



Her Majesty's
Inspectorate of
Probation



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Annual report: Inspections of probation services 2019/2020

Justin Russell

Her Majesty's chief inspector of probation

3 December 2020



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WELCOME...

- **The impact of Covid-19 and the challenges ahead.**
- **Our overall inspection findings.**
- **CRC and NPS workloads, staffing and funding.**
- **Key findings from our thematic inspections.**
- **And time for a Q&A at the end of today's event.**



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2019/2020 Annual Report:
inspections of probation services

DECEMBER 2020



Covid-19 and probation services

Every area of the service impacted – throughout the criminal justice system and support services.

General

Exceptional Delivery Model (EDM) implemented.

Unpaid work suspended.

New accreditation programmes stopped.

New forms of contact

Face-to-face supervision of TACT, newly-released and homeless only.

80% - 90% got phone supervision.

No home visits, doorstep checks only.

Courts

Significant reduction in court reports and new community orders from March – June.

Court staff working from home.

Virtual links with courts commenced.



WHAT WENT WELL...

Overnight switch to new operating model – strong staff and management commitment.



Focus on risk and wellbeing, rather than interventions.

- Remote supervision of stable service users.
- Virtual MAPPA, MARAC meetings worked well; multi-agency arrangements strengthened during lockdown.
- Evidence of innovation; online delivery of interventions and text contact with domestic abuse victims.
- Homeless prevention work – HPT teams and £8.5m towards costs of (up to) 56 nights of temporary accommodation.
- Good support for staff; a majority welcomed home working flexibility, but felt they had less feedback from service users.



MORE WORK NEEDED TO TACKLE THE LONG-TERM CHALLENGES OF COVID-19

1

Probation leaders need to increase rehabilitation activity and face-to-face support for the most vulnerable. There was reduced access to mental health and substance abuse services during lockdown.

2

Secure long-term accommodation provision and access to support services for those most in need.

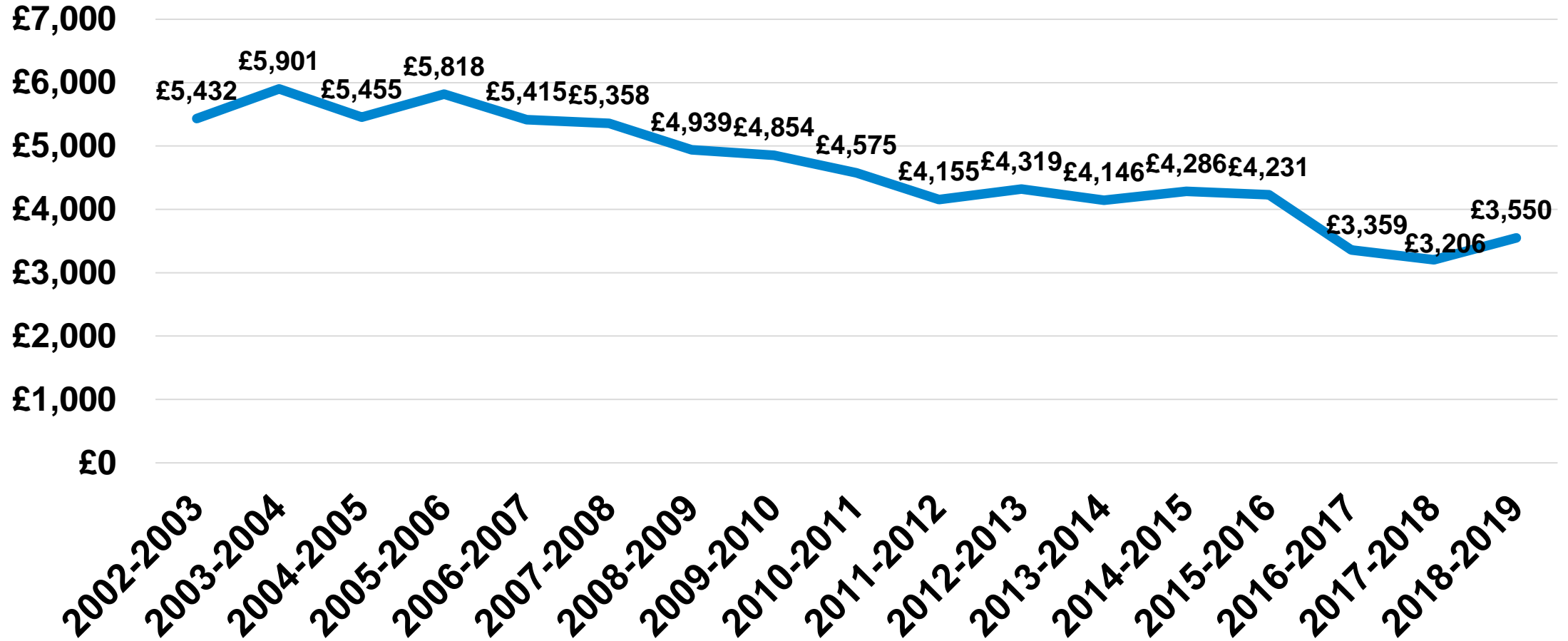
3

Need to deal strategically with the backlog of cases for trial, sentence, breach proceedings and of unpaid work and accredited programmes.

An inspection of progress against Covid-19 recovery plans has looked at 12 services and 240 cases – this will be published in the new year.



