



HM Inspectorate
of Probation

An inspection of probation services in:

Kirklees PDU

The Probation Service – Yorkshire and the Humber region

HM Inspectorate of Probation, March 2023



Contents

Foreword	3
Ratings	4
Recommendations	5
Background	6
1. Organisational delivery	7
2. Court work and case supervision	19
Annexe one – Web links	25

Acknowledgements

This inspection was led by HM Inspector Yvonne McGuckian, supported by a team of inspectors and colleagues from across the Inspectorate. We would like to thank all those who participated in any way in this inspection. Without their help and cooperation, the inspection would not have been possible.

The role of HM Inspectorate of Probation

HM Inspectorate of Probation is the independent inspector of youth offending and probation services in England and Wales. We report on the effectiveness of probation and youth offending service work with adults and children.

We inspect these services and publish inspection reports. We highlight good and poor practice, and use our data and information to encourage high-quality services. We are independent of government, and speak independently.

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

© Crown copyright 2023

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.

This publication is available for download at: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation

ISBN 978-1-915468-43-7

Published by:

HM Inspectorate of Probation
1st Floor Civil Justice Centre
1 Bridge Street West
Manchester
M3 3FX

Follow us on Twitter
[@hmiprobation](https://twitter.com/hmiprobation)

Foreword

We inspected Kirklees Probation Delivery Unit (PDU) in January 2023. While we identified some progress, such as in partnership working and in building a positive working culture, difficulties in recruiting staff and high workloads mean that this progress is not yet having the desired effect on frontline practice. Assessment, planning, delivery of services and reviewing were all assessed as 'Inadequate', and this has driven the overall rating of the service as 'Inadequate'.

A priority for the management team is to provide high levels of support to staff, to prevent burnout and retain staff. My inspectors saw that wellbeing and staff care were the clear focus for leaders. However, despite the significant investment in staff welfare, high workloads and the impact of vacancies remain very challenging. Workloads are overwhelming for staff and that, coupled with a lack of clear understanding of the prioritisation framework, is leading to backlogs and an inconsistent approach to sentence management. Over 40 per cent of cases had yet to have an assessment made and only just over a third of inspected cases were satisfactory in relation to the assessment of potential risks of harm, with some of the assessments underestimating the exact nature of risk. While there are examples of good and effective practice, we did not find these in enough of the cases we assessed. There is an immediate priority to ensure everyone on supervision has an initial assessment so that risks and needs are identified. Line managers were not routinely auditing the quality of practitioner work and management oversight was insufficient or absent in almost two thirds of the cases we inspected.

People on probation are not yet fully benefiting from a range of services that are available to support them. Referrals to these services are not being made often enough and probation staff are not clear on how to access services. The lack of accredited programmes designed to address some of the most serious offending is a concern with accredited programme completions running at only 12 per cent. Programmes for sex offenders were extremely limited and were only being delivered from outside the PDU in Leeds and Wakefield. However, people on probation we spoke to were positive about their relationships with probation practitioners finding them easy to talk to and contact.

We found some element of innovation and strong partnership working; these include good relationships with the local courts and sentencers, ready access to domestic abuse information, improving relationships with children's social care and the development of housing provision for people with addiction. Given these strengths it is disappointing not to see the value of these reflected in the cases we inspected.

The findings from this PDU are not a reflection of the commitment of frontline staff, but the result of insufficient staffing to manage the local workload and a failure to ensure experienced managers and peers are available and positioned to support service delivery. Every effort must be made to ensure this and every PDU can operate sufficiently and safely.



Justin Russell
Chief Inspector of Probation

Ratings

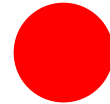
Kirklees PDU

Fieldwork started January 2023

Score **4/27**

Overall rating

Inadequate



1. Organisational delivery

1.1 Leadership

Requires improvement



1.2 Staff

Inadequate



1.3 Services

Inadequate



1.4 Information and facilities

Good



2. Court work and case supervision

2.1 Court work

Requires improvement



2.2 Assessment

Inadequate



2.3 Planning

Inadequate



2.4 Implementation and delivery

Inadequate



2.5 Reviewing

Inadequate



Recommendations

As a result of our inspection findings we have made a number of recommendations that we believe, if implemented, will have a positive impact on the quality of probation services.

