of harm to children and young people sufficient? | | | | | |
|------------------|--------------------|---|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|--------|
| | | All cases | | CRC cases | | NPS cases | |
| | | n | % yes | n | % yes | n | % yes |
| All cases | | 1,058 | 78.2% | 666 | 73.6% | 392 | 86.0% |
| Gender | Male | 902 | 77.9% | 543 | 72.6% | 359 | 86.1% |
| | Female | 156 | 79.5% | 123 | 78.0% | 33 | 84.8% |
| Age group | 18-20 | 60 | 83.3% | 35 | 80.0% | 25 | 88.0% |
| | 21-24 | 153 | 75.2% | 105 | 68.6% | 48 | 89.6% |
| | 25-29 | 253 | 74.0% | 146 | 71.2% | 89 | 78.7% |
| | 30-39 | 306 | 78.4% | 194 | 73.7% | 112 | 86.6% |
| | 40-49 | 184 | 79.9% | 118 | 75.4% | 66 | 87.9% |
| | 50+ | 117 | 84.6% | 65 | 80.0% | 52 | 90.4% |
| Ethnic group | White | 821 | 78.2% | 527 | 73.8% | 294 | 86.1% |
| | Black | 106 | 80.2% | 54 | 75.9% | 52 | 84.6% |
| | Asian | 46 | 82.6% | 32 | 75.0% | 14 | 100.0% |
| | Mixed | 48 | 70.8% | 30 | 66.7% | 18 | 77.8% |
| | Other | 19 | 73.7% | 10 | 70.0% | 9 | 77.8% |
| Supervision type | Community sentence | 562 | 76.3% | 425 | 72.2% | 137 | 89.1% |
| | Post-custody | 496 | 80.2% | 241 | 75.9% | 255 | 84.3% |
| OGRS band | Low | 462 | 81.8% | 284 | 77.8% | 178 | 88.2% |
| | Medium | 307 | 73.9% | 201 | 69.7% | 106 | 82.1% |
| | High/Very high | 278 | 77.3% | 174 | 72.4% | 104 | 85.6% |
| RoSH level | Low | 228 | 81.6% | 220 | 81.8% | 8 | 75.0% |
| | Medium | 632 | 74.7% | 433 | 69.3% | 199 | 86.4% |
| | High/Very high | 175 | 86.3% | - | - | 175 | 86.3% |

Public protection: Good practice examples

Nicola was a 32-year-old White British female who had received an 18-month Suspended Sentence Order for an offence of assault occasioning actual bodily harm. She had two previous convictions, also violent in nature. She had been a perpetrator and victim of domestic abuse, having been in a relationship with a violent individual who had not disclosed his previous convictions. Nicola's two children were living intermittently with her mother, a former drug addict, and were known to children's social care. A thorough assessment was completed, covering the risk of harm Nicola posed to others through lack of consequential thinking and immediate escalation of emotional responses, as well as issues around daily substance misuse, lack of useful employment, limited literacy, challenging family circumstances, and the need to maintain accommodation. This underpinned a

detailed plan, with clear thinking around multi-agency working, reporting arrangements, supportive motivational interviewing, and victim awareness and substance misuse work.

Ian was a 36-year-old White British male who had received a four-year custodial sentence for breach of a previous Sexual Offences Prevention Order (imposed for possessing indecent images of children) and for inciting a child to engage in pornography. He had previously been a victim of domestic abuse, and had post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) from his army service. The relationship with his former partner had now broken down and he had one daughter, known to children's social care due to physical neglect. The risk of harm assessment was detailed, covering current and previous offending behaviour, Ian's resistance to social care involvement regarding his daughter, historic non-compliance with protective measures and his wilful withholding of his relationship status (which had led to a previous recall). The consequent risk management plan was also detailed, covering protective measures and management levels to protect both the victim and his own daughter, and tied in well with the overall sentence plan (which included a sex offender programme and victim awareness work).

