

The availability and delivery of interventions (probation services)

HM Inspectorate of Probation

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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 Kevin Ball (Senior Research Officer), Dr Laura Buckley (Research Officer), and Dr Robin Moore (Head of Research), HMI Probation.

We would like to thank all those who helped plan and took part 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.

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The HMI Probation Research Team can be contacted via HMIProbationResearch@hmiprobation.gov.uk

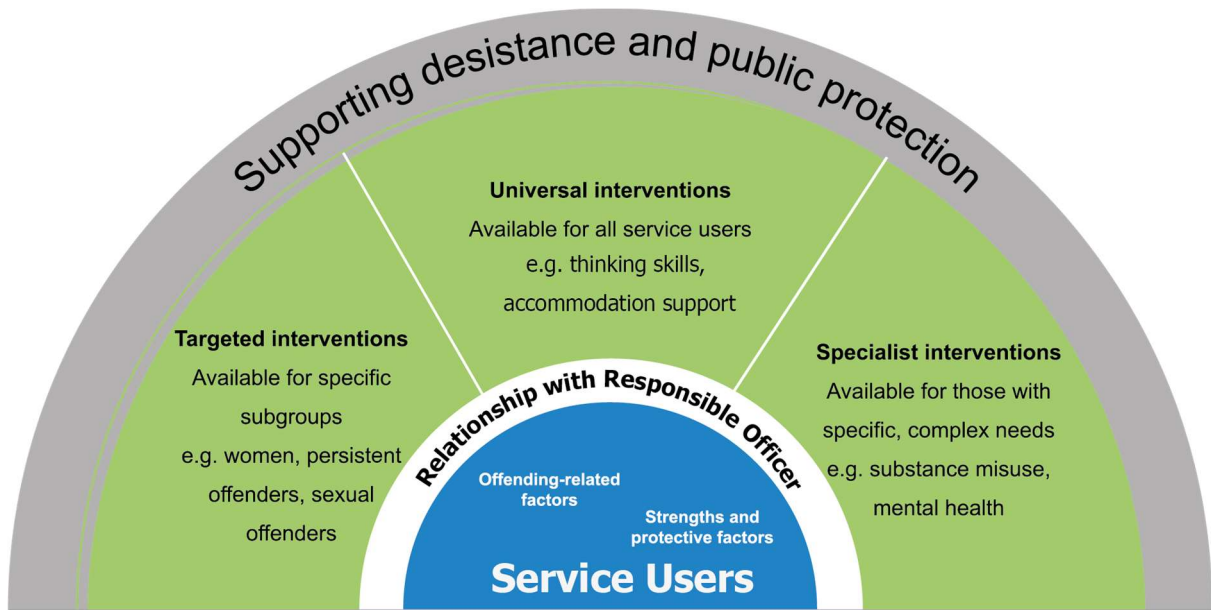
Contents

Executive summary.....	4
1. Introduction.....	6
2. Findings	8
2.1 Availability and delivery	9
2.2 Contribution of contracted providers.....	14
2.3 Contribution of partners	17
3. Conclusion.....	20
References.....	22
Annex A: Methodology	23

Executive summary

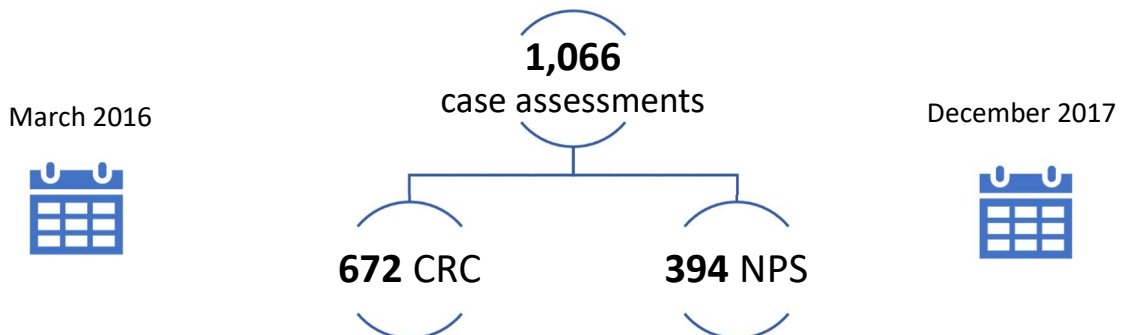
Context

Tailored and responsive probation service delivery requires a range of high-quality universal, targeted and specialist interventions which support the desistance from offending for all service users and the safety of other people.



Approach

The findings presented in this bulletin are based upon case assessment data from our Quality and Impact (Q&I) inspections conducted between March 2016 and December 2017 (n=1,066 cases). In each case, our inspectors considered key questions relating to the availability and delivery of interventions and the contribution of both contracted providers and partners, recording the reasons for their judgements alongside notable instances of good or poor practice.



Key findings and implications

- Across eight of ten factors linked to desistance, interventions were available in more than 80% of the cases in which it was deemed a priority for the individual service user. However, interventions to address accommodation issues were not available in about one-quarter of those cases in which it was a priority. Bearing in mind that appropriate accommodation can provide the platform for addressing a range of other factors, attention should be given to increasing the range and volume of accommodation-focused interventions.
- Across six factors, sufficient interventions had been delivered in just under half of the cases in which it was deemed a priority. The research literature indicates that many of these factors overlap (such as drug misuse, lifestyle, relationships, and mental health) and that desistance is more likely if interventions are integrated and combine holistically. One-to-one work was sometimes delivered due to the lack of other interventions, but the quality of this work varied significantly.
- There was particular scope for improving intervention delivery and the contribution of contracted providers and statutory/non-statutory partners in relation to (i) lifestyle and associates, and (ii) attitudes to offending. The potential gains from addressing these issues are clear – the What Works literature indicating that pro-criminal associates and pro-criminal attitudes are two of the major risk factors for reoffending. Motivation to change is pivotal to desistance, and our inspectors noted the importance of 'buy in' from service users and how the use of motivational techniques could be effective. Conversely, initial motivation could be curtailed by delays in accessing services.
- Compared to partner organisations, the support provided by contracted providers was less likely to be judged sufficient for supporting the desistance of service users and the safety of other people. With regard to public protection, all those working with probation service users need to ensure that they have a sufficient focus on protecting actual and potential victims, with work being sufficiently well coordinated.
- In some aspects, delivery was more likely to be judged sufficient in National Probation Service (NPS) cases compared to Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) cases; for example, the contribution of both contracted providers and partners in relation to education, training and employment (ETE). The NPS cases also tended to have stronger information flows from partner organisations. To monitor progress and refine service user plans, accurate and timely information needs to be provided on a consistent basis from all those delivering interventions.