Kirklees PDU should:

1. complete robust risk assessments that give full consideration of information regarding domestic abuse and safeguarding in all cases
2. undertake all initial assessments and sentence planning as a priority
3. improve the quality of risk assessment, planning and reviewing
4. ensure information relating to child safeguarding is routinely obtained and used to support effective risk management
5. maintain the good relationships between managers and staff that recognises the stress individuals are under and supports their emotional and mental health until workloads have been reduced
6. maintain the good relationships between practitioners and people on probation
7. use data and performance information to help practitioners prioritise the work they undertake.

Yorkshire and the Humber region should:

8. improve the availability of accredited programmes and structured interventions
9. support planning at PDU level to enable staff to undertake the necessary sentence management tasks as staffing levels increase
10. improve the pathways and referrals to commissioned rehabilitative services (CRS).

HM Prison and Probation Service should:

11. address the need for improved staff recruitment and retention
12. ensure all PDUs are sufficiently resourced to meet local needs, including middle management capacity to oversee newly qualified/recruited staff.

Background

We conducted fieldwork in Kirklees over the period of a week, beginning 16 January 2023. We inspected 38 cases where sentences and licences had commenced between 13 June 2022 and 19 June 2022; 04 July 2022 and 10 July 2022. We also conducted 35 interviews with probation practitioners.

Kirklees PDU is a newly formed unit following the unification of probation services. This has had significant implications for building infrastructure and partnerships, including establishing new membership for the multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA). Previously, probation services were delivered by West Yorkshire Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) and the North East National Probation Service (NPS) division. Kirklees covers the towns of Huddersfield and Dewsbury; it is positioned in the south-west edge of the Yorkshire and the Humber probation region.

Kirklees is in the West Yorkshire Police area, which covers a much wider area that includes the principal cities of Bradford and Leeds. Serious organised crime, use of weapons and drug supply are significant issues for Kirklees. There is a local magistrates' court, with the nearest Crown Court being in Leeds, which is serviced by Leeds PDU.

There are effective links with the reducing reoffending strategy, led by the mayor of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority. There are two approved premises situated in the Dewsbury area. The Head of Kirklees Youth Offending Service (YOS) is working jointly with The Probation Service to improve transitions of young people to adult probation services. There is a dedicated criminal justice team in the local authority designed to improve outcomes and to begin commissioning of services.

Kirklees PDU is responsible for approximately 2,000 people on probation, and for working with 1,500 victims. When fully staffed the PDU will have 112 staff, but there are some significant staffing vacancies. While there is a head of service and eight SPOs, there is no deputy allocated to this PDU. The region provides support for quality and performance as well as for the provision of accredited programmes. One of two regional heads of operation provides direct line management to the head of the PDU. Probation services are delivered from two main sites. Church House in Huddersfield is a new facility and offers a good base for practitioners and people on probation. The other site is on Albion Street in Dewsbury which, at the time of the inspection, was due to reopen following an extensive refurbishment.

Probation Service Yorkshire and the Humber has a blended approach, with the sentence management of standalone unpaid work (UPW) managed by a Senior Probation Officer (SPO) reporting to the Head of PDU. The operational delivery of UPW hours is delivered across Kirklees and Wakefield PDUs, with an UPW Operations Manager for each PDU reporting to the Head of UPW. The UPW team has recently undertaken a recruitment drive and is fully staffed. The rate of UPW requirements starting has improved very recently, but the completion of assessments remains challenging.

1. Organisational delivery

1.1. Leadership



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

Requires improvement

In this inspection, four domain 2 standards were rated 'Inadequate' and one rated 'Requires improvement'. However, we identified several areas of effective management where, despite significant barriers, progress was being made, which has supported a rating for leadership of 'Requires improvement' rather than 'Inadequate'.

