



Her Majesty's
Inspectorate of
Probation

Probation inspection standards

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Contents

1. Regional questions	3
1.1 Leadership	3
1.2 Staff	3
1.3 Services	5
1.4 Information and facilities	5
1. PDU standards- Domain one	7
1.1 Leadership	7
1.2 Staff	7
1.3 Services	9
1.4 Information and facilities	9
2. PDU standards- Domain two	11
2.1 Court work	11
2.2 Assessment	11
2.3 Planning	12
2.4 Implementation and delivery	13
2.5 Reviewing	14
2.6 Outcomes.....	15
2.7 Statutory victim work	15

1. Regional questions

1.1 Leadership

1.1.1 How does the vision and strategy drive the delivery of a high-quality service for all people on probation?

- a) How does the vision and strategy prioritise the quality of service and adherence to the evidence base?
- b) How are the views of people on probation incorporated into the vision and strategy?
- c) What governance arrangements and delivery plans are in place that translate the vision and strategy into practice?
- d) What is the strategic approach of the regional leadership team to meeting diverse needs?

1.1.2 How are potential risks to service delivery anticipated and planned for in advance?

- a) How are the risks to the service understood, and are appropriate mitigations and controls in place?
- b) What arrangements are in place to ensure business continuity in the event of major incidents?
- c) When carrying out changes to systems, processes or staffing, how is the impact on delivery assessed and appropriate action taken?

1.1.3 How does the operating model support effective service delivery, meeting the needs of all people on probation?

- a) How does the operating model facilitate meaningful contact and continuity of contact with people on probation?
- b) How does the operating model encourage personalised approaches with people on probation, taking account of diversity factors?
- c) Where there are significant planned changes to the operating model, how are these communicated and implemented?

1.2 Staff

1.2.1 Do regional staffing and workload levels support the delivery of a high-quality service?

- a) Are staffing levels across the region sufficient?
- b) Are staff workloads across the region manageable?
- c) Are there effective arrangements in place to ensure sufficient staffing levels for each PDU?

1.2.2 Do the skills and profile of regional staff support the delivery of a high-quality service?

- a) Are roles for regional staff clearly defined to support the delivery of a high-quality service?

- b) Is there a strategy in place to ensure that the regional workforce reflects adequately the diversity of the local population?

1.2.3 Are arrangements for learning and development comprehensive and responsive?

- a) Is there a strategy in place to identify and develop the potential of all staff in the region?
- b) Is there a strategy in place to ensure that sufficient access is provided to in-service staff training for all staff in the region?
- c) Is there a strategy in place to ensure that all staff in the region, from all backgrounds, have equitable access to promotion opportunities and reward and recognition?

1.2.4 Do managers pay sufficient attention to staff engagement?

- a) Is there a staff engagement strategy in place for all staff in the region?
- b) Are staff engagement levels monitored and PDUs supported to improve engagement where necessary?
- c) Is there a strategy in place to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all staff in the region, and build staff resilience?
- d) Are PDUs supported to make reasonable adjustments for staff in accordance with statutory requirements and protected characteristics?
- e) Is there a policy and process for complaints, and support if any staff in the region feel discriminated against or experience any form of discrimination?

1.3 Services

1.3.1 Is there a sufficiently comprehensive and up-to-date analysis of the profile of people on probation, used by the region to deliver well-targeted services?

- a) Does the analysis capture sufficiently the desistance and offending-related factors presented by people on probation?
- b) Does the analysis capture sufficiently the risk of harm profile of people on probation?
- c) Does the analysis pay sufficient attention to diversity factors and to issues of disproportionality?
- d) Is there sufficient analysis of local patterns of sentencing and offence types?
- e) Does the analysis incorporate the views of people on probation?

1.3.2 Does the region provide access to all of the relevant services to deliver requirements through local partnerships, commissioned services or in-house interventions?