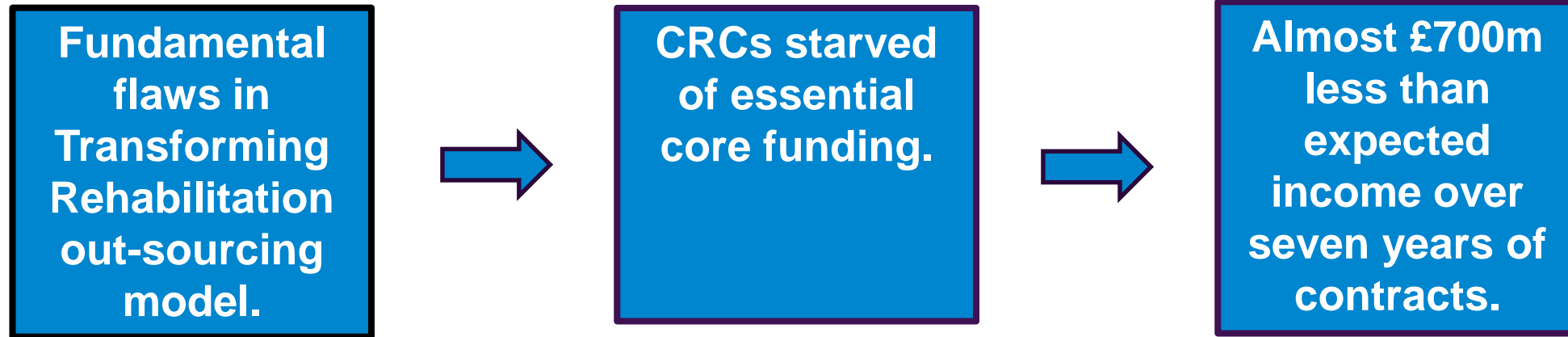
COVID-19 CAME IN ADDITION TO DECLINING INVESTMENT



(Total annual probation funding / total caseload, adjusted for inflation – at 2020 prices)



Probation at the beginning of 2019 inspection cycle



- Falling probation officer numbers; unmanageable caseloads and weak scores on management oversight and risk management.
- 20 out of 21 CRCs rated 'Requires improvement' and one as 'Inadequate' in our 2018/2019 inspections.
- Key provider for Wales and the South West went into administration in February 2019.



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Probation inspections – 2019/2020



In 2019/2020, we inspected **10** Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) and **1** National Probation Service (NPS) domain.

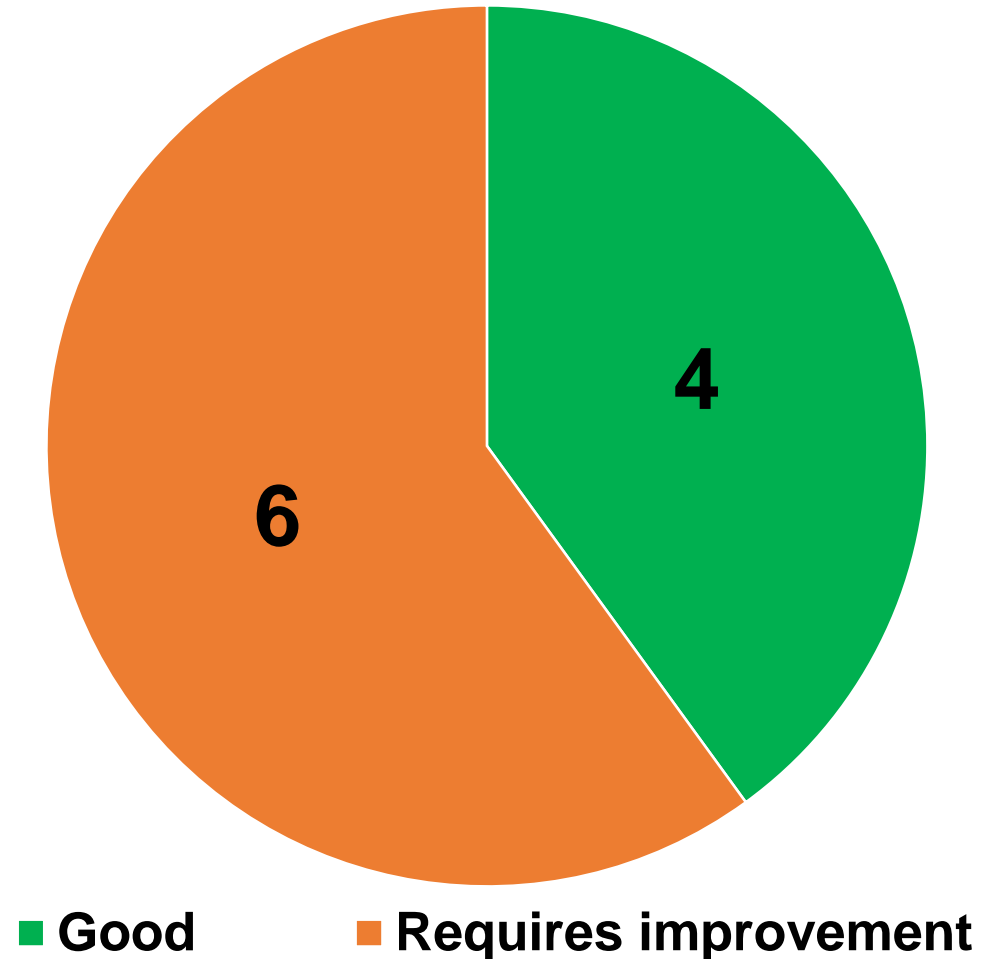
Our inspection of probation services was **cut short**, due to Covid-19.



OVERALL RATINGS – 2019/2020

10 CRCs plus North
West NPS inspected in
2019/2020.

Note: An inspection of
Hampshire and Isle of Wight
could not be completed due
to Covid-19, so an overall
rating could not be awarded.