Strengths:

- Despite the ratings for the domain 2 cases inspected, the PDU leadership team reflected an awareness of the challenges impacting on service delivery. There was clarity of the work needed to address the issues and a phased plan, which was being implemented.
- There was a clear vision for the PDU; the mission statement was agreed collaboratively with staff and supported by the team. The main aim was to support staff wellbeing during the transition and to protect them from experiencing stress while workloads remained high.
- PDU leaders identified staffing as a critical business risk impacting on being able to deliver a quality service. Therefore, the managers were focusing on addressing the staffing concerns to secure stability in the first instance and then move to addressing the quality of work.
- Staff recognised this focus and were positive about managers and leaders being visible and supportive. Consultation with staff was routine and ongoing, leading to action plans and changes in the running of the PDU. The culture of the PDU was open and supportive; managers are well sighted on issues experienced by staff.
- The PDU has sought the views of people on probation, who were generally positive about their experiences.

Areas for improvement:

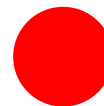
- The priorities under the amber prioritisation framework were not universally understood, leading to inconsistent practice and priorities being decided on a case-by-case basis. Some work undertaken followed processes but added no value, the overall quality of casework was insufficient, which is reflected in the four inadequate ratings in domain 2.
- Management oversight did not always result in necessary changes, including underestimation of risk of serious harm and a lack of follow up of indicators of risk to children. Meaning some individuals were being managed incorrectly.
- Quality assurance systems had just started to be implemented, but this work was in its infancy and not supported by routine use of performance data.

Supervision was welfare led; however, case discussions relied on the practitioner to identify cases of concern rather than the manager proactively reviewing and selecting cases. While the focus on wellbeing is valuable, the current format lacks rigour in respect of case oversight and staff learning.

- Referrals to CRS providers were infrequent or inaccurate. Services were not accessed as often as they needed to be.
- There was limited access to offending behaviour work including accredited programmes, structured interventions and toolkits.
- While actions had been taken to support the inclusion of people on probation and staff, there was insufficient use of data to understand the experience of Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups. In the cases inspected, outcomes¹ for this group were significantly worse than outcomes for other groups.
- Work with those classified as medium risk of harm was poorest, and we were concerned that some increasing risks were not recognised and managed.
- At a regional level, there was little detailed understanding of PDU-specific risks and priorities. Overall, the support from the region to address and evaluate issues appeared to be an area that needs further development.

¹ The findings relating to Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups have not been subject to a relative rate index analysis, which is used to compare rates of incidence; we report our findings with that caveat. Findings are taken from the comparison of the summary judgement questions we use to generate the ratings.

1.2. Staff



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

Inadequate

Staff were committed, working long hours to manage the work they were responsible for. However, high vacancy rates and ineffective application of the prioritisation framework meant that it was very difficult for staff to consistently undertake fundamental work to assess and plan for the needs of people on probation.

Strengths:

- Staff were committed and working hard to manage high workloads. The team had successfully developed a culture of a single PDU, provided good peer support and were well thought of by people on probation.
- The work of administrative staff was reviewed regularly to ensure that reception duties were covered and that key tasks were completed.
- Protected development days were assigned to practitioners. These were designed to support individual learning and we were positive about the engagement of senior managers from social care in these sessions.
- Sickness and attrition rates are lower than we have seen elsewhere.

Areas for improvement:

- The priorities for staff under the amber prioritisation framework were not widely understood. Casework showed that staff made individual decisions based on each case, and risk of harm was not prioritised often enough. Staff were also undertaking some unnecessary work that did not enhance sentence management – such as initial assessments being undertaken after cases had terminated or weeks before the end of the order; and some by staff who had never met or spoken to the person on probation.
- Staffing levels were insufficient and significantly impacted on the quality-of-service delivery. At the time of inspection, the PDU was on amber status on the prioritisation framework and has been for a year. Projections undertaken show staffing levels will not be fully resolved until July 2024.
- There were vacancies in most grades despite determined efforts to recruit locally. Information supplied at the time of inspection was that vacancies included 4.5 Probation Services Officers (PSOs), 11 Probation Officers (POs) and 1.8 SPOs. Cases were being allocated to existing staff and having a significant impact on workloads.
- Recruitment for administrative staff was hampered by low pay levels. The vacancy rate for administration staff was 41 per cent.
- Kirklees had the highest workload in the region at various times in 2022. These remained high, with some staff working at 180 per cent capacity. Workloads were reported to be unmanageable, causing stress and a feeling of staff being overwhelmed.

