



HM Inspectorate
of Probation

An inspection of probation services in:

Sheffield PDU

The Probation Service – Yorkshire and the Humber region

HM Inspectorate of Probation, March 2023



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Acknowledgements

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The role of HM Inspectorate of Probation

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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.

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Manchester
M3 3FX

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Foreword

This was the first Probation Delivery Unit (PDU) inspection of probation services in Sheffield since the unification of the Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) and the National Probation Service (NPS) in June 2021. In spite of some committed practitioners the results were disappointing. All the standards relating to casework scored poorly and the PDU has been rated as 'Inadequate' overall.

As with several other PDUs we have inspected since unification, Sheffield had high vacancy rates across probation practitioner and administrative grades. The impact of that was being shouldered by frontline staff, almost all of whom were dealing with unmanageable caseloads. To make matters worse, sickness levels were well above the Civil Service average and there had been a steady flow of staff leaving the PDU for careers elsewhere.

Those problems underpinned our findings in relation to casework. Much to my concern, work to keep the public safe was the weakest area of practice across all our standards. There were a worrying number of cases where essential information had not been gathered from the police or social services, which weakened attempts to keep people (women and children in particular) safe from abusive behaviour. Enforcement action was inconsistent and contingency planning was often insufficient.

In principle, Senior Probation Officers (SPOs) had manageable spans of control and should have been well-positioned to properly oversee work conducted within their teams. However, management oversight was absent or ineffective in most of the cases we inspected. SPOs were not routinely auditing casework and there was no framework in place for reviewing multi-agency public protection arrangement (MAPPA) level one cases managed by The Probation Service. As a result, middle managers had too little insight into the quality of the work conducted within the PDU to support change and protect others from harm.

At a strategic level, senior leaders were yet to lay out a credible and clear vision for returning the PDU to an acceptable level of service. There were significant gaps in understanding the diversity needs of people on probation. We were particularly concerned that critical partnership arrangements with the police, youth offending team (YOT) and the local authority – among others – were strained and ineffective. Referrals to commissioned rehabilitative services (CRSs) were too low and many people on probation told us they were not getting access to services to help them lead better lives. Consequently, outcomes for people on probation in Sheffield were very poor.

But despite all of this, practitioners in the PDU were committed and determined to make a difference to the city of Sheffield. Many have recently joined The Probation Service and have their careers ahead of them. Senior and middle managers would do well to engage, support and lead them towards a sustainable and effective model of delivery that supports people to change and protects others from harm.



Justin Russell
Chief Inspector of Probation

Ratings

Sheffield PDU

Fieldwork started January 2023

Score **1/27**

Overall rating

Inadequate



1. Organisational delivery

1.1 Leadership

Inadequate



1.2 Staff

Inadequate



1.3 Services

Inadequate



1.4 Information and facilities

Requires improvement



2. Court work and case supervision

2.1 Court work

Inadequate



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.

Sheffield PDU should:

1. devise a strategy for returning to an acceptable level of service delivery and ensure that it is communicated to and understood by all staff
2. ensure that SPOs have routine oversight of high risk of serious harm and MAPPA level one cases
3. implement a quality assurance programme to check on the quality of risk management and practice on **all** casework
4. refer all people on probation to CRSs where they meet the eligibility criteria and the service is relevant to their needs
5. conduct an analysis into the needs of people on probation and develop a strategy for addressing local issues
6. make arrangements with Sheffield City Council to ensure safeguarding information is made available to probation practitioners at court and throughout case management.

Yorkshire and the Humber region should:

7. ensure that all practicable options have been implemented to provide Sheffield PDU with sufficient practitioners and administrative staff
8. improve completion rates for accredited programmes and unpaid work
9. improve access to domestic abuse intelligence held by South Yorkshire Police
10. conduct a review into the implementation of the Community Integration Team (CIT) model in Sheffield to ensure it is meeting the needs of people on probation.

HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) should:

11. install a panic alarm system which can be heard on all floors of the Division Street office
12. install permanent Wi-Fi internet at the Division Street office
13. review the existing process for resolving long-term sickness absence
14. review its support to Yorkshire and the Humber region in relation to recruiting and retaining staff.

Background

We conducted fieldwork in Sheffield over the period of a week, beginning 16 January 2023. We inspected 73 cases where sentences and licences had commenced between 06 June and 08 July 2022. We also conducted 61 interviews with probation practitioners.