- a) Are the right services in place and accessible, based on the analysis of the profile of people on probation?
- b) Are services effectively targeted, based on the analysis of the profile of people on probation?
- c) Are there excessive backlogs or waiting times for services?
- d) Are there reasonable completion rates?
- e) Is the quality of services reviewed and evaluated, including reviewing the impact on diverse groups, with remedial action taken where required?
- f) Are effective plans in place to fill any gaps and resolve any backlogs in services?

1.4 Information and facilities

1.4.1 Are analysis, evidence and learning used effectively to drive improvement?

- a) Do assurance systems and performance measures drive improvement?
- b) Is there a sufficient understanding of performance across the region?
- c) Does the region learn systematically from things that go wrong, including Serious Further Offences (SFOs)?
- d) Where necessary, is action taken promptly and appropriately in response to performance monitoring, audit or inspection?

1.4.2 Do the policies and guidance in place enable staff to deliver a high-quality service, meeting the needs of all people on probation?

- a) Are national policies and guidance implemented and communicated effectively by the region to enable the delivery of a high-quality service?
- b) Are there policies and clear guidance in place about the full range of regionally commissioned services, their suitability for individual people on probation and referral processes?

- c) Are regional policies and guidance reviewed regularly, paying due regard to diversity issues?

1. PDU standards- Domain one

1.1 Leadership

The leadership of the PDU enables the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all people on probation.

1.1.1 Do the vision and strategy of the PDU leadership team drive effectively the delivery of high-quality services for all people on probation?

- a) Are PDU staff, partners, suppliers and other stakeholders engaged sufficiently in delivering the vision and strategy?
- b) Does the PDU's culture promote openness, constructive challenge and ideas?
- c) Are there effective arrangements and clear local delivery plans that translate the vision and strategy into frontline practice?
- d) Does the PDU leadership team influence partners, suppliers, the courts and other stakeholders effectively to support the delivery of the vision and strategy?
- e) Does the PDU leadership team take a deliberate, strategic and informed approach to meeting diverse needs?

1.1.2 Are potential risks to service delivery anticipated and planned for in advance?

- a) Are risks to local service delivery understood sufficiently, with appropriate mitigations and controls in place?
- b) Are appropriate arrangements in place to ensure continued provision of local services in the event of major incidents?
- c) When carrying out changes to systems, processes or staffing, is the impact on local service delivery, including equality impact, assessed and appropriate action taken?

1.1.3 Does the PDU ensure that the delivery model meets effectively the needs of all people on probation?

- a) Do PDU delivery plans align with the regional delivery model?
- b) Do PDU staff understand the PDU delivery plans, how the service should be delivered and what they are accountable for?
- c) Do the PDU delivery plans take sufficient account of the views of people on probation?

1.2 Staff

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

1.2.1 Do staffing and workload levels support the delivery of a high-quality service for all people on probation?

- a) Are PDU staffing levels sufficient?
- b) Are PDU staffing levels planned and reviewed, with changes made to meet the changing demands and profiles of people on probation?

- c) Do practitioners have manageable workloads, given the profile of the cases and the range of work undertaken?
- d) Do administrative staff have manageable workloads?
- e) Do heads of service for the PDU and middle managers have manageable workloads?
- f) Are workloads managed actively, with resources being redeployed, when this is reasonable and necessary, in response to local pressures?

1.2.2 Do the skills and profile of staff support the delivery of a high-quality service for all people on probation?

- a) Does the workforce reflect adequately the diversity of the local population?
- b) Do the skills and diversity of the workforce meet caseload needs?
- c) Are cases allocated to staff who are appropriately qualified and/or experienced?
- d) Is the potential of staff identified and developed?
- e) Where volunteers and mentors are used, are they supported to fulfil clearly defined roles?

1.2.3 Does the oversight of work support high-quality delivery and professional development?

- a) Do staff receive effective case-focused supervision that enhances and sustains the quality of work with people on probation?
- b) Is an effective induction programme delivered to new staff that addresses issues of diversity and is accessible to all?
- c) Is sufficient access provided to pre-qualifying training routes to support the delivery of a high-quality service?
- d) Is the appraisal process used effectively to ensure that staff are delivering a high-quality service?
- e) Do staff from all backgrounds have equitable access to promotion opportunities and reward and recognition?
- f) Is a culture of learning and continuous improvement promoted actively?
- g) Are the learning needs of staff identified and met?
- h) Is poor staff performance identified and addressed?