- The PDU had a backlog of OASys initial assessments. Despite attempts to reduce the backlog, completion rate performance, measuring the completion of initial assessments required, for the year to date was 41 per cent; it was unclear how this would improve.
- Inspectors were concerned that there was no understanding of the numbers of assessments pending, questioning how this was managed and monitored. We were not persuaded by assurances that those who posed a high risk of serious harm had an active assessment, given 10 cases in our sample had no risk assessment and six had an underestimated risk.
- SPOs were not routinely auditing data and the quality of casework. The PDU had limited understanding of the quality and effectiveness of work with people on probation.
- Management oversight of casework was insufficient or absent in 61 per cent of the cases inspected. It was particularly poor for PSOs who needed much more support, where we found management oversight was ineffective or absent in 83 per cent of cases.

1.3. Services



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

Inadequate

There were strong relationships at local level; however, there remained a lack of provision to support people to reduce further offending and to mitigate risk of harm to others. Despite services available locally, referral pathways were not effective, and access to and completion of accredited programmes was low.

Strengths:

- Services for women were impressive, provided by the Together Women project, which had a holistic and gender-appropriate approach to meeting the needs of women, which was a trauma-informed approach.
- The work to establish UPW arrangements was positively recognised. Operations managed jointly across Huddersfield and Wakefield offered projects seven days a week, with separate services for women and those with neurodivergence. Practitioners were able to book induction sessions and first-day working arrangements directly, allowing swift and prompt starts.
- Collaborative partnership work was a clear part of the vision and strategy. At a strategic level this was working effectively in several areas, including the provision of services to court, with Change Grow Live for substance misuse and addiction recovery, and with the two approved premises in the PDU area.

Areas for improvement:

- Insufficient services were delivered to meet the needs of and address the risks posed by individuals. In part this was due to the backlog of initial assessments and sentence plans (41 per cent completed year to date); this left more than half of the people on probation with unassessed needs.
- The needs analysis to inform commissioning and interventions was based on only a partial view as a result of the significant backlog.
- Accredited programme completions were low (at 12.5 per cent), with delays in delivery. Work had been undertaken to reduce the backlog of accredited programme delivery. Since April 2022, the backlog had reduced by 70 with nine (13 per cent) having completed an accredited programme and 21 (30 per cent) undertaking an alternative piece of work. Due to the lack of suitable premises, due to the refurbishment of premisses, programmes were being delivered in Leeds or Wakefield, which was a barrier for some people on probation. Risk assessments had been undertaken and some programmes were due to start in Huddersfield.
- Accredited programmes for people convicted of sexual offences were also extremely limited. Delivery was centralised and delivered from Leeds. There are long-term plans to deliver services locally. This had a greater impact in Dewsbury where there was a higher concentration of registered sex offenders.

- CRS services were underused, and the referral process was hampered by staff not fully understanding the criteria for services. Providers reported receiving incomplete information on referrals and, when followed up, often found that individuals did not meet the criteria for service.
- Referrals to Ingeus were low and were not being received at the rate and pace projected. This was concerning, given there was a gap in understanding the needs of those lacking an initial assessment.
- The delivery of Structured interventions was limited to those people on probation who have an accredited programme requirement, but with insufficient time to complete it. Staff were not confident in using toolkits.
- There was no analysis to identify disproportionality in sentencing or service provision.