1. Introduction

This bulletin focuses upon the availability and delivery of interventions for probation service users across England and Wales, encompassing the role of contracted providers and partners in supporting desistance from offending and in keeping other people safe.

Tailored and responsive delivery for all probation service users requires a strong mix of internal and external services, including those which are universal, targeted and specialist in nature. There needs to be sufficient flexibility and options to cater for those with often chaotic and unstable lives, as well as supportive interventions to address the needs of specific groups such as women, those with a disability, or those with mental health and/or substance misuse problems. Intervention services need to be person-centred, with all efforts having been made to identify and remove barriers to access, enabling the right interventions to be delivered to the right people at the right time.

Opportunities to provide integrated services and pathways of delivery should be well-developed, addressing the needs of the whole person and incorporating wrap-around support where required. There is evidence highlighting the potential benefits from joint working at a local level, involving, for instance, the voluntary sector, health services, local authorities and the police. Notably, some service users pose significant risks to the public and these risks are most effectively managed by agencies using their skills and knowledge in a complementary way.¹ Multi-agency working can also play an important part in addressing the multiple and complex needs of service users and supporting their desistance.

Analysis of inspection data in our *2017 Annual Report* revealed that CRCs were generally performing less well than the NPS in providing timely and appropriate services necessary to meet the needs of service users and support their desistance. Potential explanations for this variance in service provision were noted in our thematic inspection report on *Probation Supply Chains* (2018). This report detailed the operational, contractual and financial problems facing CRCs that have subsequently left them with under-developed supply chains for providing specialist services, especially those provided by the third sector. *Transforming Rehabilitation* envisaged that the NPS would purchase specialist services from CRCs using the 'Rate Card' – a price list of available interventions. However, in practice we found that the NPS purchased few services due to a variety of barriers including financial constraints, organisational (especially IT) problems, and not least a cultural stumbling block of trust in the new providers and the limited CRC supply chains.

In our report on *The Work of Probation Services in Courts* (2017), we expressed regret about the decline of accredited programmes. Commencements of court orders with a requirement for an accredited programme declined by 12% between 2015/2016 and 2017/2018. Such specialist interventions are grounded in evidence and have been validated by experts in the field who sit on the MoJ Correctional Services Advice and Accreditation Panel. We noted that the newly available rehabilitation activity requirements (RARs) had led to fewer accredited programmes being ordered, longer waits for group places, and greater difficulty in retaining the competence to deliver them well.

¹ Interventions can be restrictive where the primary purpose is to keep to a minimum the individual's risk of harm to others, as well as constructive where the primary purpose is to support desistance.

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.

The standards are grouped within three domains, the first of which covers how well the organisation is led, managed and set up. There is a specific standard on services – set out below, alongside the key questions and prompts which are most relevant to this bulletin.²

1.3 Services

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

1.3.2 Does the organisation provide the volume, range, and quality of services to meet the needs of service users?

- a) Are appropriate services provided, either in-house or through other agencies, to meet the identified needs and risks?
- b) Is sufficient attention paid to building on strengths and enhancing protective factors?
- c) Are diversity factors and issues of disproportionality sufficiently considered in the range of services provided?
- d) Are services available and accessible to service users in appropriate locations?

1.3.3 Are relationships with providers and other agencies established, maintained, and used effectively to deliver high-quality services to service users?

- a) Are there effective relationships with other agencies to support desistance through access to mainstream services both during and after sentence?
- b) Are there effective relationships with other agencies to manage the risk of harm to others?

² The full standards framework can be found here: <https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmiprobation/about-our-work/our-standards-and-ratings/>.

2. Findings

The findings presented in this bulletin are based upon the case assessment data from our Q&I inspections, completed between March 2016 and December 2017.³ These inspections took place across 14 different police force areas, covering all NPS divisions and all CRC owners.⁴ 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 service users
- 500 (47%) post-release custody cases
- 177 (17%) high or very high risk of serious harm 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 delivery of interventions and the involvement of both contracted providers and partners. Contracted providers include all those service providers commissioned by and under contract to the CRC/NPS.⁵ This includes the staff and services provided under contract even where they are integrated or located within the CRC/NPS. Partners include statutory and non-statutory organisations, working with service users through a partnership agreement with the CRC/NPS.⁶

In this bulletin, judgements relating to the following questions are set out:⁷

Availability and delivery

- Were there any gaps in the availability of interventions?
- Were sufficient interventions delivered in relation to priority factors?

Contribution of contracted providers

- Did contracted providers contribute sufficiently to helping the service user achieve the desired outcomes?
- Were the interventions delivered by providers under contract sufficiently focused on protecting those at risk of harm⁸ from this service user?

³ See Annex A for further information about our case assessment approach.

⁴ 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.

⁵ A contracted provider could be a commercial organisation, a not for profit organisation or a statutory agency.

⁶ Statutory partners within MAPPA are the NPS, police and prison services. Other agencies with a legal duty to cooperate such as NHS organisations, registered social landlords, electronic monitoring providers and the UK Border Agency, may also be involved in MAPPA cases.

⁷ The inspections took place prior to the introduction of our current inspection standards.