1.2.4 Do managers pay sufficient attention to staff engagement?

- a) Are staff motivated to contribute to the delivery of a high-quality service?
- b) Is appropriate attention paid to monitoring and improving staff engagement levels?
- c) Do managers recognise and reward exceptional work?
- d) Is appropriate attention paid to staff safety and wellbeing, and building staff resilience?
- e) Are reasonable adjustments made for staff in accordance with statutory requirements and protected characteristics?
- f) Are there clear routes for complaints, and support if staff feel discriminated against or experience any form of discrimination?

1.3 Services

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

1.3.1 Are the right volume, range and quality of services in place to meet the needs of people on probation?

- a) Are appropriate services provided, either in-house or through other agencies, to meet the identified needs and risks?
- b) Is building strengths and enhancing protective factors central to the delivery of services?
- c) Are diversity factors and issues of disproportionality addressed sufficiently in the range of services provided?
- d) Are diversity factors and issues of disproportionality addressed sufficiently in the way that services are delivered?
- e) Are services delivered in appropriate and accessible locations?

1.3.2 Are relationships with providers and other agencies established, maintained and used effectively to deliver high-quality services to people on probation?

- a) Are there effective relationships with other agencies, to support desistance through access to mainstream services both during and after the sentence?
- b) Are there effective relationships with other agencies, to manage the risk of harm to others?
- c) Are there effective arrangements with other agencies, to support the personal circumstances and diversity needs of people on probation?
- d) Are courts kept up to date with the services available, to support sentencing options?

1.4 Information and facilities

Timely and relevant information is available and appropriate facilities are in place to support a high-quality, personalised and responsive approach for all people on probation.

1.4.1 Are analysis, evidence and learning used effectively to drive improvement?

- a) Is learning communicated effectively?
- b) Does the PDU collect and use diversity information to drive improvement?
- c) Are the views of people on probation and other key stakeholders sought, analysed and used to review and improve the effectiveness of services?
- d) Does the PDU learn systematically from things that go wrong, including SFOs?
- e) Are service improvement plans supported through evaluation and development of the underlying evidence base?
- f) Where necessary, is action taken promptly and appropriately in response to performance monitoring, audit or inspection?

1.4.2 Do the policies and guidance in place enable staff to deliver a high-quality service, meeting the needs of all people on probation?

- a) Are policies and guidance communicated to and understood by relevant staff?
- b) Are policies and clear guidance in place about the full range of locally commissioned services, their suitability for individual people on probation and referral processes?
- c) Are PDU policies and guidance reviewed regularly, paying due regard to diversity issues?

1.4.3 Do the premises and offices enable staff to deliver a high-quality service, meeting the needs of all people on probation?

- a) Are the premises and offices sufficiently accessible to staff and people on probation?
- b) Do the premises and offices support the delivery of appropriate personalised work and the effective engagement of people on probation?
- c) Do the premises and offices provide a safe environment for working with people on probation?

1.4.4 Do the information and communications technology (ICT) systems enable staff to deliver a high-quality service, meeting the needs of all people on probation?

- a) Are ICT systems reviewed and updated regularly to support and enhance service delivery most effectively?
- b) Is information exchanged with partners and other key stakeholders as necessary?
- c) Do the ICT systems support remote working where required?
- d) Do the ICT systems support the production of management information, including data on the needs and diversity factors of people on probation?

2. PDU standards- Domain two

*Prompts marked * do not apply in unpaid work only cases, or other cases with no rehabilitative requirements.*

2.1 Court work

The pre-sentence information and advice provided to court supports its decision-making.

2.1.1 Is the pre-sentence information and advice provided to court sufficiently analytical and personalised to the individual, supporting the court's decision-making?