Sheffield is one of 11 PDUs in the Yorkshire and the Humber region of The Probation Service. Prior to unification in June 2021, Sheffield was previously covered by the South Yorkshire CRC and the North East division of the NPS. People on probation report to the Division Street office in the city centre. Administrative staff are based at the Hawke Street office in Attercliffe. A team of 21 practitioners provide services to Sheffield's Crown Court and magistrates' courts. There is one approved premises (Norfolk House) in Sheffield, which is not managed by this PDU. There are no prisons in Sheffield.

The PDU aligns with the metropolitan borough of Sheffield in South Yorkshire, which has a population of 554,401. South Yorkshire Police is the local police force. The PDU is responsible for 1,820 people on probation. Twenty-two per cent of the caseload are black, Asian or minority ethnic. Proven reoffending rates stand at 26 per cent, which is marginally below the regional average.

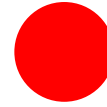
The current Head of PDU was appointed shortly after unification, having previously worked as a senior leader in a neighbouring area for the NPS. There are 10 SPOs in the PDU, all of whom lead operational teams. In total, there are 148 practitioners based in Sheffield, 24 of whom are trainees completing their Professional Qualification in Probation (PQiP). There is one MAPPA co-ordinator attached to the PDU. All unpaid work requirements are managed locally within the PDU.

Outsourced CRS suppliers provide interventions in relation to six areas of service: Shelter (subcontracted to NACRO) for accommodation; Change, Grow Live for dependency and recovery; Together Women for women's services; and The Growth Company, which spans personal wellbeing; finance, benefits and debt; and education, training and employment.

At the time of this inspection, Sheffield was categorised by the region as being 'amber' on the prioritisation framework. This is a national guidance document produced by The Probation Service, which is intended to enable local PDUs to manage demand when staff capacity is low. It sets out principles for PDUs on what work must continue and which tasks should be paused until capacity returns to target levels.

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.

Inadequate

Strengths:

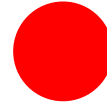
- Practitioners and administrative staff from NPS and CRC backgrounds were working in blended teams. Staff widely identified as being part of a single, unified organisation.

Areas for improvement:

- Until recently, senior leaders had not outlined a strategic vision, which was reflected through the inspection findings in relation to the quality of casework, where all five of our quality standards were rated as 'Inadequate'.
- An initiative called 'Back to Basics', introduced in December 2022, emphasised compliance with minimum timeliness targets and recording on the case management systems at the expense of quality and effective practice.
- There was insufficient focus on the oversight of the quality of work undertaken by SPOs to ensure service delivery was effective and reached the required quality.
- The delivery plan was not understood by practitioners or administrators and did not sufficiently highlight priorities for the PDU.
- A quality assurance framework was presented to inspectors by senior leaders. This was unfamiliar to middle managers and therefore we questioned its value and impact.
- Work to keep people safe was particularly poor. Worryingly, the lowest judgements for sufficiency in casework related to the management of high risk of serious harm cases. This reflected an absence of a framework for reviewing high risk of serious harm and MAPPA level one cases.
- Partnership working in relation to public protection was problematic. Referrals for more complex MAPPA level two cases were sometimes late. Police officers involved in the management of sexual or violent offenders (MOSOVO) were routinely unable to access important information about the risk posed by individuals, which hampered efforts to control and manage risk posed to others.
- Relationships across local partnerships were weak. There was a lack of effective engagement at a strategic and operational level with partners including the police, YOT, local authority and third sector providers.
- The PDU risk register was overly basic and did not address important operational issues, such as high staff sickness or the quality of work with people on probation.

- Many practitioners and administrative staff felt that there was a lack of effective means of engaging meaningfully in decisions affecting their work.
- The PDU leadership had not conducted any formal analysis of diversity within the population of people on probation. That meant senior and middle managers had limited insight into the needs of people with protected characteristics on their caseload.
- The planning and delivery of changes to systems and processes was poor. There was an absence of impact analysis and project controls when setting up the CIT. It had adverse consequences for existing integrated offender management arrangements with the police, who were not fully consulted on the plans in advance.
- The views and experiences of people on probation are not woven into the PDU's delivery plan, which meant opportunities to understand what would support people to change were missed.

1.2. Staff



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

Inadequate

Strengths:

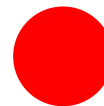
- Practitioners and administrative staff we spoke to overwhelmingly took pride in their work and wanted to make a difference to their community.
- SPOs had manageable spans of control which should in principle enable them to oversee their teams effectively.
- All middle managers have been engaged on a leadership training programme delivered by HMPPS. They broadly felt it was useful and applicable.
- There had been a small number of protected development days for practitioners. These are intended to support learning and further sessions are planned. Four peer-review quality improvement sessions led by the region had taken place, attended by 40 staff. Some practitioners we spoke to had found the sessions helpful.