A mixed picture on CRC performance in 2019/2020

Outstanding

Good

Requires improvement

Inadequate

1.1 Leadership

1.2 Staff

1.3 Services

1.4 Information and facilities

2.1 Assessment

2.2 Planning

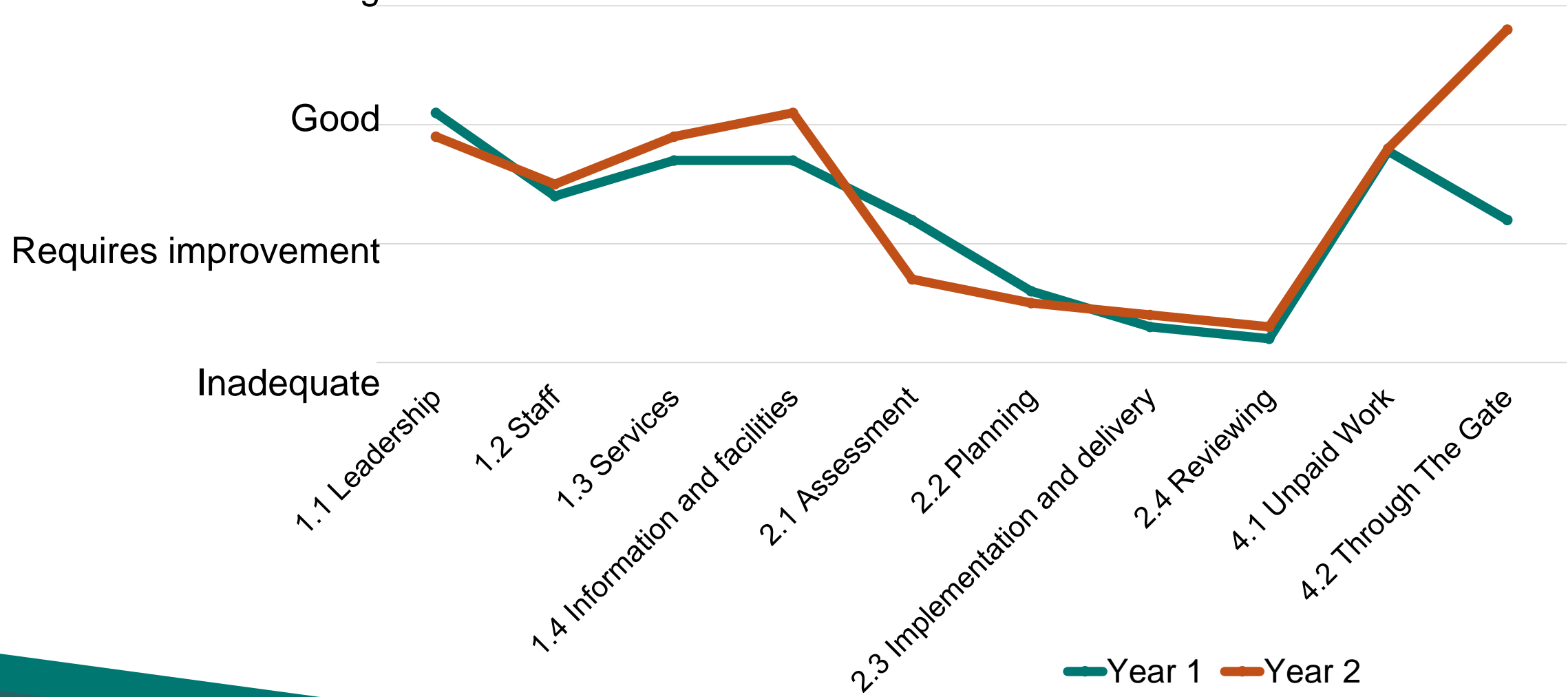
2.3 Implementation and delivery

2.4 Reviewing

4.1 Unpaid Work

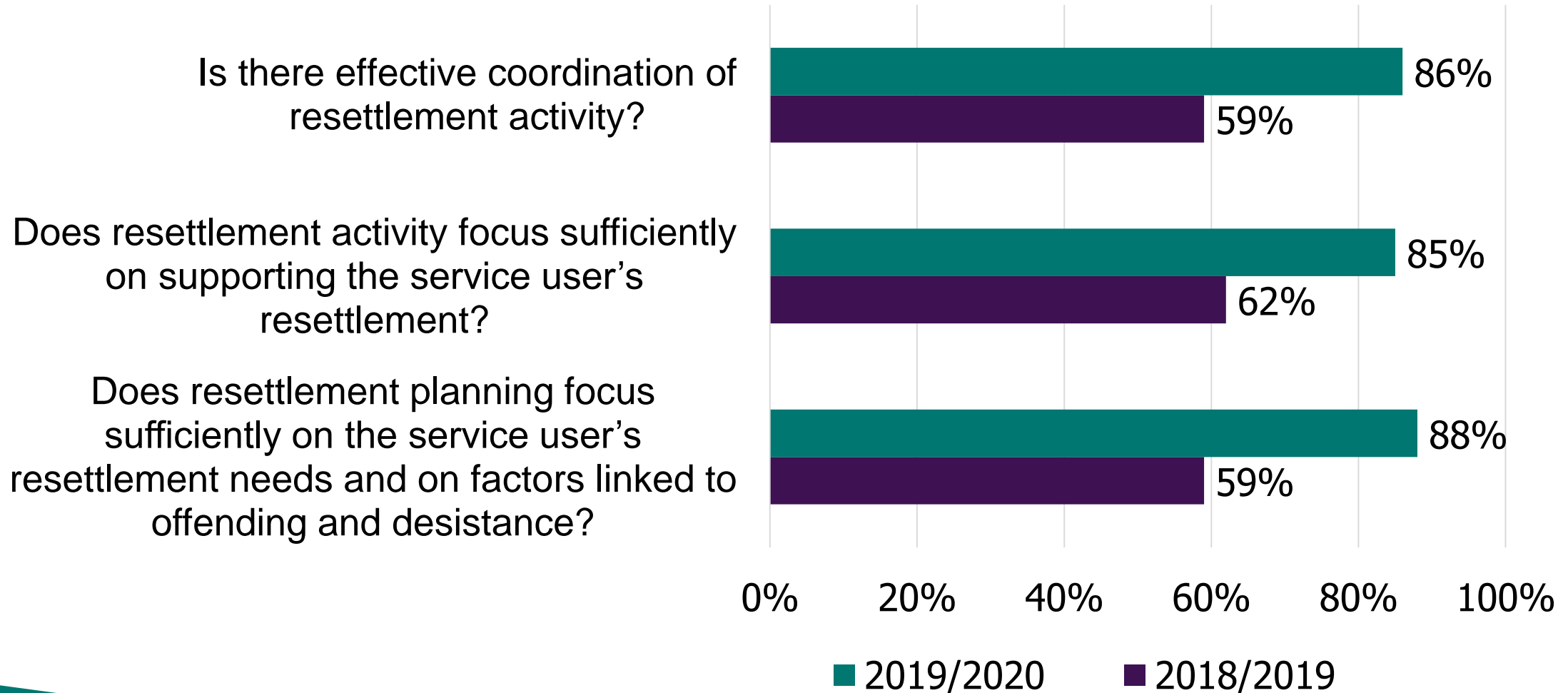
4.2 Through The Gate

Year 1 Year 2





Significant improvement in through the gate





Some positive signs for CRCs

'Good'

Some CRCs are starting to perform better – three now rated 'Good' and one close.

Unpaid work supervision generally satisfactory – 8 out of ten rated 'Good'.