Resettlement work

Strengths:

- Resettlement work was promising in Kirklees PDU, and the establishment of the community integration teams (CIT) was beginning to have a positive effect on pre-release planning. The CIT team focus on short sentence prisoners and those who fit the criteria for integrated offender management.
- The custody CIT team are able to speak to prisoners quickly, having good relationships with the Offender Management in Custody (OMiC) team in HM Prison Leeds. Needs were identified early, including accommodation, substance misuse issues and factors that may contribute to further offending. Once identified these were shared with partner agencies to start planning for release as early as possible.
- The CHART service provided a range of treatment, recovery and support services for people on probation with addictions. They were working in partnership with probation and were in the process of purchasing properties to provide accommodation where people on probation will receive suitable support to address substance and alcohol misuse.
- The Together Women's project had good links with HM Prison New Hall (a women's prison) where they went to help women plan and prepare for release.
- In all cases there were good attempts to re-engage individuals on being released from custody following enforcement action being taken, an important part of risk management.

Areas for improvement:

- Planning that sets out the requirement of the sentence was worse for those in custody, sufficient in only 36 per cent of custody cases compared with 61 per cent of community cases.
- Reviewing of case management for those on licence was worse than in community cases and other agencies were not always fully involved in reviews, meaning that some key information was missed.

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.

Good

Information sharing arrangements with the police's domestic abuse unit were positive. The investment in accommodation in both Huddersfield and Dewsbury was welcomed and is supporting staff and people on probation. These have contributed to the overall rating for information and facilities of 'Good'.

Strengths:

- A practitioner serious organised crime forum had been set up to run quarterly, led by the lead SPO, with a space for probation practitioners to have reflective discussions of cases, focusing on professional curiosity.
- All probation practitioners were attending the regional professional curiosity briefings provided by the quality development officers, supporting their learning and development.
- The service had a well-equipped, bright and attractive office in Huddersfield town centre. Everyone we spoke to was positive about the building. Based in a converted church, the high-quality finish and positive environment gave a clear message that staff and people on probation are valued.
- The building was easily accessed by public transport, accessible to people with disabilities and had appropriate safety equipment. CCTV was of good quality and each room was alarmed. Waiting areas were clean and comfortable, and the outside of the building was discrete.
- The PDU had access to Junction, the regional online platform used to host performance information and polices. It was accessible to all staff and a useful platform.
- Work to ensure that domestic abuse and safeguarding enquiries were undertaken via dedicated laptops allowed access to relevant information. Domestic abuse enquires were made in 87 per cent of cases and child safeguarding enquiries in 27 of the 34 cases that needed them. We encourage learning from this model to be shared nationally.
- Information sharing access the community and custody community integration teams (CITs) was effective. The custody probation teams were able to speak directly to people as they went into prison and identify needs, which was being shared with the community team. Arrangements were in place to access housing advice and support, mental health and substance misuse.
- The police precision team, responding to serious organised crime, described effective information sharing regarding gang issues. Bronze meetings had been re-established, leading to appropriate methods of sharing intelligence.

Areas for improvement:

- Systems in place to develop learning were undermined for some staff by overwhelming workloads leading to little time for reflection on practice.
- Diversity information was gathered as part of initial assessments, but data was not segmented to enable analysis of service delivery for people with protected characteristics.
- The regional team produces a report that goes into the Open performance portal. All staff had access to the portal but there was no systematic process in place to monitor who had accessed the portal. Managers had tried to promote the use of this, but it was not clear as to usage and efficacy.
- The PDU performance group met fortnightly to explore missed targets. The focus was on the amber framework, in regard to how performance was tackled, with an emphasis on activity that should or should not be done. But it was unclear how performance was looked at holistically.

Feedback from people on probation

We would like to thank everyone that engaged with User Voice to share their views and experiences. We are also grateful to probation staff who assisted with the process.

- User Voice, working with HM Inspectorate of Probation, had contact with 82 people on probation as part of this inspection. Interviews mainly took place face to face, with a small number by responses received via text. Those interviewed had been under supervision for up to two years, but with a good spread of people who had been in contact for varying periods of time.
- The feedback from people on probation was very positive; people said that staff on reception were helpful and kind, stating that appointments ran well and probation practitioners were punctual.
- The levels of flexibility shown came through the consultation, something we also noticed while we were inspecting in the Huddersfield office. We noted that all staff greeted people with respect, and sought to help them and get them into their appointment quickly.
- Arrangements were in place for those who were involved in gangs, with appointments being made on separate days to avoid confrontation.
- Just over half of those consulted said that the relationship with their PO was one of the positive things about probation services.