- a) Does the information and advice draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including child safeguarding and domestic abuse information?
- b) Is the individual involved meaningfully in the preparation of the report, and are their views considered?
- c) Does the advice consider factors related to the likelihood of reoffending?
- d) Does the advice consider factors related to risk of harm?
- e) Does the advice consider the individual's motivation and readiness to change?
- f) Does the advice consider the individual's diversity and personal circumstances?
- g) Does the advice consider the impact of the offence on known or identifiable victims?
- h) Is an appropriate proposal made to court?
- i) Is there a sufficient record of the advice given, and the reasons for it?

2.2 Assessment

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

2.2.1 Does assessment focus sufficiently on engaging the person on probation?

- a) Does assessment analyse the motivation and readiness of the person on probation to engage and comply with the sentence?
- b) Does assessment analyse the protected characteristics of the individual and consider the impact of these on their ability to comply and engage with service delivery?
- c) Does assessment analyse the personal circumstances of the individual and consider the impact of these on their ability to comply and engage with service delivery?
- d) Is the person on probation involved meaningfully in their assessment, and are their views taken into account?

2.2.2 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 strengths and protective factors of the person on probation?

- c) Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information?

2.2.3 Does assessment focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

- a) Does assessment identify and analyse clearly any risk of harm to others?
- b) Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including past behaviour and convictions, and involve other agencies where appropriate?
- c) Does assessment analyse any specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims?

2.3 Planning

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

2.3.1 Does planning focus sufficiently on engaging the person on probation?

- a) Is the person on probation meaningfully involved in planning, and are their views taken into account?
- b) Does planning take sufficient account of the diversity factors of the individual which may affect engagement and compliance?
- c) Does planning take sufficient account of the personal circumstances of the individual which may affect engagement and compliance?
- d) Does planning take sufficient account of the readiness and motivation of the person on probation to change which may affect engagement and compliance?
- e) Does planning set out how all the requirements of the sentence or licence/post-sentence supervision will be delivered within the available timescales?
- f) Does planning set a level, pattern and type of contact sufficient to engage the individual and to support the effectiveness of specific interventions?

2.3.2 Does planning focus sufficiently on reducing reoffending and supporting desistance?

- a) Does planning sufficiently reflect offending-related factors and prioritise those which are most critical?*
- b) Does planning build on the individual's strengths and protective factors, utilising potential sources of support?
- c) Does planning set out the services most likely to reduce reoffending and support desistance?

2.3.3 Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

- a) Does planning sufficiently address risk of harm factors and prioritise those which are most critical?
- b) Does planning set out the necessary constructive and/or restrictive interventions to manage the risk of harm?
- c) Does planning make appropriate links to the work of other agencies involved with the person on probation and any multi-agency plans?
- d) Does planning set out necessary and effective contingency arrangements to manage those risks that have been identified?

2.4 Implementation and delivery

High-quality well-focused, personalised and coordinated services are delivered, engaging the person on probation.

2.4.1 Is the sentence or post-custody period implemented effectively with a focus on engaging the person on probation?

- a) Post-custody cases only: Did the community offender manager ensure a proportionate level of contact with the prisoner before release?
- b) Do the requirements of the sentence start promptly, or at an appropriate time?
- c) Is sufficient focus given to maintaining an effective working relationship with the person on probation, taking into account their diversity needs?
- d) Are sufficient efforts made to enable the individual to complete their sentence, including flexibility to take appropriate account of their personal circumstances?
- e) Are risks of non-compliance identified and addressed in a timely fashion to reduce the need for enforcement actions?
- f) Are enforcement actions taken when appropriate?
- g) Are sufficient efforts made to re-engage the individual after enforcement actions or recall?

2.4.2 Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support desistance?