More accessible approaches to face-to-face appointments for lower-risk caseload – also community hubs and open-plan offices.

Strong commitment to service-user engagement – service-user councils; paid and volunteer roles for ex-service users.

£22m

Extra funding has made a real difference on Through the Gate: 8 out of ten services rated 'Outstanding'.



Investment in IT; new and innovative casework management systems and workload management tools.



But challenges remain

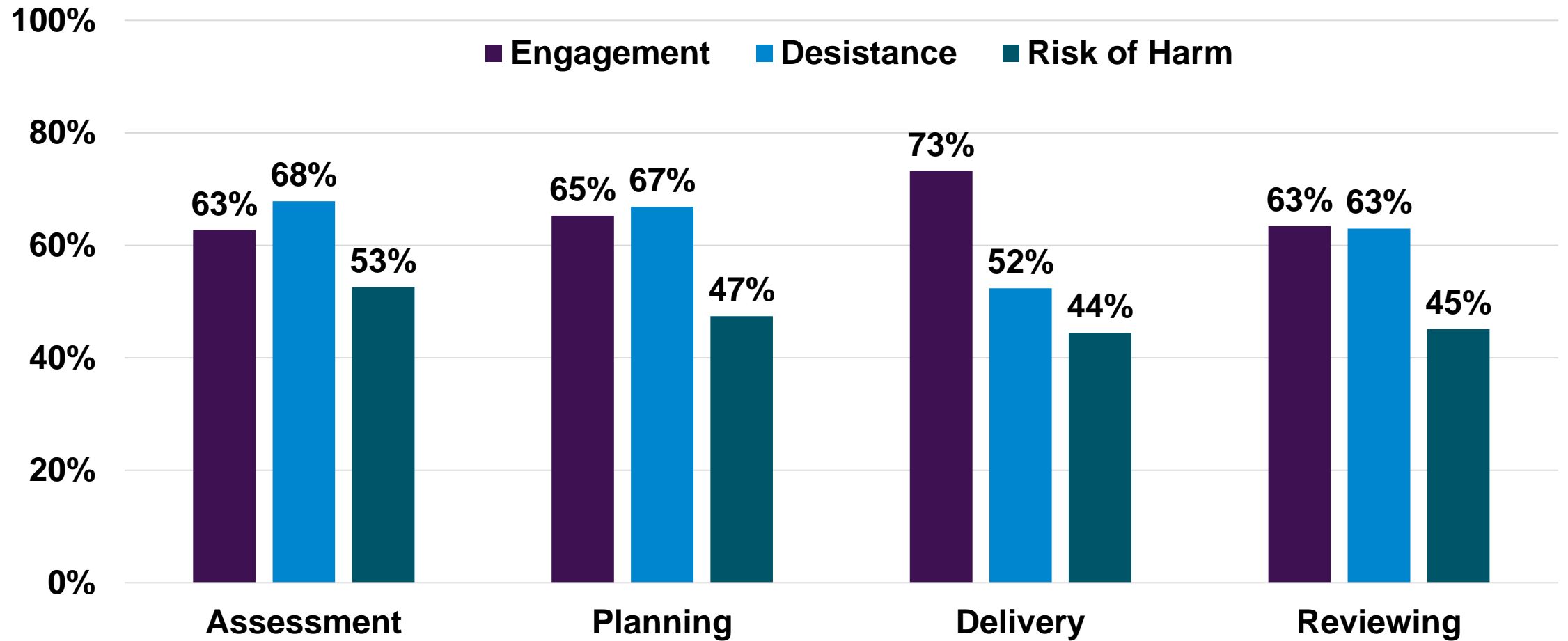
'Two tiers' of CRC performance have emerged – significant difference between providers. Three rated 'Good' but five rated 'Inadequate' across all our case supervision standards.