Craig was a 26-year-old white British male who had received an 18-month Suspended Sentence Order for an assault and breach of a Restraining Order. The victim was his ex-partner, and there were two previous offences of a similar nature (one against the same victim). Previous non-compliance was a potential issue, and the responsible officer worked hard to build rapport and trust with Craig. A sophisticated assessment of the risks posed by Craig was undertaken, including analysis of the motivation and circumstances of his offending. It was concluded that the violence was situational in nature rather than instrumental, which then influenced the planning and interventions. Needs around thinking and behaviour, attitudes and victim empathy were identified, as well as several protective factors. Alcohol use was not linked to the current offence but there was a link to a previous offence, and the responsible officer determined that its significance should be subject to further discussion. There was a good level of liaison with the local police, and appropriate checks were carried out with social services.

Public protection: Poor practice examples

Dean was a 29-year-old Black British male. He was sentenced to an 18-month Suspended Sentence Order for a violent assault on his partner. The assessment of risk of harm focused upon the current offence, despite the long list of antecedents (21 previous convictions), which included getting drugs by deception, dangerous driving and previous battery offences. No account was taken of the fact that Dean had a brain tumour and hydrocephalus some years ago that had affected his behaviour previously and could still be impacting on his thinking and behaviour now. Consequently, there was insufficient analysis of issues around Dean's thinking and behaviour, attitudes to offending, emotional wellbeing and substance misuse. The resulting risk management plan was poor and it was unclear how the victim of the domestic abuse would be kept safe.

Chris was a 23-year-old White male, given a 14-month custodial sentence for possessing a bladed article. The offence involved Chris threatening the ex-partner of his now girlfriend. He had 11 previous convictions, including offences of a violent/aggressive behaviour, harassment and a previous possession of a bladed article. He was from the travelling community and had limited numeracy and literacy skills. It was also reported that he had attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and Tourette's syndrome. Chris was sentenced at the Crown Court without a pre-sentence report and the case was then allocated to an inexperienced responsible officer with minimal

managerial support. He was assessed as presenting a medium risk of serious harm, but there was no evidence that his previous offending behaviour had been taken into account or that more recent concerns had been considered in the context of an increased risk of harm. As a result, there were clear risk factors that had not been addressed and which required active risk management. Domestic abuse was an ongoing issue, yet this had not been assessed and there was no liaison with police or consideration given to necessary referrals. Likewise, no further consideration had been given to child protection concerns which were identified at the point of release.

Jack was a 34-year-old White British male who had received a 12-month Suspended Sentence Order following an incidence of domestic abuse against his then partner (who now had a restraining order against Jack). He had two previous convictions, about ten years previously, neither of which were violent. The assessment, completed by an agency worker, was not fit for purpose. Prior to the case being allocated to the probation provider, it had been identified that Jack was in a new relationship with a woman with two young children and that a safeguarding check was required. No such check was made following allocation. The assessment also failed to consider Jack's alcohol use in relation to risk of harm. Jack was assessed as presenting a medium risk of serious harm, but no risk management plan was completed.