“My Probation Officer listens to me and we can talk about anything. I find it very therapeutic and even though I don’t need any support I know it’s available.”

“Good Probation Officer, just keep me really well informed on things. She offered me to get onto a course but haven’t started it yet.”

- Of those spoken to, 58 per cent said they had been able to access services relevant to their needs, 60 per cent said access was timely and that services were available in the local area. Three quarters of people said that overall, they were happy with the support they received.

“My Probation Officer managed to help me get some counselling which has really helped me.”

Diversity and inclusion

Strengths:

- Recruitment over the last 18 months had increased the diversity of the workforce. Twenty-two per cent of the workforce was Black, Asian or from a minority ethnic background. The Office for National Statistics' 2021 census shows that the local community is 73.6 per cent white, 19.4 per cent Asian/Asian British, 3.1 per cent mixed ethnicity, 2.3 per cent Black/Black British².
- All recruitment panels had a Black, Asian or minority ethnic member. There was a focus on attending events held by under-represented groups in the community, to try and increase job applications, which was at an early stage.
- Services for women were positive; Together Women provided a single pathway where the needs of women were identified and responded to.
- A 'concentrator' model was in place where some staff focus more on women. Consideration was being given to separate reporting for women, who made up nine per cent of people on probation.
- Women attend a female only UPW group; we were encouraged by the opportunities that were made available.
- A separate UPW group had been developed for men with neurodiversity. It offered a calmer and more relaxed environment based in a group room where there was less distraction and stimulus.

Areas for improvement:

- The focus on equality, inclusion and diversity was underdeveloped at PDU level. The needs and experiences of Black and minority ethnic people on probation were not known well enough. Probation performance for people from Black and ethnic minority backgrounds was worse, in all summary judgement questions in the cases inspected.
- Data and performance were not routinely segmented to identify or review the needs and experiences of people with protected characteristics. The service had not reviewed data systematically below senior leadership level and there was no real discussion of broader disproportionality at multi-agency meetings.
- The PDU had recognised that men and Asian staff were significantly under-represented. Eighty-one per cent of the workforce was female while nine per cent of the caseload were women. Efforts had been made to address the gaps by going out to colleges and local community events to promote the service and gain career interest from various groups, including men.
- Due to workload pressures, the PDU made a decision not to appoint diversity champions from the workforce. Instead, each SPO had been assigned areas

² <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censusareachanges/E08000034/>

of focus based on protected characteristics. In reality, spans of responsibility were too wide to enable meaningful action and progress to be made.

- The PDU plan included actions to 'develop and nurture an environment where everyone feels safe and included'. Plans were in place to hold monthly 'culture club' events for staff. In our view the inclusion agenda was not as evident for people on probation.

2. Court work and case supervision

2.1. Court work



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

Requires improvement

Our rating³ for court work is based on the percentage of cases we inspected being judged satisfactory against the key question:

Key question	Percentage 'Yes'
Is the pre-sentence information and advice provided to court sufficiently analytical and personalised to the individual, supporting the court's decision-making?	58%

Strengths:

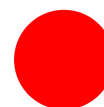
- In total, 12 reports were inspected in a cohort of 38 cases. Of these, seven were judged to be sufficient. The team servicing the local magistrates' court had recently been increased and included an experienced PO and additional administrative support.
- In all but one case the views of the individual were obtained and taken into account, including information about motivation and previous responses to probation.
- In nine of the 12 reports, domestic abuse enquiries had been made to advise the court. The ability of the PDU to access information directly rather than making a request and waiting for a response, was effective. The information obtained supported appropriate recommendations and decisions to be made.

Areas for improvement:

- In the cases that we judged to be insufficient, information available was not thoroughly analysed and the potential implications of risky behaviours were not fully explored. Motivation and readiness to change were explored in eight of the 12 cases.
- Appropriate child safeguarding enquiries were too limited and had been made in six of the of the nine relevant cases. This raised questions about the accuracy of the assessments made and also the proposals for sentencing without having all the available information.