Areas for improvement:

- Staffing levels across all practitioner and case administrator grades were insufficient and caseloads were far too high. PQiP practitioners in particular had been managing excessively high caseloads, with one at 200 per cent and none below 129 per cent capacity. This affected their capacity to engage in essential learning and reflection.
- According to target staffing figures, the PDU had 15 vacancies at Probation Services Officer grade and 14 vacancies at PO grade. The PDU predicts that it will not have a full complement of POs until January 2024, assuming that sufficient numbers of PQiPs elect to stay in their current location.
- Leaders have been unable to effectively mitigate the impact of staff shortages, due to this being regionally and nationally overseen. Some support was provided by a neighbouring PDU and a single case administrator was assigned to provide support; however, that was insufficient.
- Sickness levels were much higher than the national average. Proactive work by senior and middle managers in the PDU to minimise work-related stress was ineffective. Long-term sickness absence was taking too long to resolve.
- Only 62 per cent of staff had completed mandatory e-learning. Those who had not completed the necessary training should be exempt from being allocated specific cases. However, the PDU guidance on case allocation did not include reference to the skills and knowledge of the practitioner, which created a risk of cases being allocated inappropriately.
- The quality of supervision received by practitioners was mixed. This was concerning given there was a high proportion of inexperienced practitioners in the PDU who required more intensive support and management spans of control were reasonable.

- Middle managers were not routinely auditing casework which meant the PDU had very limited insight into the quality and effectiveness of work with people on probation.
- Management oversight of casework was insufficient or absent in 68 per cent of the cases inspected. Worryingly, high risk of serious harm cases received the least effective oversight; one out of 12 cases inspected was sufficient.
- We found limited evidence that staff were being recognised for their experience or that talent was being nurtured or developed. The PDU had not carried out a training and need analysis for its staff.
- Given the inconsistent approach to staff recognition, engagement and workloads, staff morale was low and led to a negative culture.

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

Strengths:

- There were a good range of unpaid work placements within the PDU. Staff had sought suggestions from community groups about potential placements. Feedback from the beneficiaries of unpaid work projects was positive. Some unemployed people with an unpaid work requirement were completing education and training with a local third sector provider.
- Substance misuse partnership workers were co-located with the CIT in a single office, which provided opportunities for collaborative working.
- Women's CRSs were delivered from a dedicated centre. Some probation practitioners worked from that location alongside other professionals. A range of additional services were available for women on probation from the centre.

Areas for improvement

- Referrals to CRS providers were too low. Except for accommodation, all providers had spare capacity to provide support to people with problems related to their offending. Only 46 per cent of people on probation we surveyed felt they had access to services relevant to their needs.
- The PDU's leadership had weak operational relationships with the police, local authority substance misuse commissioners, YOT, CRS and third sector providers of services. All the local partners we spoke to wanted more engagement, collaboration and coordination with the PDU.
- The PDU had no insight at a strategic level into whether diverse needs within the caseload were being met. Too few cases inspected considered individual characteristics sufficiently.
- The CIT was intended to provide people on short-term prison sentences with services before their release and enhanced supervision when on licence in the community. However, the implementation was poorly managed and as a result, providing no additional level of service.
- Compliance with unpaid work, which is overseen by practitioners in the PDU, was too low. Less than half of those instructed to attend unpaid work did so and only 48 per cent had completed their hours within 12 months.
- Low numbers of people on probation were starting and completing accredited programmes. The backlog of people waiting to start an accredited programme had reduced from 133 to 74. Of the 59 people whose requirement was terminated, 49 per cent related to sentences finishing before groupwork had been completed, meaning requirements were terminated as an unsuccessful completion.

- There had been just 21 successful completions across all accredited programmes in the PDU between April and December 2022. Covid-19 restrictions had limited capacity in group rooms prior to April 2022. There were 39 people on probation waiting to start the sex offender programme with five successful completions since May 2022. An additional four completed the Maps 4 Change approved toolkit as an alternative. Another 94 people on probation were waiting to start other accredited programmes.
- MAPPA referrals for people being released from prison were sometimes late, which hampered the ability of agencies to plan for and manage high risk and complex cases. Practitioners and middle managers were reported to be rushed and ill-prepared at multi agency meetings. There had been considerable issues in relation to the sharing of Active Risk Management System-informed Offender Assessment System documents with MOSOVO police officers. This reflected findings from casework where only 17 out of the 55 relevant cases inspected involved sufficient coordination of agencies to manage risk of harm.
- Insufficient action had been taken to increase sentencer awareness of the availability of Community Sentence Treatment Requirements in the area or monitor their use. As a result, substance misuse services were not receiving expected volumes of referrals, despite there being capacity to provide treatment in the community. We found numerous examples from our inspection of casework where people with substance misuse issues had not been referred to specialist practitioners.