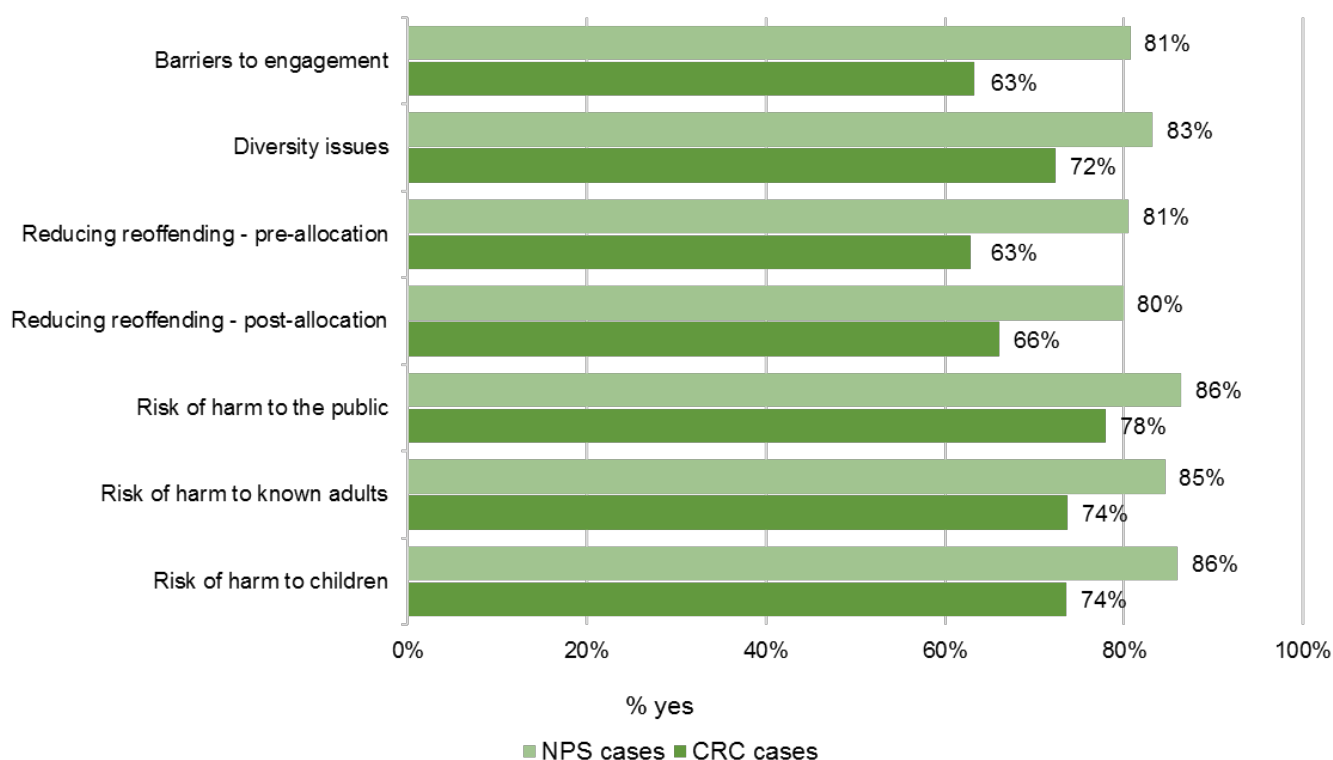
Liam was a 23-year-old White British man, sentenced to a Community Order for possession of drugs with intent to supply. He had five previous convictions, including one for assault and one involving domestic abuse against a previous partner. He had been a 'Looked After Child' and been in various care homes. At the point of allocation, not enough was known about the previous offences, but the responsible officer failed to obtain the necessary information. The officer had not been sufficiently trained to work with cases where there was evidence of domestic abuse, and there was a lack of managerial supervision. Information provided by Liam (including that he had been the victim of domestic abuse) was not appropriately verified, and there was a lack of understanding about the triggers to his violent offending. No contact had been made with the Domestic Violence Unit in another area, and the responsible officer also failed to get full information about risks towards children.

3. Conclusion

Well-informed, analytical and personalised assessment is the starting point for managing service users. This bulletin demonstrates that, in our inspections from March 2016 until December 2017, such assessment was more likely to be found in NPS cases (as summarised in Figure 1). The difference between the NPS and CRC cases aligns with the following conclusion in our 2017 Annual Report:

“Although we have found CRCs delivering well in a small handful of areas, we see clearly that there is now a two-tier and fragmented service, with individuals being supervised by the NPS more effectively overall.”

Figure 1: Quality and sufficiency of assessment – CRC vs NPS cases



Assessment commences pre-sentence, and at this stage is delivered by the NPS in all cases. As shown within this bulletin, the divergence in the quality of assessment – between cases then retained by the NPS and allocated to CRCs – commenced pre-sentence. We noted in our 2017 thematic inspection on the work of probation services in courts that there has been a drive towards the speedy delivery of sentences,⁹ reducing the prospect that assessment undertaken at court will also be adequate for the purposes of managing risk and

⁹ The speeding up of court processes has been driven by the Transforming Summary Justice and Better Case Management initiatives. To meet the demand for more cases to be dealt with at the first hearing, the NPS must be able to undertake assessments and reports within tight timescales.

addressing need through the supervision of a community sentence. The obvious trade-off is one between speed at court and the need for more work post-sentence to acquire a comprehensive understanding of the service user's risks, needs, skills and strengths, enabling service delivery to be sufficiently focused and personalised.