³ The rating for the standard is driven by the score for the key question, which is placed in a rating band. [Full data and further information about inspection methodology is available in the data workbook for this inspection on our website.](#)

2.2. Assessment



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

Inadequate

Our rating⁴ for assessment is based on the percentage of cases we inspected being judged satisfactory against three key questions:

Key question	Percentage 'Yes'
Does assessment focus sufficiently on engaging the person on probation?	47%
Does assessment focus sufficiently on the factors linked to offending and desistance?	50%
Does assessment focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	34%

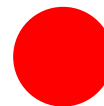
Kirklees PDU is rated as 'Inadequate' for assessment as the lowest score out of the three key questions was 34 per cent. Concerningly, the lowest score relates to whether there was sufficient focus on keeping other people safe, with this only being demonstrated in a minority of cases.

Areas for improvement:

- In too many cases the information gathered from the police and social care regarding domestic abuse and child safeguarding was not analysed well enough to understand the risk to others. Practitioners need to be confident in analysing the information to ensure the risks posed are identified.
- In 10 cases no risk assessment had taken place. In a few cases assessments were undertaken so late in the order that they could not make a difference to case management.
- There was a failure to identify and analyse the risk of harm posed in 20 of the 35 relevant cases. The specific concerns and risks related to victims were only assessed in 17 of the 35. Although the majority of risk classifications were reasonable, the six that were inaccurate all showed underestimation of the potential risk that the individual posed.
- Assessment focused sufficiently on the factors linked to offending and desistance in half of the cases. There was a failure to assess engagement and compliance issues, including diversity factors, that may have needed to be taken into account. In half of the cases, offending-related needs had been identified correctly.

⁴ The rating for the standard is driven by the score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band. [Full data and further information about inspection methodology is available in the data workbook for this inspection on our website.](#)

2.3. Planning



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

Inadequate

Our rating⁵ for planning is based on the percentage of cases we inspected being judged satisfactory against three key questions:

Key question	Percentage 'Yes'
Does planning focus sufficiently on engaging the person on probation?	45%
Does planning focus sufficiently on reducing reoffending and supporting desistance?	42%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	34%

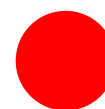
Kirklees PDU is rated as 'Inadequate' for planning in all three areas we assessed. Planning to keep other people safe was not given enough priority.

Areas for improvement:

- Planning focused on the most critical offending-related factors in just 14 of the 35 relevant cases, and we noted some missed opportunities to build on the individual's person on probation's strengths and protective factors. Plans were being completed months into the sentence, limiting the amount of progress that could be made and also not giving individuals a clear direction on what they were required to achieve or engage in.
- The roles of other agencies who could have supported the work of probation services were not fully understood and as a result less than half of the cases set out the services that could support desistance and reduce reoffending. Where another agency was involved, such as children's social care, planning was linked in just eight of the 34 cases where needed.
- We were concerned about the quality of planning to manage risk of harm, which addressed the key issues in only 11 of 36 relevant cases. Plans failed to specify which restrictions or interventions would best manage risk of harm. These included referrals to multi-agency risk assessment conferences.
- Contingency planning was specific and assisted in managing risk in just 11 of the relevant 35 cases, there being a lack of actions to manage risk to children and partners, both before and after release from custody.

⁵ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. [Full data and further information about inspection methodology is available in the data workbook for this inspection on our website.](#)

2.4. Implementation and delivery



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

Inadequate

Our rating⁶ for implementation and delivery is based on the percentage of cases we inspected being judged satisfactory against three key questions:

Key question	Percentage 'Yes'
Is the sentence or post-custody period implemented effectively with a focus on engaging the person on probation?	45%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support desistance?	42%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?	37%

Kirklees PDU is rated as 'Inadequate' for implementation and delivery of service in each of the three areas, with services to support the safety of other people having the lowest score.