⁸ Our Research & Analysis Bulletin 2018/02 focuses upon the quality of public protection work by providers of probation services. High-quality public protection work can minimise – but not eliminate – the potential for risk of harm to society. We consider **all** risk of harm posed by service users, 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.

- Was sufficient information from contracted providers used in reviewing the work?

Contribution of partners

- Did partners contribute sufficiently to helping the service user achieve the desired outcomes?
- Were the interventions delivered by partners sufficiently focused on protecting those at risk of harm from this service user?
- Was sufficient information from partners used in reviewing the work?

The sample sizes across these questions vary due to their applicability in individual cases; for example, whether the factor was a priority for the individual and whether there was a contribution from contracted providers or partners. Inspector judgements are presented for the samples as a whole (applicable cases) and, in some instances, broken down by the provider (CRC or NPS), service user's demographics (age, gender, and ethnicity), type of supervision (community sentence or post-custody), and likelihood of reoffending level (based upon the Offender Group Reconviction Scale (OGRS) score). Logistic regression models were used to assess which sub-group differences were significant when accounting for the relationships between the variables.

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 Availability and delivery

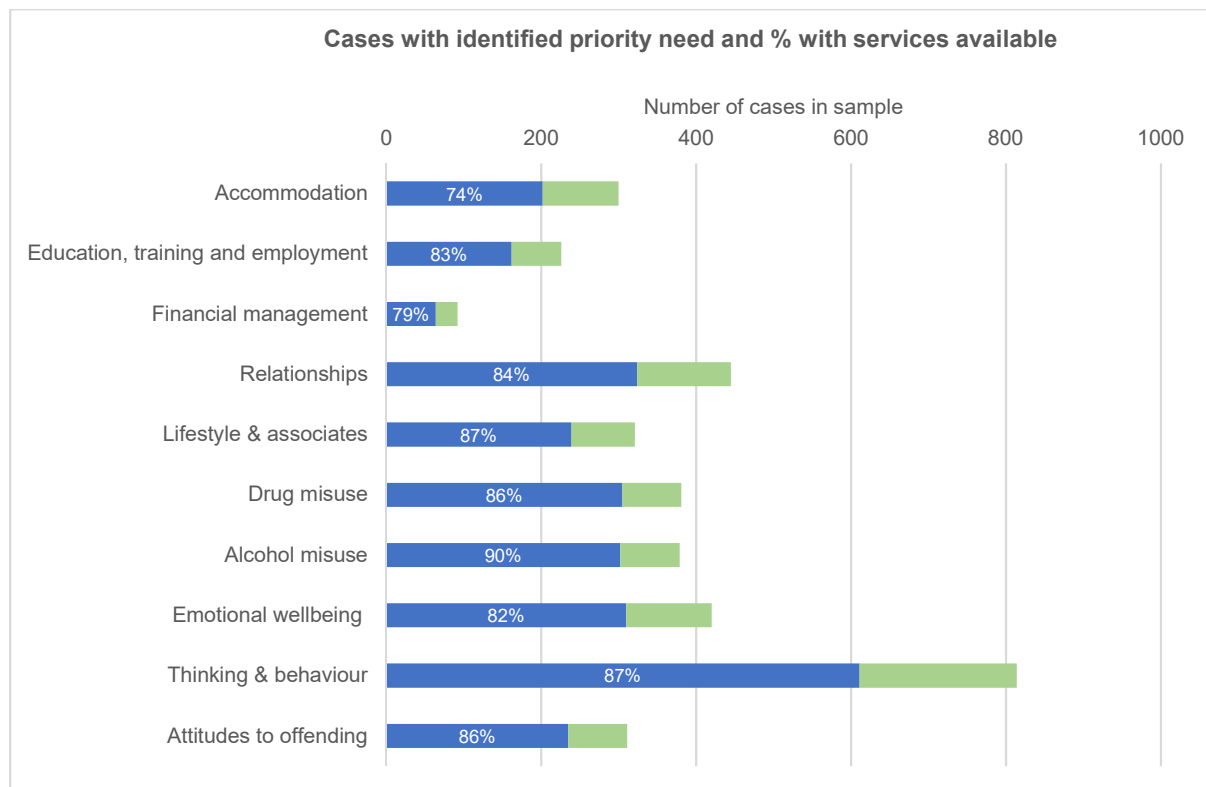
In each individual case, our inspectors identified up to five factors which they considered to be priorities for supporting the service user's desistance from offending. Figure 1 below shows the number of cases in our sample with the identified priority factor (full bars) and the proportion where services for that priority were available (blue segments).

The most frequently identified factor was thinking and behaviour, recorded in around three-quarters (76%) of the cases. Relationships and emotional wellbeing were the next two most frequently identified priorities, recorded in about two in five cases (42% and 38% respectively).⁹

Interventions were available in over 80% of applicable cases across eight of the ten factors, peaking at 90% for alcohol misuse. Interventions were least commonly available to meet accommodation needs, present in about three-quarters (74%) of the cases. When controlling for other variables, the only significant difference between NPS and CRC cases was for relationships – interventions being available in 89% of NPS cases compared to 81% of CRC cases.

⁹ The priority factors listed match the sections in the Offender Assessment System (OASys; Moore, 2015), which align closely to the 'central eight' risk factors identified in the What Works literature (Andrews and Bonta, 2010). Inspectors also considered whether 'gang membership' and 'discriminatory attitudes' were priority factors, but these are excluded from this bulletin due to the relatively small numbers of cases in which they appeared.