- a) Post-custody cases only: Did the community offender manager address the key resettlement or desistance needs before release?
- b) Are the delivered services those most likely to reduce reoffending and support desistance, with sufficient attention given to sequencing and the available timescales?
- c) Wherever possible, does the delivery of services build upon the individual's strengths and enhance protective factors?
- d) Is the involvement of other organisations in the delivery of services sufficiently well-coordinated?*
- e) Are key individuals in the life of the person on probation engaged where appropriate to support their desistance?*
- f) Are the level and nature of contact sufficient to reduce reoffending and support desistance?
- g) Are local services engaged to support and sustain desistance during the sentence and beyond?*

2.4.3 Does the implementation and delivery of services support the safety of other people effectively?

- a) Post-custody cases only: Did the community offender manager address key risk of harm needs before release?
- b) Are the level and nature of contact offered sufficient to manage and minimise the risk of harm?*

- c) Is sufficient attention given to protecting actual and potential victims?
- d) Is the involvement of other agencies in managing and minimising the risk of harm sufficiently well-coordinated?
- e) Are key individuals in the life of the person on probation engaged where appropriate to support the effective management of risk of harm?*
- f) Are home visits undertaken where necessary to support the effective management of risk of harm?*

2.5 Reviewing

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

2.5.1 Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the compliance and engagement of the person on probation?

- a) Does reviewing consider compliance and engagement levels, and any relevant barriers, with the necessary adjustments being made to the ongoing plan of work?
- b) Is the person on probation involved meaningfully in reviewing their progress and engagement?
- c) Are written reviews completed as appropriate as a formal record of actions to implement the sentence?

2.5.2 Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting desistance?

- a) Does reviewing identify and address changes in factors linked to offending behaviour, with the necessary adjustments being made to the ongoing plan of work?*
- b) Does reviewing focus sufficiently on building on the strengths and enhancing the protective factors of the person on probation?
- c) Is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies working with the person on probation?
- d) Are written reviews completed as appropriate as a formal record of the progress towards desistance?

2.5.3 Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

- a) Does reviewing identify and address changes in factors related to risk of harm, with the necessary adjustments being made to the ongoing plan of work?
- b) Is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies involved in managing the risk of harm?
- c) Is the person on probation (and, where appropriate, are key individuals in their life) involved meaningfully in reviewing the risk of harm?*
- g) Are written reviews completed as appropriate as a formal record of the management of the risk of harm?

2.6 Outcomes

Early outcomes are positive, demonstrating reasonable progress for the person on probation.

2.6.1 Do early outcomes demonstrate that reasonable progress has been made, in line with the personalised needs of the person on probation?

- a) Have there been improvements in those factors most closely linked to offending, both in developing strengths and addressing needs?
- b) Has there been a reduction in factors most closely related to risk of harm to others?
- c) Has there been a reduction in offending?
- d) Has there been sufficient compliance?

2.7 Statutory victim work

Relevant and timely information is provided to victims of a serious offence, and they are given the opportunity to contribute their views at key points in the sentence.

2.7.1 Does initial contact with victims encourage engagement with the victim contact scheme and provide information about sources of support?

- a) Is appropriate initial contact made soon after sentence, with consideration given to the timing of such contact?
- b) Are the initial letters personalised appropriately, considering the nature of the experience of victims and any diversity issues?
- c) Is clear information given to victims about what they can expect at different points in a sentence?
- d) Do the initial letters include sufficient information to enable victims to make an informed choice as to whether to participate in the scheme?
- e) Are victims informed about the action they can take if the offender attempts to make unwanted contact with them?
- f) Are victims referred to other agencies or services, or given information about available sources of help and support?

2.7.2 Is there effective information and communication exchange to support the safety of victims?

- a) Are victim liaison staff involved in Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements where appropriate?
- b) Do victim liaison staff share relevant information with the probation practitioner?
- c) Are the concerns of the victims addressed and is attention paid to their safety in planning for release?

- d) Are victim liaison staff provided with appropriate and timely information about the management of the offender?

2.7.3 Does pre-release contact with victims allow them to make appropriate contributions to the conditions of release?

- a) Are victims given the opportunity to contribute their views to inform decisions about the release of the offender in a timely way, and supported in doing so?
- b) Are views expressed by victims treated appropriately and in accordance with the victim contact scheme?
- c) Are victims supported in making a victim personal statement in parole applications?