More than 50% of inspected CRC cases unsatisfactory on risk of harm management.

Falling budgets and probation officer numbers in some areas is leading to inexperienced PSOs taking on inappropriate cases.

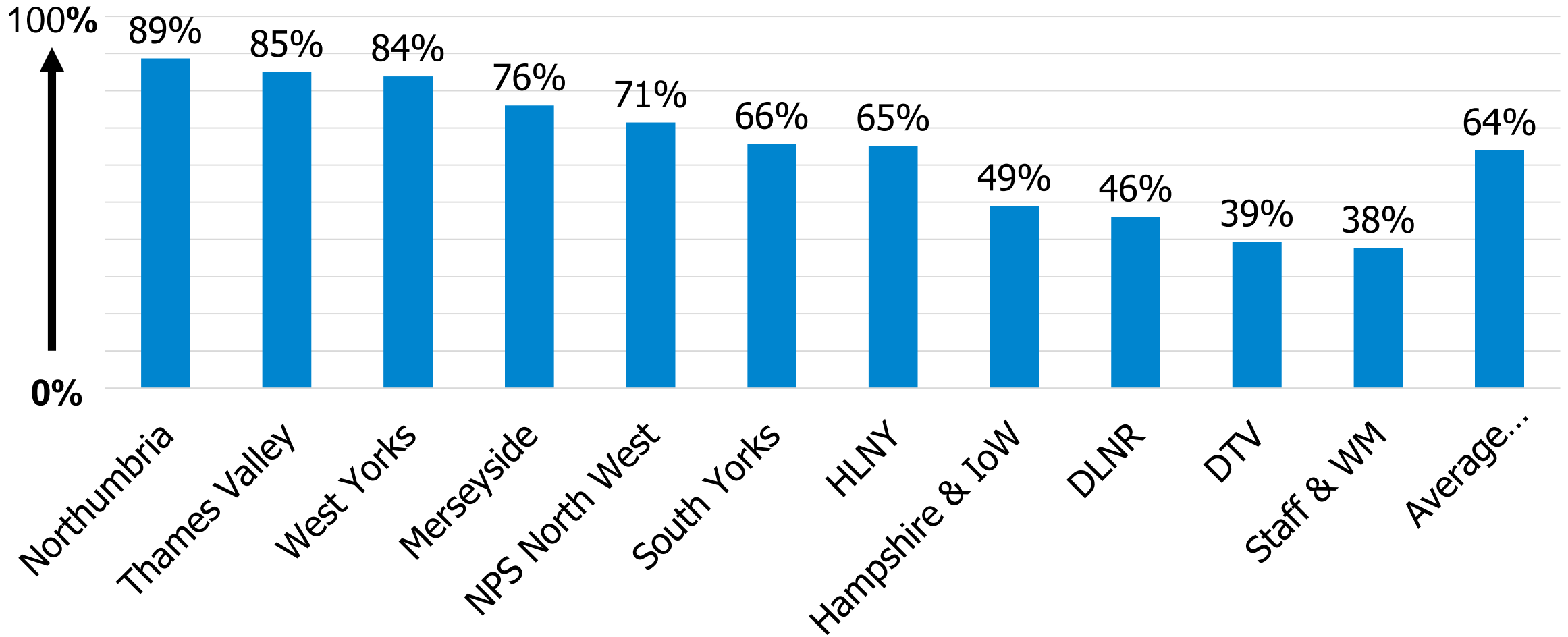


Management of risk remains a concern





Domestic abuse checks are still missing



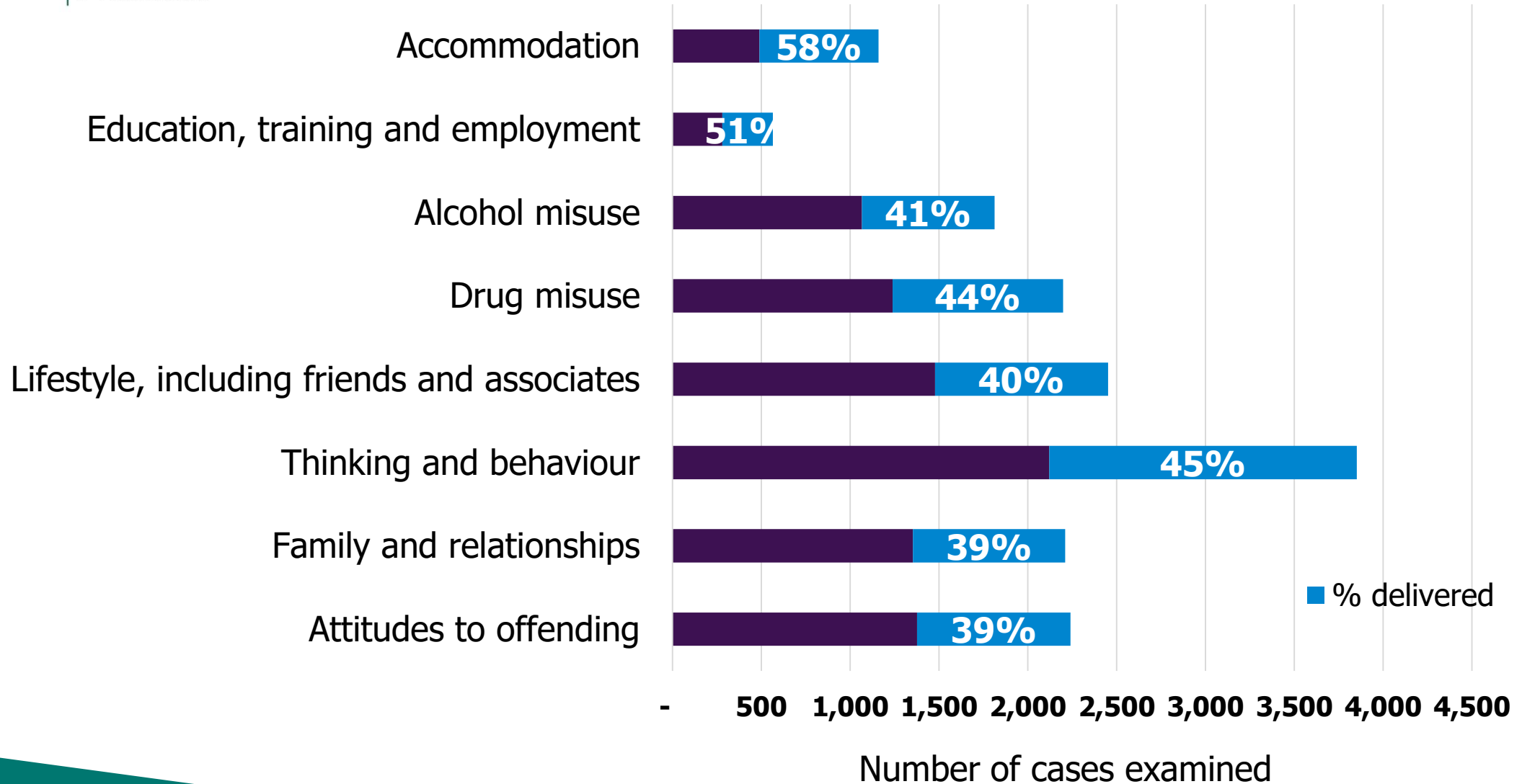


Higher risk cases are getting better supervision

	NPS high risk of serious harm	NPS medium risk of serious harm	CRC medium risk of serious harm	CRC low risk of serious harm
Does assessment focus sufficiently on keeping people safe?	78%	73%	57%	55%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping people safe?	73%	68%	51%	12%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?	68%	63%	44%	22%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	64%	60%	47%	38%