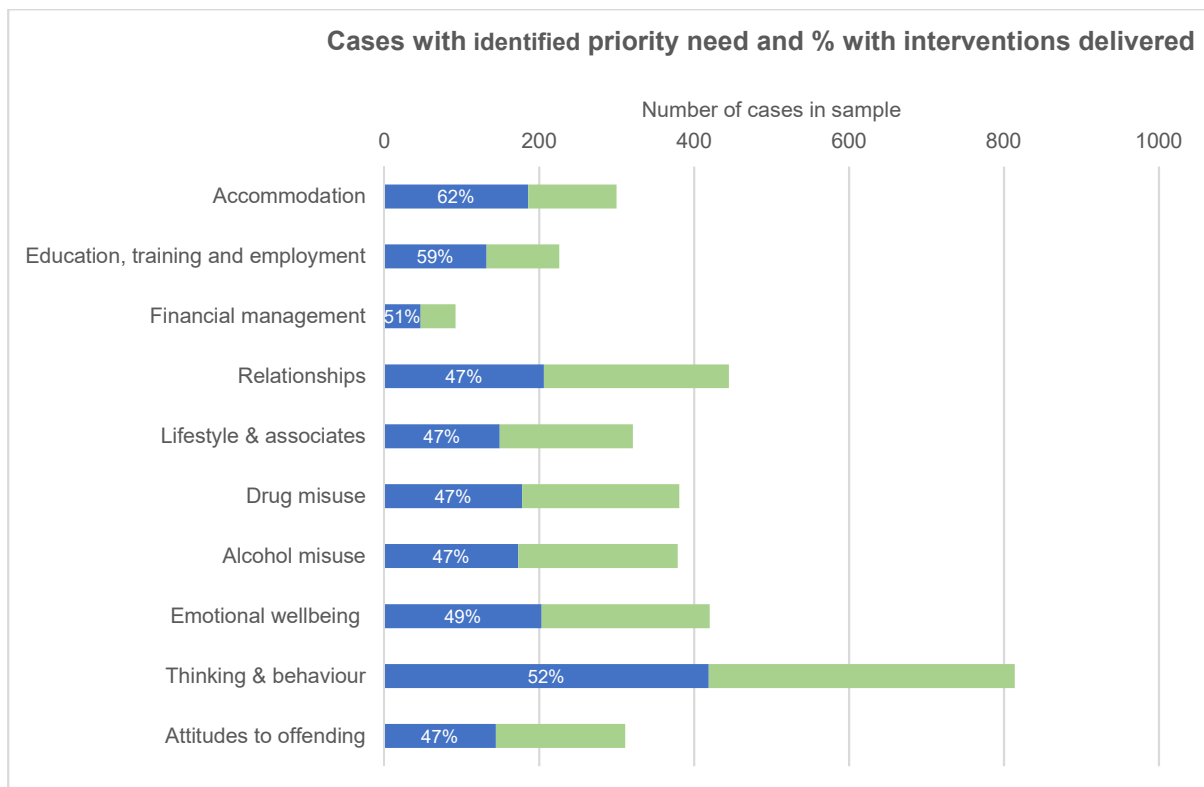
Figure 1: Availability of interventions where factor was a priority



In relation to the factors identified as priorities, inspectors also considered whether sufficient interventions had been delivered. In each case, consideration was given to the amount of progress that could reasonably be expected given the length of time since sentence or release on licence and the service user's practical situation and capacity to engage, learn and change. As shown by Figure 2, sufficient interventions were judged to have been delivered most frequently for accommodation (62% of applicable cases), followed by ETE (59%). Across six of the ten factors, sufficient interventions had been delivered in just under half (47% to 49%) of the applicable cases.

The differences between NPS and CRCs delivery were significant for accommodation (74% NPS; 54% CRC) and emotional wellbeing (56% NPS; 44% CRC). We also found sufficient interventions were more likely to have been delivered for those with a low likelihood of reoffending in relation to relationships, lifestyle and associates, alcohol misuse, emotional wellbeing, thinking and behaviour, and attitudes to offending. Older service users were more likely to have received sufficient interventions in relation to relationships, lifestyle and attitudes, alcohol misuse, emotional wellbeing, attitudes to offending, and thinking and behaviour.

Figure 2: Delivery of interventions where factor was a priority



Looking across the further information provided by inspectors, the following were identified as enablers and barriers to the successful delivery of interventions:

Enablers

- Responsible officers (ROs) being able to swiftly identify the appropriate interventions for a service user.
- The service user being willing to change and ready to engage with the interventions – the impact of the interventions would be limited without ‘buy in’ from the client. The use of motivational techniques by responsible officers was of value for some service users.
- Securing appropriate housing – this was often a stabilising factor which could help the service user to rebuild relationships, gain employment/claim benefits, and reduce substance misuse.

Barriers

- Some ROs felt that the eligibility for interventions could be over-restrictive, especially for those service users who were substance misusers.
- In some cases, interventions were deemed to be unsuitable. Reasons included: no evening provision for those in full-time employment; difficulties in access for those in rural areas; inappropriateness for those with additional needs (such as learning disabilities); or lack of suitability for those with specific risk levels (either too high or too low).
- Financial resources could be a barrier, and in some instances, funding was being withdrawn from current provision.

- A lack of appropriate or timely referral by the RO could be problematic; in some instances, a service user's initial motivation could be curtailed by delays. Often the reasons for not referring were unclear, but sometimes it was deemed to be due to high staff workload levels or a lack of knowledge or experience on the part of the RO.
- One-to-one work was sometimes undertaken due to the lack of availability of other interventions, but the quality of this work varied significantly. While some ROs delivered high quality work, other attempts were deemed to be unfocused and poorly prepared.
- Substance misuse issues could provide a challenge to successful delivery of interventions, as they impacted on a service user's ability to focus on and absorb the learning provided.

Availability and delivery: Good practice example

Rachel, aged 42, was on licence following a custodial sentence for sexual activity with a minor. She had no previous convictions. The RO, recognising that Rachel had low levels of educational attainment and emotional wellbeing, delivered one-to-one structured work to increase self-esteem. She also deployed a motivational approach to enable Rachel to gain some insights into her own offending behaviour and to accept full responsibility. Suitable accommodation was secured and appropriate liaison and information sharing took place with children's social care services to arrange supervised contact with her son. A referral was made to assist Rachel in developing independent living skills, including financial management. The inspector considered this intervention work to have made an important contribution towards reducing reoffending outcomes. All reasonable action was deemed to have been taken by the RO, partners and providers to minimise Rachel's risk of serious harm to others.