The need for more work was particularly apparent in the cases then allocated to CRCs, and while some small inroads were made, significant differences in the quality of assessment between the CRC and NPS cases remained. Across the CRC cases, there was particular scope for improvement with those service users who had a non-low likelihood of reoffending. More generally, there were clear differentiations in the quality of assessment in terms of: (i) engaging service users and close family members; (ii) reviewing previous records (covering past offending, behaviours and supervision) and assessments; and (iii) obtaining the necessary information and input from other agencies.

Incentivisation for the CRCs to cover the background, motivation and complex needs of an individual engaged in community supervision has not been particularly strong, with the relevant contractual performance measure focused upon the completion of an initial sentence plan rather than the process and quality of assessment.¹⁰ Moving forward, our new inspection standards make it very clear to probation providers what is expected in terms of assessment, as well as the linked stages of planning, implementation and reviewing. Operating alongside our new inspection ratings, they will demonstrate to providers where they need to focus, helping to drive improvement where it is required. In terms of assessment, an outstanding rating will require a sufficient focus in a large majority (80%+) of cases in each of the key areas of engagement, desistance and keeping other people safe.

¹⁰ Under the current performance framework, CRCs are required to ensure that a plan is completed within 10/15 business days of the service user attending his/her first appointment. There is an additional service level measure (SL021) for the NPS which is focused upon quality – the percentage of OASys assessments assessed as either “Satisfactory” or “Good” through OASys Quality Assurance processes. The Offender Assessment System (OASys) is the standard tool used across the NPS.

References

- Bonta, J. and Andrews, D. (2010). 'Viewing offender assessment and rehabilitation through the lens of the risk-need-responsivity model', in McNeill, F., Raynor, P., and Trotter, C. (eds.) *Offender Supervision: New directions in theory, research and practice*. Cullompton: Willan Publishing.
- Council of Europe (2010). *Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)1 on the Committee of Ministers to member states on the Council of Europe Probation Rules*.
- HMI Probation (2017a). *Annual Report 2017*. Manchester: HM Inspectorate of Probation.
- HMI Probation (2017b). *The work of probation services in courts*. Manchester: HM Inspectorate of Probation.
- McNeill, F. and Weaver, B. (2010). *Changing Lives: Desistance Research and Offender Management*. Glasgow: Glasgow School of Social Work & Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research, Universities of Glasgow and Strathclyde.
- Ministry of Justice (2014, second edition). *Transforming Rehabilitation: a summary of evidence on reducing reoffending*. London: Ministry of Justice.
- Moore, R. (ed.) (2015). *A compendium of research and analysis on the Offender Assessment System (OASys) 2009–2013*. London: Ministry of Justice.
- Risk Management Authority (2006). *Standards and Guidelines for Risk Assessment*. Paisley: RMA.
- Sapouna, M., Bisset, C., Conlong, A. and Matthews, B. (2015). *What Works to Reduce Reoffending: A Summary of the Evidence*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government (Justice Analytical Services).
- Shapland, J., Bottoms, A., Farrall, S., McNeill, F., Priede, C. and Robinson, G. (2012). *The quality of probation supervision – a literature review*. Sheffield: University of Sheffield and University of Glasgow.

Annex A: Methodology

'Quality and Impact' inspections

Our 'Quality and Impact' inspections were completed between March 2016 and December 2017. As set out in Table A1 below, these inspections took place across 14 different police force areas, covering all NPS divisions and all CRC owners. We did not inspect within the following seven CRCs: Dorset, Devon & Cornwall; Essex; Hampshire & the Isle of Wight; Merseyside; Northumbria; Thames Valley; and West Yorkshire. As the inspected areas were selected on a risk basis, they may not be representative of all the areas across England and Wales.