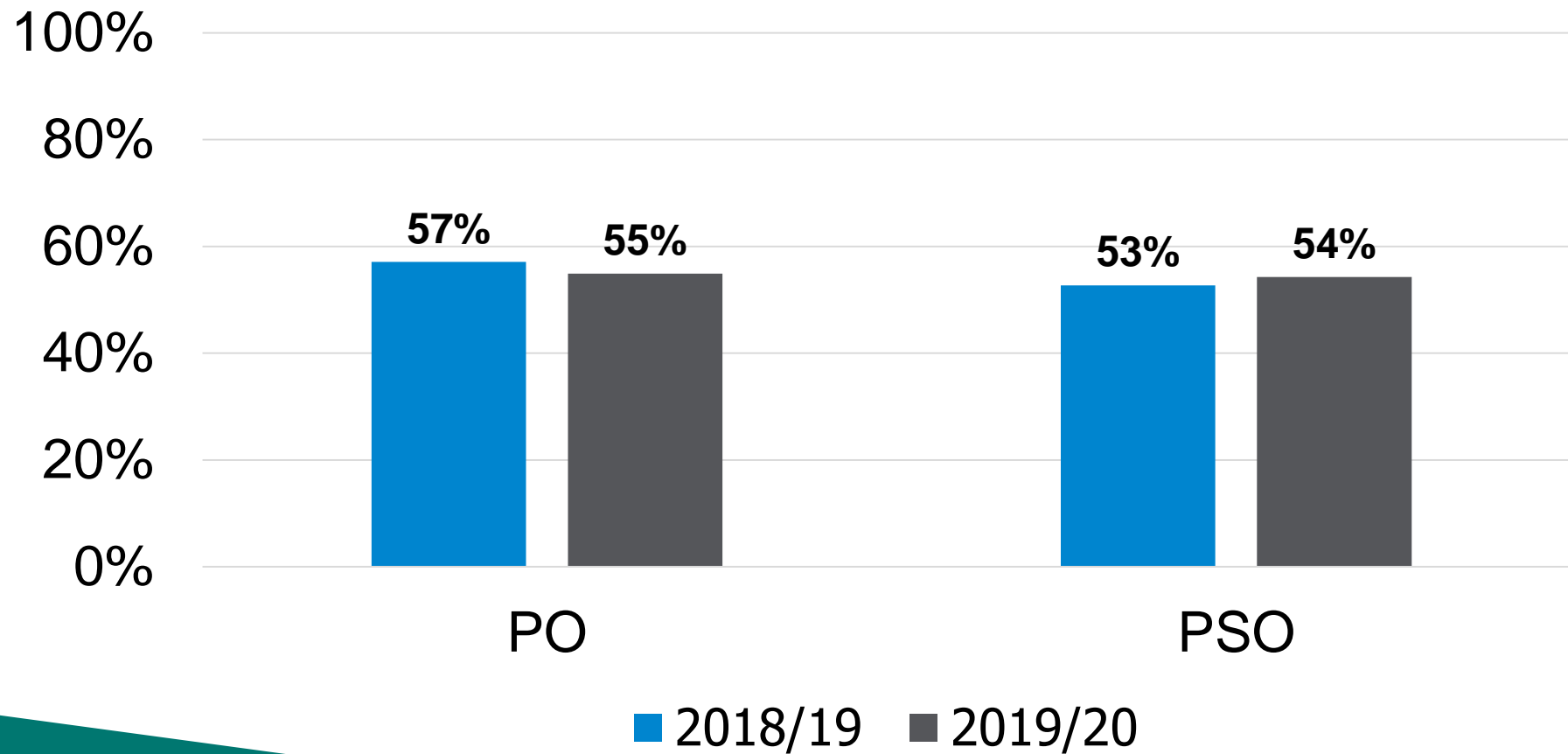
Many needs still not being met





Caseloads remain too high

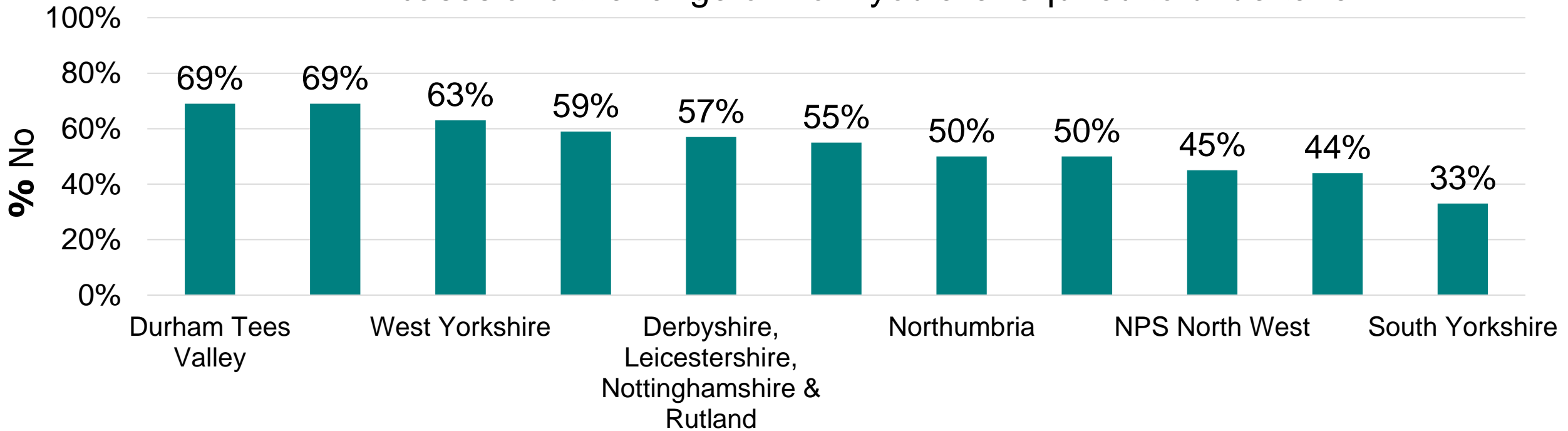
Percentage of POs and PSOs with 'unmanageable' caseloads