Availability and delivery: Poor practice examples

Jay, aged 35, had been released from prison after serving time for drug offences. He was a long-term, persistent offender with 60 previous convictions. Poor planning meant that there was an eight-month delay in identifying his offending-related needs. Jay attended a drug support agency after release, but was then sent away and told that he did not need to attend again. This was not noticed or followed up by his RO. The RO was not confident that there were local services available which would be able to support Jay in seeking employment, even though he was highly motivated to find full-time work. Securing stable accommodation was also challenging in this instance, for although Jay was supported to move into a local hostel, it was felt by the inspector that this placement carried a risk of a return to drug use and potentially to offending.

Simon, aged 58, had served five years in prison for robbery, and had 16 previous convictions. He stated that he was keen to gain employment and was working towards gaining his large goods vehicle licence while still in custody. Unfortunately, the funding was withdrawn, and this meant that Simon had to find an alternative path to gaining employment when released. In this area, the NPS had no contracted ETE provision, and the RO did not consider the local job centre to be effective in assisting job seekers to secure employment linked to their strengths. Simon suffered from stress on release which was exacerbated by his inability to find work, a situation which was making him vulnerable to reoffending. The RO was unaware of the services that were available in the community, such as those provided by the third sector, and thus did not refer Simon to agencies which may have been able to help him to remain occupied and desist from offending. The RO had not received training in how to deliver relevant work packs, thus the quality of one-to-one work was insufficient.

Kieran, aged 26, had served a custodial sentence for an offence involving domestic abuse against his ex-partner. He had 25 previous convictions. Upon release, Kieran was motivated to address his offending, aware that this would allow him to have more contact with his children. He also had the support of his mother, with whom he was living at the time, which was another positive factor. However, interventions did not support his desistance as the RO did not make any referrals to appropriate providers. This included no referral being made to the Building Better Relationships programme, despite this being a licence condition. Kieran also stated that his relationship with his mother had become increasingly strained, meaning he was seeking an alternative place to stay. Yet the RO stated that there was a lack of accommodation provision and would find it difficult to support him in this respect. Kieran went on to breach his restraining and non-molestation orders. The inspector felt that thinking and behaviour work might have provided him with the tools to reassess before reoffending.

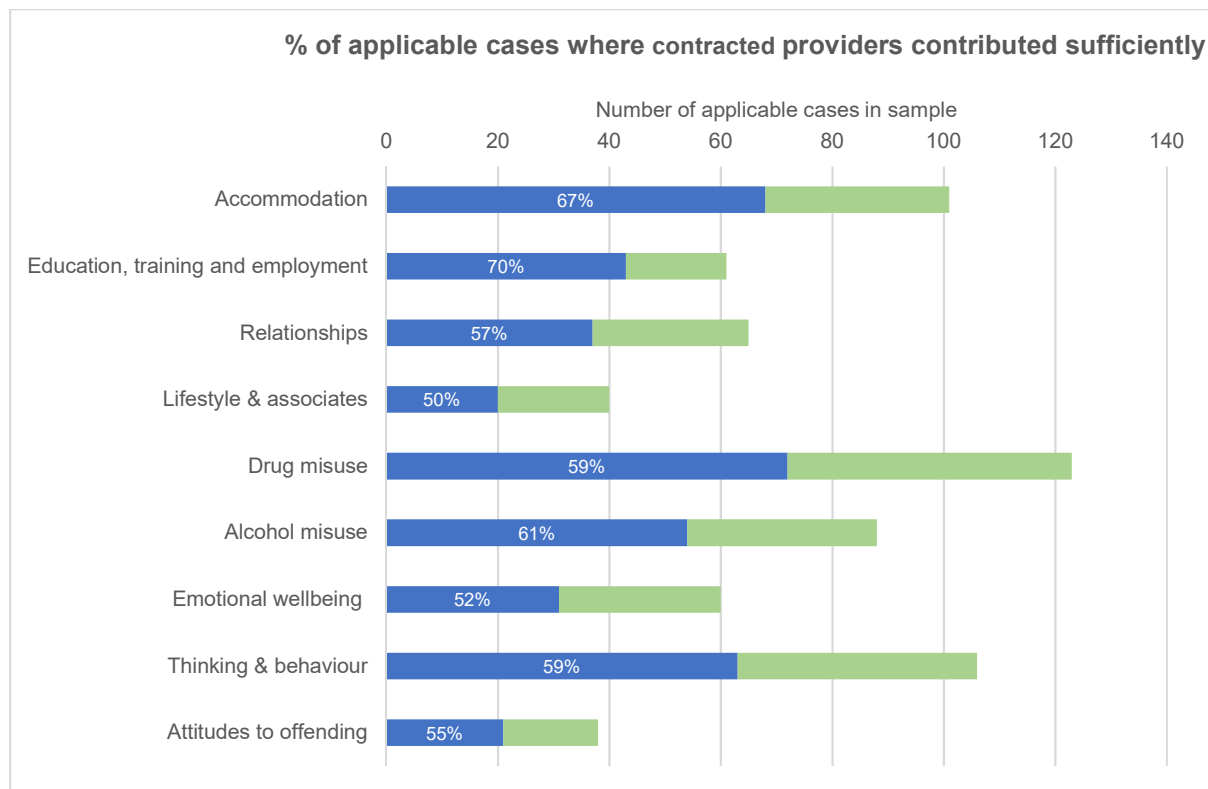
2.2 Contribution of contracted providers

In those cases involving contracted providers, inspectors considered whether they had contributed sufficiently in helping individual service users achieve desired outcomes across priority factors. Attention was given to whether providers had undertaken work identified in the plan for the service user and whether it has been delivered in the manner intended.

As shown by Figure 3,¹⁰ inspectors were most likely to judge that the contribution was sufficient in relation to ETE – seven in ten of the applicable cases (70%) – and least likely to judge it sufficient in relation to lifestyle and associates – half of the applicable cases (50%).