Strengths:

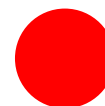
- Probation practitioners worked flexibly to accommodate the needs of people on probation and to foster engagement. Welfare checks were a standard part of supervision contacts and in a few cases the effects of previous trauma were understood and taken into account. We also found good co-working to engage people while they were in custody through the work of the CIT team.

Areas for improvement:

- Not enough offence-focused work was being undertaken. The offer of accredited programmes was limited and affected by not being delivered locally. We found very little use of toolkits or structured interventions.
- Contact with social care when there were safeguarding concerns was variable, despite some examples of effective joint work. In other cases, potential contact with children remained unknown. Focus on keeping actual and potential victims safe was sufficient in 12 of the 33 cases where this should have taken priority.
- Given these findings, we were unable to see that consistent and necessary services or interventions were being delivered to people on probation that were necessary to reduce reoffending and/or address the risks they posed.

⁶ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. [Full data and further information about inspection methodology is available in the data workbook for this inspection on our website.](#)

2.5. Reviewing



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

Inadequate

Our rating⁷ for reviewing is based on the percentage of cases we inspected being judged satisfactory against three key questions:

Key question	Percentage 'Yes'
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the compliance and engagement of the person on probation?	63%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting desistance?	50%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	47%

Kirklees PDU is rated as 'Inadequate' for reviewing; while there was good focus on keeping people engaged, too little attention was paid to keeping others safe.

Strengths:

- Reviewing was better for women, often linked to joint work with other agencies, including health and social care.
- Practitioners, having built effective relationships, were responsive to changes in people's lives and worked hard to keep people engaged and complying with their orders. Formal reviews had taken place; the quality of these varied, but efforts were made to respond to external changes as they occurred.

Areas for improvement:

- People on probation were not always involved in reviewing their progress, and other agencies contributed in just over half of the cases. When they were involved, some practitioners did not go on to verify information.
- Where there were changes to the safety of others, these were not always responded to quickly or in a way that managed the risk, including a failure to follow-up social care information, new relationships and the implications of increased drug and alcohol use.
- It was good to note that ongoing checks were made in some cases for any new domestic abuse callouts; however, this was not routine, and managers did not monitor if these were done in all relevant cases. We identified cases where known risks had not been given sufficient prominence in the management of the cases.

⁷ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. [Full data and further information about inspection methodology is available in the data workbook for this inspection on our website.](#)

2.6. Outcomes

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

We do not currently rate the Outcomes standard, but provide this data for information and benchmarking purposes only.

Outcomes	Percentage 'Yes'
Do early outcomes demonstrate that reasonable progress has been made, in line with the personalised needs of the person on probation?	37%

Strengths:

- Offending either reduced or remained the same in 68 per cent of the cases we inspected, where we could identify progress. Only four people in our sample of 38 had been convicted or charged with a new offence.
- Progress for women was better than for men; we saw some early progress for women. We noted good joint working with other agencies including adult safeguarding, the Together Women project and with custody. Work to help women feel safe and stable was good, and this fostered good relationship building. The delivery of UPW and rehabilitation activity requirement days in women's only spaces had been developed and there were early plans to extend these opportunities.

Areas for improvement:

- While progress had been made to factors linked to offending in 12 cases, there was little evidence that needs had been addressed in 26 cases. There was less progress in relation to risk of harm, where there had been a reduction in factors in 10 cases and no evidence of reduction of risk in 12 cases.
- When we segmented our data from the case assessments, people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds had worse outcomes in most areas.
- Assessment, planning, delivery, reviewing and outcomes were worse for those assessed as medium risk of harm. These cases were often held by PSOs who have less oversight than trainee POs, those training for the Professional Qualification in Probation and less experience than qualified Pos. These staff need more support than they currently receive to ensure that any changes to risk are identified and responded to as the service expects.
- Breach and recall action was taken in seven of the 13 cases where it was required.

Annexe one – Web links

Full data from this inspection and further information about the methodology used to conduct this inspection is available [in the data annexe on our website](#).

A glossary of terms used in this report is available on our website using the following link: [Glossary \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/glossary).