Resettlement work

Strengths:

- Licence conditions which prohibited contact with victims were used in all but one of the relevant cases we looked at. This would have prevented further harm and enabled practitioners to take enforcement action in the event of contact taking place.
- People released from prison were more likely than those on community orders to be referred to services relevant to their needs.
- Where people had been recalled to prison, we found that attempts were made to re-engage with the person in six out of nine cases. That would have supported future compliance with the sentence.

Areas for improvement:

- The Offender Management in Custody framework is intended to enable probation and prison practitioners to work together on planning the prisoner's release. Handover meetings between prison and probation staff were taking place frequently, but this was not leading often enough to good quality assessments. Only 53 per cent of assessments on resettlement cases identified all relevant factors related to risk of harm.
- A CIT had been created in Sheffield as part of a regional initiative. The CIT was intended to make referrals to services before the prisoner's release and provide more frequent supervision in the community. It was aimed specifically at people serving sentences of less than 20 months in prison. However, we found no difference in the level of service provided to people managed by the CIT compared to other resettlement cases.
- The personal characteristics of the person on probation had not been sufficiently considered in 63 per cent of the cases we inspected. That reflected the absence of analysis and focus at a strategic level on the diverse needs of people on probation in Sheffield.
- Too few cases set out how licence conditions such as accredited programmes would be completed before completion of the sentence. As a result, there was a risk in some cases of interventions to reduce the likelihood of people reoffending not being done.
- Written reviews were being completed on most resettlement cases. However, only seven out of 15 relevant case reviews we inspected were informed by intelligence from other agencies. That means that judgements about how to manage cases may not have been based on a full understanding of the risk associated with the person on probation.

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.

Requires improvement

Strengths:

- The Division Street office had been redecorated and provided a welcoming environment for people on probation.
- Of the people on probation we spoke to, 84 per cent felt the location of their appointments was within a reasonable travelling distance. The Division Street office was in a central location, within walking distance of partnership offices.
- The PDU had access to Junction, which is a regional online platform used to host performance information and policies. It is accessible to all staff.

Areas for improvement:

- Safeguarding and domestic abuse enquiries with police and children's services were not being carried out frequently enough. Only ten out of 23 of the relevant pre-sentence reports we inspected included contact with children's services. No enquiries were made with the police in 66 per cent of reports. That pattern of failing to seek intelligence from other agencies continued throughout sentences on the cases we inspected.
- Practitioners we spoke to were unaware of findings from local Serious Further Offence reviews and leaders had not checked that improvements to practice had been embedded across their teams.
- Practitioners had differing interpretations of practice guidance, such as the meaning of the amber status on the prioritisation framework.
- Very little case audit work was taking place. SPOs were expected to dip sample assessments, but we saw little evidence of this happening in practice. Cases selected for inspection were subject to a review by Quality Development Officers following our announcement but the results were not shared with all practitioners. We found no other examples of routine assurance work taking place.
- Practitioners did not have access to an inventory of local services which meant some staff had gaps in their understanding of what was available for people on probation. Not enough was being done by leaders to promote the use of available interventions through CRS providers.
- The PDU was using OPEN software, which provides information on overdue deadlines and cases of concern. However, there was limited evidence this was being used routinely by managers or practitioners.
- Only 17 out of 32 practitioners who responded to our survey said that sufficient attention was paid to their safety.

- The panic alarm at Division Street could only be heard in one room of the office and was inaudible on other floors. This was a serious safety issue which was unresolved at the time of our inspection.
- There was no Wi-Fi in the Division Street office and the wired internet connection was unreliable. A business case for the installation of Wi-Fi had been approved, but at the time of our inspection, the work was outstanding.
- There was insufficient space at the CIT office for all practitioners, preventing the full team from being able to be located and working together.
- The unpaid work reception at Hawke Street was not enclosed, which meant receptionists had no protection in the event of violent or aggressive behaviour. Plans had been drawn up for an enclosed booth but there was doubt as to whether funding would be available within the financial year.