There was a significant difference between CRC cases and NPS cases in relation to ETE – contracted providers contributing sufficiently in about nine in ten (91%) NPS cases compared to about six in ten CRC cases (59%).

Figure 3: Contribution of contracted providers to achieving outcomes



In relation to public protection, inspectors considered whether the interventions delivered by contracted providers were sufficiently focused on protecting those at risk of harm from the service user. Inspectors needed to be satisfied that engagement with the service user was appropriate to the individual and relevant to the needs of the case, and that interventions were being completed in line with the objectives linked to risk of harm.

The proportions of cases in which inspectors deemed that delivery was sufficiently focused on protecting those at risk from this service user are set out in Table 1. As shown,

¹⁰ Financial management is excluded from this figure and from Figure 4 due to the relatively small numbers of cases in which this factor was deemed to be applicable. We have focused upon those cases in which contributions were made. In our 2017 Annual Report, we present some alternative analysis, including those cases in which a referral should have been made.

inspectors judged that there was a sufficient focus in about three in five (61%) of the applicable cases.

Inspectors also considered whether sufficient information from contracted providers was used in reviewing the work with individual service users, recognising that the achievement of planned outcomes is dependent on sound reviews, which in turn requires sufficient information from supporting agencies. The information was deemed to have been sufficient in two-thirds (66%) of the applicable cases (see Table 1).

Table 1: The focus upon risk of harm and information used for reviewing (contracted providers)

		Sufficient focus of interventions upon risk of harm?		Sufficient information used for reviewing the work?	
		n	% yes	n	% yes
All cases		249	61.0%	180	66.1%
Provider	CRC	150	61.3%	127	62.2%
	NPS	99	60.6%	53	75.5%
Gender	Male	203	61.1%	144	66.0%
	Female	46	60.9%	36	66.7%
Age group	>30	104	50.0%	67	67.2%
	30+	144	68.7%	113	65.5%
Ethnic group	White	202	61.9%	145	64.1%
	BAME	44	56.8%	33	72.7%
Supervision type	Community sentence	131	58.8%	92	65.2%
	Post-custody	118	63.6%	88	67.0%
OGRS band	Low/Medium	190	61.6%	152	65.1%
	High/Very high	51	58.8%	113	66.4%

Contribution of contracted providers: Good practice examples

Mikey, aged 20, had six previous convictions and had received a custodial sentence for burglary. His licence included a curfew and the Integrated Offender Management (IOM) programme. The RO undertook good Through-the-Gate work, visiting Mikey in prison before his release in order to build up a relationship and ensure planning took account of Mikey's priorities. Mikey had been homeless since the age of 18, thus the RO placed an emphasis on securing accommodation for him, as well as supporting him to gain employment. Representatives from accommodation and ETE were present at the IOM hubs to speak with Mikey, as well as being at the monthly IOM meetings to discuss progress. Some financial assistance was provided to Mikey through IOM, training was obtained with a large supermarket, and a place was booked on a course to obtain a building qualification. The RO also recognised Mikey's difficulties in forming healthy relationships with partners, as well as being easily led by peers into offending behaviour. The RO delivered good-quality one-to-one work for these priorities. Mikey subsequently managed to secure full-time employment.

Lily, aged 35, had 20 previous convictions and was undertaking a community order for a violent offence. A high-quality pre-sentence report and assessment meant that her needs were identified at an early stage. The RO had a good understanding of the services available in the local community which could provide the specialist support Lily required. A referral was made to the local women's centre, where she could access support to address both her offending and other needs. Due to the anxiety and depression she suffered due to a sexual assault, a mental health services intervention was also obtained. Finally, Lily was allocated a peer mentor who was able to help her secure new accommodation and start to address her debt issues. Securing accommodation resulted in Lily obtaining increased contact with her son, which gave her a strong motivation to desist from further offending.

Contribution of contracted providers: Poor practice example

Jenni, aged 20, had no previous convictions and had received a 12-month community order for a violent offence. She had been diagnosed with depression and given medication, and had alcohol misuse issues. She was referred to an alcohol misuse service and attended regularly. However, this was terminated once Jenni had completed her RAR days, even though she continued to binge drink. Communication between the alcohol misuse service and the RO was poor. To further address her mental health issues, Jenni had the potential to access a counsellor via her university. However, this was not explored by the RO and Jenni did not self-refer. As part of her order, she was given unpaid work, yet, due to her vulnerabilities, the allocated activity was not suitable for Jenni. The unpaid work provider reported to the RO that she had been turning up with black eyes and bruising, but this was not investigated. Jenni was later prosecuted after being suspended from her unpaid work placement following an incident which led to a further conviction of criminal damage.