CRC WORKLOADS – 2019/2020 INSPECTIONS

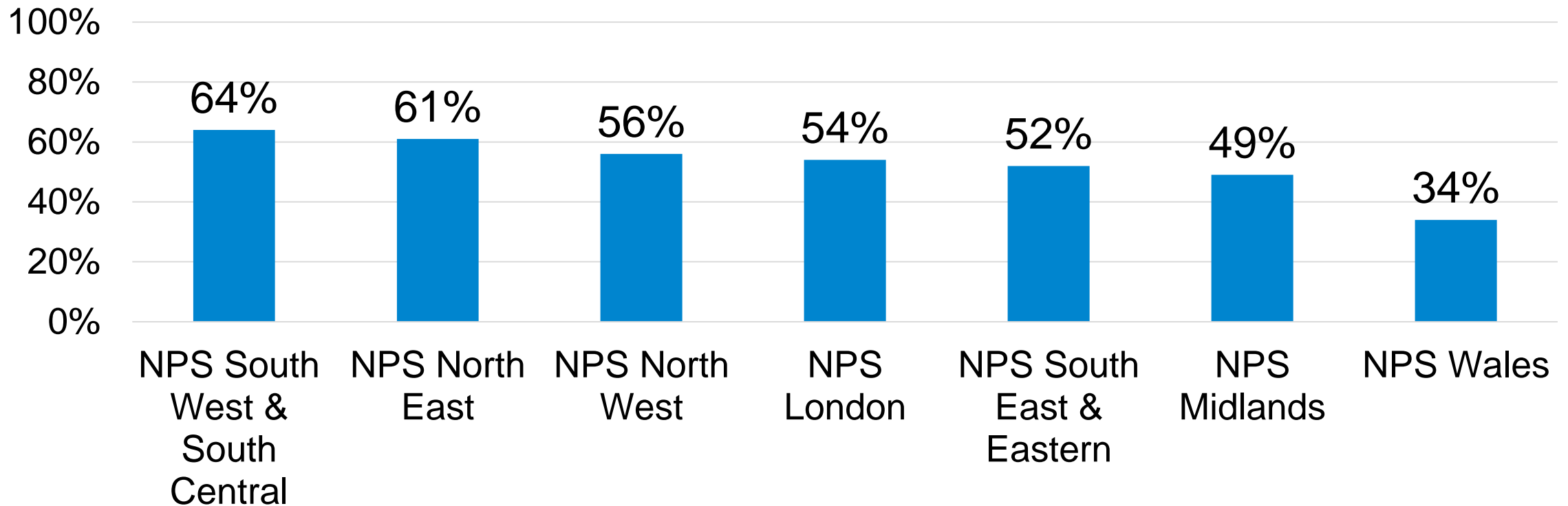
POs – Do you think your workload is manageable, given the profile of the cases and the range of work you are required to undertake?