Feedback from people on probation

User Voice, working with HM Inspectorate of Probation, had contact with 64 people on probation as part of this inspection. Approximately two thirds (64 per cent) of those surveyed were white. Most of the respondents (91 per cent) were men.

Strengths

- The survey suggested that the location of probation offices in the PDU were accessible for people on probation. Most (84 per cent) said that the location of their supervision appointments was within a reasonable travel distance.
- A large majority (88 per cent) of people on probation who responded to the survey felt safe when visiting probation premises.

Areas for improvement:

- Less than half (46 per cent) of respondents were able to access services relevant to their personal needs. That reflects our findings that too few referrals were being made to partner agencies to support people with problems related to their offending. When asked what services had been provided by probation, one respondent said:
“Nothing at all. I need help with substance misuse, but they won’t help me at the moment.”
- Half of people surveyed reported negative experiences of induction after their sentence or release from prison. When asked about the quality of the induction appointment, one person said:
“It was just leaflets thrown at me, threats of what would happen if I missed an appointment. She [the practitioner] wasn’t personal at all.”
- Only one person knew how to raise a complaint and 48 per cent of respondents had not been asked about their views of being on probation. Some people felt that the PDU would not listen to their views and that concerns would be ignored.
- At a strategic level, the PDU does not have a strategy in place for seeking the views of people on probation and using their feedback to improve the quality of services.

Diversity and inclusion

Strengths

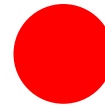
- Some probation practitioners were based at premises run by the Together Women Project. This acted as a dedicated space for women on probation to access a range of services from the same place.

Areas for improvement:

- Transitional work with children in youth justice who were soon to be transferred to adult probation was ad hoc. There was no probation practitioner seconded to the local YOT and senior management links with the PDU were weak.
- There was no strategic analysis of the disproportionate numbers of black, Asian and minority ethnic people on the PDU's caseload. Services had not been formally reviewed by the PDU senior leadership to understand whether there were gaps in the provision to people with protected characteristics.
- Leaders had not sufficiently explored the reasons for relatively high numbers of staff not disclosing their ethnicity or the overrepresentation of white people compared to the PDU caseload.
- The PDU's strategic approach to working with neurodiverse people was unclear. We found individual examples of practitioners responding to mental health problems, but these were not underpinned by a framework shaped by the PDU.
- The ethnicity and gender of both the practitioners and people on probation was not formally considered when allocating cases. We found concerning examples of people convicted of racially aggravated offences and sexual offences against women being allocated without considering the suitability of the practitioner fully in advance.

2. Court work and case supervision

2.1. Court work



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

Inadequate

Our rating¹ 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?	41%

Strengths:

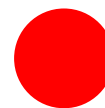
- Most of the pre-sentence reports we inspected were analytical and relevant to the person being sentenced. A large majority (90 per cent) sufficiently analysed factors relating to the likelihood of reoffending. Most (72 per cent) assessed the individual's readiness to change. The personal characteristics of the individual being sentenced were considered in 86 per cent of reports.
- Almost all the reports made an appropriate sentencing proposal to the court. Most magistrates who responded to our survey (three out of four) said that advice from probation practitioners assisted with their sentencing decisions quite well or very well.

Areas for improvement:

- Concerningly, safeguarding and domestic abuse enquiries with police and children's services were not being carried out frequently enough. Only 10 out of 23 of the relevant pre-sentence reports we inspected included contact with children's services. No enquiries were made with the police in 66 per cent of reports. That meant that assessments of risk posed to women and children were based on incomplete information and may have been flawed. The absence of intelligence checks meant most of the reports (59 per cent) we inspected were considered to be insufficient.

¹ 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 rating² 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?	60%
Does assessment focus sufficiently on the factors linked to offending and desistance?	59%
Does assessment focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	33%

Sheffield PDU is rated as 'Inadequate' for assessment because the lowest score out of the three questions, which was for keeping people safe, was under 50 per cent.

Strengths:

- Most practitioners sought to engage the person on probation in the assessment process. That included instances where practitioners made arrangements to meet people before their release from prison.
- There were several examples from the casework we inspected where the practitioner had considered the personal circumstances of the person on probation.
- More than half of the assessments in our sample (61 per cent) sufficiently identified problems linked to people committing offences. We also found analysis of factors which might reduce the likelihood of people committing further offences was generally good.