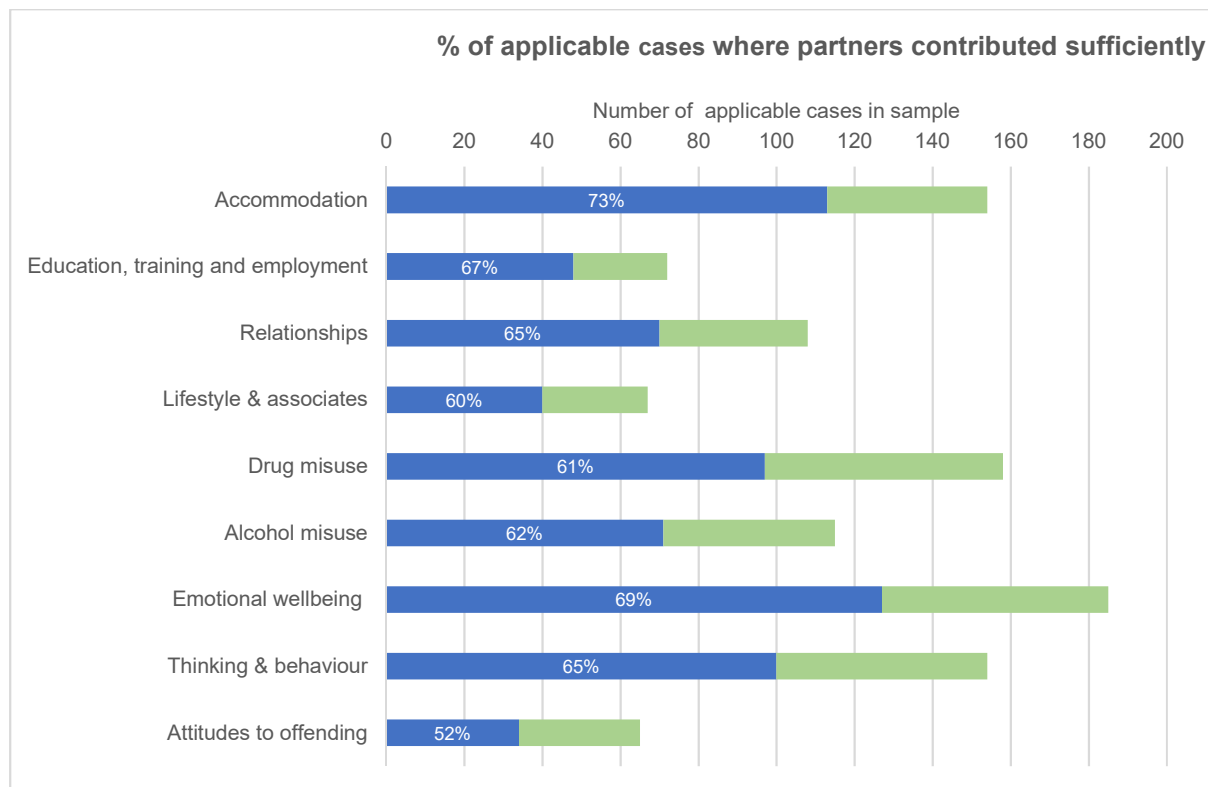
2.3 Contribution of partners

Those questions set out in the previous section for contracted providers were also considered in relation to partners (statutory and non-statutory).

Figure 4 sets out the proportions of cases in which inspectors deemed that sufficient contributions had been made by partners in helping service users achieve desired outcomes across priority factors. As shown, inspectors were most likely to judge that the contributions were sufficient in relation to accommodation – about seven in ten of the applicable cases (73%) – and least likely in relation to attitudes to offending – about half of the applicable cases (52%).

Further analysis revealed that contributions were significantly more likely to be judged sufficient in NPS cases compared to CRC cases for both ETE (82% NPS; 54% CRC) and for attitudes to offending (NPS 61%; CRC 41%).

Figure 4: Contribution of partners to achieving desired outcomes



The proportions of cases in which inspectors deemed that interventions delivered by partners were sufficiently focused on protecting those at risk from this service user are set out in Table 2. Overall, inspectors judged the focus to be sufficient in about seven in ten (71%) of the applicable cases. In dealing with high-risk offenders and MAPPA cases, the NPS must work closely with a range of statutory and other partners, and we found the interventions delivered by partners to be sufficiently focused on risk of harm in three-quarters of these cases.

Table 2 also presents the proportions of cases in which the inspectors deemed that sufficient information from partners was used in reviewing the work. The information was deemed to have been sufficient in about seven in ten (72%) of the applicable cases. There was a

significant difference between NPS and CRC cases, with a positive judgement more likely in the former cases – 82% of NPS cases compared to 64% of CRC cases.

Table 2: The focus upon risk of harm and information used for reviewing (partners)

		Sufficient focus of interventions upon risk of harm?		Sufficient information used for reviewing the work?	
		n	% yes	n	% yes
All cases		406	70.7%	391	72.4%
Provider	CRC	183	65.6%	215	63.6%
	NPS	223	74.9%	176	82.3%
Gender	Male	349	70.5%	325	71.4%
	Female	57	71.9%	66	77.3%
Age group	>30	166	60.8%	147	75.5%
	30+	240	77.5%	244	70.5%
Ethnic group	White	324	71.0%	301	70.8%
	BAME	52	69.3%	84	69.4%
Supervision type	Community sentence	187	72.7%	189	70.9%
	Post-custody	219	68.9%	202	73.8%
OGRS band	Low/Medium	279	70.3%	297	69.4%
	High/Very high	231	66.2%	218	70.2%

Comparing the findings for partners (this section) to those for contracted providers (previous section), it can be seen that inspectors' judgements were more likely to be positive in relation to those working with service users through a partnership agreement. Looking across the further information provided by inspectors, the potential benefits from joint working with the police (good liaison and information-sharing) in managing violent and sexual offenders were evident.

More generally, inspectors emphasised that high-quality delivery was characterised by clear and effective liaison and communication between ROs, contracted providers and partners. Sharing timely, relevant information and feedback on the service user's needs and progress, and recording the work done, were all vital to improving the chances of success for the service user. Feedback needed to be received, monitored and, where necessary, acted upon by the RO. It was particularly beneficial for informing complementary one-to-one work during probation appointments.

Contribution of partners: Good practice examples

John, aged 22, was subject to a 12-month licence and post-sentence supervision period following a prison sentence for a violent offence. He had 13 previous convictions. The inspector saw evidence of good liaison and communication with the social worker responsible for the child-in-need work related to John's daughter. The social worker and the RO jointly agreed to allow John to gradually move back into his partner's home at a time when their child was not resident there. Supervised contact between John and his daughter and permission to stay further nights was eventually agreed as the couple demonstrated they were working hard to improve their way of life. When John's partner became pregnant, the social worker and the RO deemed it appropriate to keep the case on the child-in-need register, recognising that pregnancy can exacerbate the risks of a relapse in domestic abuse. In the inspector's opinion, the foundation work of a timely Building Better Relationships course, delivered while John was in prison, was a key factor in achieving the good outcomes to date.