NPS Probation Office workloads – 2018/2019

Do you think your workload is manageable?
Percentage saying 'no'



NPS staffing

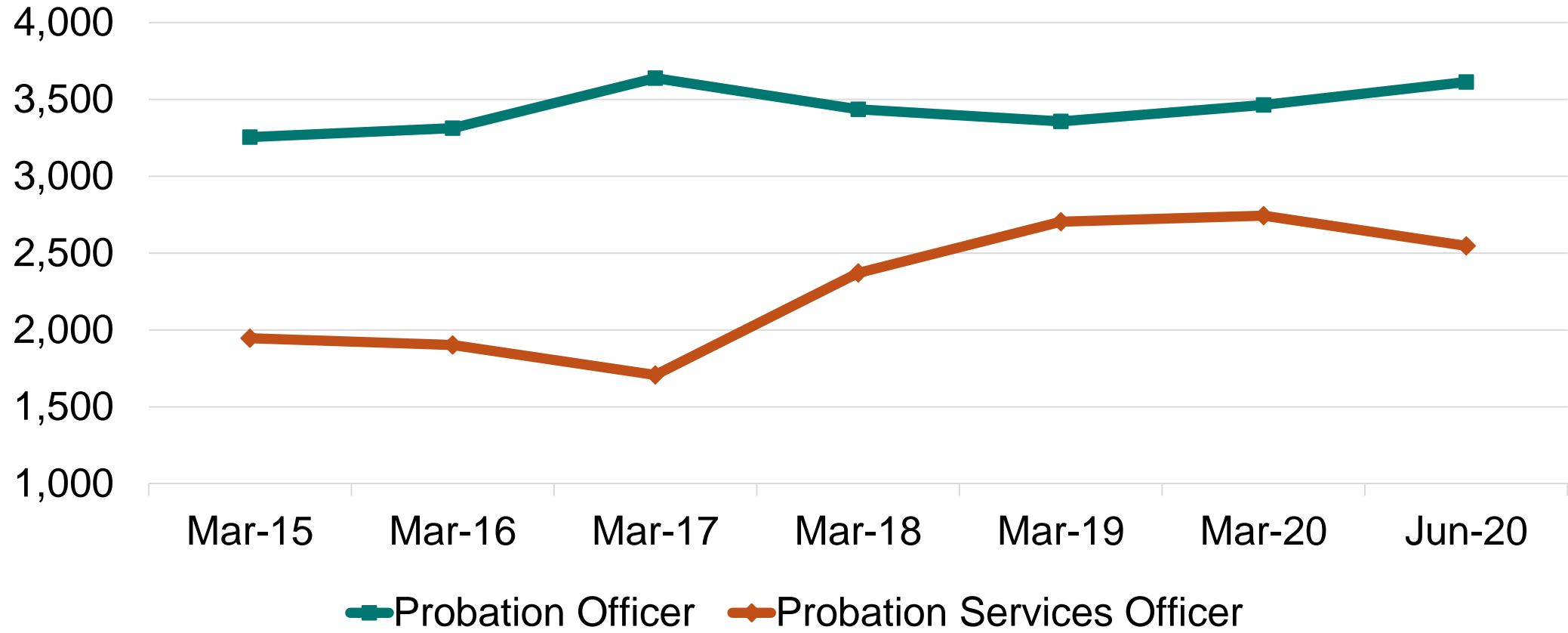
We assessed all seven NPS divisions as 'Requires improvement' in relation to staffing in our 2018/2019 inspections. We found:

- Staff shortages in all divisions; acutely at PO grade – over 650 NPS PO vacancies in September 2019.
- The number of staff in post has fallen short of target since 2015, as caseloads have increased.
- 60% of NPS POs were working in excess of 100% on workload tool; 30% had a workload more than 120%.
- Span of SPOs too broad – half of the managers we surveyed said they supervise between 11 and 20 staff. Half said they spend less than 20% of their time monitoring casework.



Some signs of improvement on staff numbers

NPS Staff in post





THEMATIC INSPECTIONS 2019/2020



**February
2020**



**November
2020**

A joint thematic inspection of Integrated Offender Management (IOM).

Part 1: Joseph McCann and the thematic review of probation recall culture and practice.

A thematic inspection of the SFO investigation and review process.

An inspection of accommodation and support for adult offenders in the community and on release from prison.

Part 2: Joseph McCann and the thematic review of probation recall culture and practice.

A thematic review of the Exceptional Delivery Model arrangements in probation and youth offending services in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.



THE FUTURE

- Unification of offender management, delivery of interventions and unpaid work within the public sector NPS. from June 2021, has been welcomed but it must be adequately resourced. It is not a magic bullet by itself.
- Transition to new structures in six months will be very challenging; people, data, IT and buildings all have to be transferred. Significant challenges around ensuring Dynamic Framework services are available from 'day one' in June 2021.
- Recruitment and training will be crucial in order to fill vacancies, reduce caseloads, improve risk management and make the most of unified structure.
- Important not to lose the innovation and creativity that the best CRCs have brought to the table.

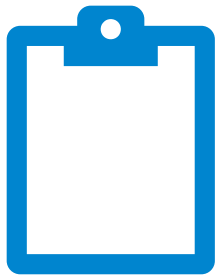


COMING IN 2021...



Thematic inspections of:

- Mental health provision.
- The impact of substance abuse.
- Diversity and provision for black, Asian and minority ethnic service users.



New inspection methodology ahead of unification in June 2021 (currently being piloted in Wales).



HM Inspectorate commitments for 2021 and beyond...

- The rolling-out of a service-user engagement strategy.
- Recruitment of assistant inspectors and inspectors.
- A commitment to diversity, specifically around recruitment of people from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds.



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CONTACT US



Civil Justice Centre, Manchester, M3 3FX



HMIP.enquiries@hmiprobation.gov.uk



0161 240 5336



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