Areas for improvement:

- Risk assessments on actual and potential victims were not strong enough in 33 out of 60 relevant cases we inspected. We found some cases where assessments in relation to violence against women lacked rigour and detail.
- Too many assessments lacked intelligence from the police in relation to domestic abuse. That meant that risks to victims were not fully understood and practitioners were prevented from effectively managing cases.

² The rating for the standard is driven by the 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.](#)

2.3. Planning



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

Inadequate

Our rating³ 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?	51%
Does planning focus sufficiently on reducing reoffending and supporting desistance?	51%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	41%

Sheffield PDU is rated as 'Inadequate' for planning because the lowest score, which was in relation to keeping people safe, was under 50 per cent.

Strengths:

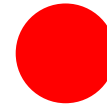
- We found that issues such as mental and physical health were sometimes considered when practitioners were planning the sentence. That increased the likelihood of the person on probation successfully completing their sentence.

Areas for improvement:

- Planning for the release of prisoners into the community was poor. There were several instances where the person on probation was released before the practitioner had devised a plan. That led to referrals for essential services to reduce the likelihood of reoffending being missed or delayed.
- People were not involved in planning frequently enough. We found little evidence of discussion between practitioners and people on probation about what needed to be achieved during their sentence. Some objectives set by practitioners were unclear and had not been shared with the person on probation.
- Contingency planning was insufficient in 60 per cent of the cases we inspected. As a result, it was unclear how practitioners would respond if there was an escalation in risk of harm to others.

³ 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 rating⁴ 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?	40%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support desistance?	40%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?	33%

Sheffield PDU is rated as 'Inadequate' for implementation and delivery because less than half of the cases we inspected were sufficient across all three key questions.

Strengths:

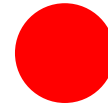
- Sufficient efforts were made to enable people on probation to complete their sentences in 74 per cent of the cases we inspected. There were some examples of practitioners making reasonable adjustments to accommodate difficulties the person on probation was experiencing.

Areas for improvement:

- Enforcement action was only taken in 27 out of the 52 cases where it was necessary to do so. That included cases where people were on licence and could have been recalled to custody. As a result, non-compliance was not being effectively dealt with and risk was not being controlled sufficiently.
- Not enough attention was being paid to protecting victims from harm. In half of cases, practitioners had not visited the person on probation's home address. Support from other agencies such as the police was not sufficiently coordinated in 38 out of 55 relevant cases.
- Only half of the relevant cases we inspected involved effective work to reduce the risk of harm posed by people on probation to others. We found numerous examples of cases where no interventions had been delivered to challenge factors related to offending.

⁴ 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 rating⁵ 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?	62%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting desistance?	58%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	47%

Sheffield PDU is rated as 'Inadequate' for reviewing because the lowest score related to keeping people safe was below 50 per cent.

Strengths:

- Most cases we inspected (79 per cent) had been reviewed by practitioners formally. That included discussions with people on probation about their compliance, and after further offences had been committed.
- In the majority of cases (73 per cent), we found that practitioners were reviewing the strength of factors which could reduce the likelihood of reoffending. There were examples of practitioners checking that housing and employment were still in place, which informed their understanding of whether the person was at risk of offending.

Areas for improvement:

- In 34 out of 57 relevant cases, risk of harm reviews were not informed by intelligence from other agencies. There were several cases where too little work had been done to verify and corroborate what people on probation were telling practitioners.
- Adjustments were not made to risk management plans in 28 out of 54 relevant cases. That included instances where recall to prison was delayed unnecessarily and where circumstances indicated that risk to others had escalated.
- Given the concerns identified in assessment, planning and implementation, and delivery, reviewing is an opportunity to improve the quality of work; however, this was not sufficient in the cases inspected.

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.

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?	31%

Areas for improvement:

- In 65 per cent of cases we inspected, there had been no change to, or an increase in, the rate of offending. There were numerous examples where people on probation went on to commit further offences during their supervision.
- Insufficient compliance was found in 53 per cent of cases we inspected. Not enough was being done to make sure people on probation completed their sentences successfully. Poor enforcement work meant that in some cases the risk of harm to others was not being adequately controlled.
- In 60 per cent of cases, not enough progress had been made on resolving problems linked to offending. Appointments with practitioners often lacked sufficient focus on challenging offending behaviour. There were too few examples of people being referred to partnership agencies for specialist support, such as for substance misuse treatment or support with education and employment. Where people had been working with specialist partnership agencies, there was limited evidence of meaningful outcomes being achieved.

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://justiceinspectorates.gov.uk).