Kenny, aged 25, was on licence having been released from prison for inciting children to engage in sexual activities. He had no previous convictions. The RO identified Kenny's needs and developed a plan which was followed through in a timely manner. This included close monitoring of domestic abuse and sexual offending concerns through regular joint home visits with the police. Emotional wellbeing was also monitored through one-to-one supervision, while thinking and behaviour was addressed through Kenny's participation in the Community Sex Offender Group Work Programme. Referral for accommodation support was made to a partnership agency to ensure that Kenny was placed in appropriate housing following his move from a probation hostel. The use of motivational techniques by the RO helped to promote Kenny's engagement and compliance with the sentence. The inspector stated that the interventions contributed significantly to supporting Kenny's desistance from further offending. There was no evidence of further harmful behaviour by Kenny, with his activities being closely monitored, which included regular polygraph testing.

Contribution of partners: Poor practice example

Martin, aged 38, was subject to a 12-month licence/post-sentence supervision period following a prison sentence for theft offences. He was a persistent offender, with 39 previous convictions. It was recognised that Martin would be homeless on release and a referral to Through the Gate services was planned but not completed. The Police IOM team were supposed to meet him at the prison gate but this did not happen. The inspector judged that mentoring would have benefited Martin, but no such service was available in the area. The drug and alcohol provider was rigid in its approach and created unrealistic barriers which excluded most IOM cases from getting the treatment they needed. In addition, housing provisions in the area for former prisoners were described by the inspector as "woeful". As such, Martin was provided with a tent on release. There was no clear rehabilitation plan in place for Martin for three months after his release from prison.

3. Conclusion

The timely provision of a good range of high-quality interventions is at the heart of successful probation delivery, alongside strong local strategic partnerships and the critical relationships between individual practitioners and service users. This has been recognised by the Ministry of Justice (2018) in its recent consultation on the delivery of probation services:

'Rehabilitation and reintegration must be a collective enterprise, with a range of statutory and voluntary services having a role to play alongside probation in tackling the problems leading to offenders committing crime. By working more effectively with these partners, and by all public services meeting their obligations in respect of offenders, we can improve individual outcomes and protect victims and communities.'

As the Ministry develops its strategy for improving probation services beyond 2020, it is vital that careful attention is given to the provision of effective, joined-up local partnership work and other specialist services. The findings in this bulletin are relevant to the design of the new delivery model.

We found that interventions to address accommodation issues were not available in about one-quarter of those cases in which it was a priority. Bearing in mind that appropriate accommodation can provide the platform for addressing a range of other issues, attention should be given to increasing the range and volume of interventions for housing needs. In England, the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 has imposed a new duty on probation providers to refer service users to the local housing authority when they are at risk of becoming homeless. The Act also places a duty on local housing authorities to take reasonable steps to prevent someone from becoming homeless and to help those who are homeless to secure accommodation. These are welcome developments, but their effectiveness remains dependent upon the appropriate services and interventions being in place for those who require them.

Across six factors linked to desistance, we found that sufficient interventions had been delivered in just under half of the cases in which it was deemed a priority. The research literature indicates that many of these factors overlap (such as drug misuse, lifestyle, relationships, and mental health) and that desistance is more likely if interventions are integrated and combine holistically, addressing the needs of the whole person. The government has now established a cross-Whitehall Reducing Reoffending Board, to work across government to tackle some of the main causes of reoffending, including employment, health and accommodation. The importance of the work of this Board in joining-up approaches and improving access to wider services is clear.¹¹

We found that there was particular scope for improving intervention delivery and the contribution of contracted providers and partners in relation to (i) lifestyle and associates, and (ii) attitudes to offending. The potential gains from addressing these factors are also clear – the What Works literature indicates that pro-criminal associates and pro-criminal attitudes are

¹¹ The Home Office *Drugs Strategy* (2017) also emphasises the importance of joint working in a number of priorities including education, health, safeguarding, criminal justice, housing, and employment. The need to address physical and mental health needs alongside substance abuse is highlighted, alongside the benefits from employment, meaningful activity, stable and appropriate housing, and having a supportive network.

two of the major risk factors for reoffending. Motivation to change is pivotal to desistance, and our inspectors noted the importance of 'buy in' from service users and how the use of motivational techniques could be effective. Conversely, we found that initial motivation could be curtailed by delays in accessing services.

Compared to partner organisations, the support provided by contracted providers was less likely to be judged sufficient for supporting the desistance of service users and the safety of other people. With regard to public protection, all those working with probation service users need to ensure that they have a sufficient focus on protecting actual and potential victims, with work being sufficiently well coordinated.

In some aspects, delivery was more likely to be judged sufficient in NPS cases compared to CRC cases; for example, the contribution of both contracted providers and partners in relation to ETE. As we noted in our thematic inspection report on Probation Supply Chains (2018), CRC supply chains are under-developed with gaps in the range of specialist services required. It is further shown above that the NPS cases tended to have stronger information flows from partner organisations. To monitor progress and refine service user plans, accurate and timely information needs to be provided on a consistent basis from all those delivering constructive and/or restrictive interventions.

Our inspection standards make it very clear to probation providers what is expected in terms of the services provided – 'a comprehensive range of high-quality services... supporting a tailored and responsive service for all service users'. The volume, range, and quality of services should meet the needs of service users, and relationships with providers and other agencies should be established, maintained, and used effectively. Operating alongside our inspection ratings and rating characteristics, our standards will demonstrate to providers where they need to focus, helping to drive improvement where it is required.

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Annex A: Methodology

Quality & Impact inspections

Our Q&I 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 & 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
	Purple Futures	Humberside, Lincolnshire and North Yorkshire	North Yorkshire	August 2016
		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	
	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

NPS Division	CRC owner	Contract package area	PCC Area inspected	Date of inspection report
London	MTCnovo	London	London	Dec 2016; Jan 2018; Mar 2018

Sampling

In each Q&I 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. 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 ROs 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 assessments

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.¹²

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

¹² The reliability and validity of judgements was further supported through training and quality assurance activities.

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.