Table A1: HMI Probation 'Quality and Impact' inspections, March 2016 –December 2017

| NPS Division | CRC owner | Contract package area | PCC Area inspected | Date of inspection report |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|--------------------|---------------------------|
| North East | Sodexo | Northumbria | X | |
| | | South Yorkshire | South Yorkshire | June 2017 |
| | ARCC | Durham Tees Valley | Durham | August 2016 |
| | | Humber, Lincolnshire and North Yorkshire | North Yorkshire | August 2016 |
| Purple Futures | West Yorkshire | X | | |
| North West | Sodexo Justice Services/Nacro | Cumbria & Lancashire | Cumbria | October 2017 |
| | Purple Futures | Cheshire and Greater Manchester | Greater Manchester | February 2017 |
| | | Merseyside | X | |
| Midlands | The Reducing Reoffending Partnership | Staffordshire and West Midlands | Staffordshire | January 2017 |
| | | Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire and Rutland | Derbyshire | September 2016 |
| | EOS Works Ltd | Warwickshire and West Mercia | West Mercia | November 2017 |
| Wales | Working Links | Wales | Gwent | April 2017 |
| South West & South Central | Working Links | Bristol, Gloucestershire, Somerset and Wiltshire | Gloucestershire | August 2017 |
| | | Dorset, Devon and Cornwall | X | |
| | Purple Futures | Hampshire and Isle of Wight | X | |

| NPS Division | CRC owner | Contract package area | PCC Area inspected | Date of inspection report |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|--|--------------------|------------------------------|
| | MTCNovo | Thames Valley | X | |
| South East & Eastern | Sodexo Justice Services/Nacro | Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire & Northamptonshire | Northamptonshire | April 2017 |
| | | Norfolk and Suffolk | Suffolk | June 2017 |
| | Essex | X | | |
| | Seetec | Kent, Surrey and Sussex | Kent | October 2016 |
| London | MTCNovo | London | London | Dec 2016; Jan 2018; Mar 2018 |

Sampling

In each 'Quality and Impact' inspection, we reviewed Community Order, Suspended Sentence Order and licence cases in which the service user had been sentenced or released from prison about nine months previously. This time point was selected so that the cases were sufficiently current, but had been running long enough to provide sufficient evidence of outcomes.

The sample size within each inspection was linked to the number of eligible cases, with the largest samples in the main metropolitan areas – the sample size ranging from approximately 50 cases in six areas to over 100 cases in Greater Manchester and over 200 cases in London. While the samples may not have been fully representative of all eligible cases, we ensured, as far as possible, that there was alignment in relation to (i) gender, (ii) ethnicity, (iii) sentence type and (iv) office location – with minimum numbers set for (i) and (ii). Cases were also selected from the full range of risk of serious harm and likelihood of reoffending levels, and from as many responsible officers as possible.

Some types of case were excluded from the sampling frames. Exclusions were as follows:

- Community Order or Suspended Sentence Order cases where the only requirement was unpaid work, an attendance centre, an exclusion or curfew; or a combination of these requirements.
- Cases held by a Youth Offending Team (YOT), where the probation provider was managing or providing interventions on the YOT's behalf.
- Cases which were (or had been during the sample period) subject to a Serious Further Offence review or a Serious Case Review.
- Cases that had been transferred in or out (moving across the units of inspection) since the date of the community sentence or release from custody.

Terminated or recalled cases were included, but there had to be a minimum of four weeks delivery to ensure that there was enough work to be inspected.

Case assessment

All sampled cases were allocated to individual inspectors. To support the reliability and validity of their judgements, all cases were reviewed using a standard case assessment form, underpinned by quality indicators and judgement guidance.¹¹

A key source of evidence was the information recorded in the relevant case management system. Once reviewed, lines of inquiry would be pursued in an interview with the relevant responsible officer. Inspection staff were encouraged to take an investigative approach where necessary, accessing further evidence sources to support their judgements.

Analysis

In this bulletin, logistic regression has been used to analyse the case assessment data, examining which sub-group differences were significant when accounting for the relationships between the variables. The independent variables were entered using a forward stepwise approach, incorporating the most significant variables in turn (statistical significance $<.05$) and then removing them at a later stage if necessary (significance >0.1). This approach was considered appropriate as the analysis was exploratory in nature and there was no clear evidence as to the relative importance of the various independent variables.

¹¹ The reliability and validity of judgements was further supported through training and quality assurance activities.