



HM Inspectorate
of Probation

An inspection of probation services in:

North and North East Lincolnshire

The Probation Service – Yorkshire and the Humber Region

HM Inspectorate of Probation December 2024



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The role of HM Inspectorate of Probation

HM Inspectorate of Probation is the independent inspector of youth justice 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.

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Foreword

North and North East Lincolnshire Probation Delivery Unit (PDU) was last inspected by HM Inspectorate of Probation in 2023, when it was rated overall as 'Requires improvement'. Since then, leaders have maintained a strong focus on what they were doing well, including partnership working and developing effective service provision for people on probation. It is therefore particularly disappointing to have to report on what has actually been a deterioration in the effectiveness of casework, particularly in relation to keeping other people safe. In all four of our casework standards, fewer than half the cases we reviewed met our threshold for sufficiency, resulting in all four standards being rated as 'Inadequate'.

Unlike many PDUs we have inspected in the last 11 months, North and North East Lincolnshire has reasonable staffing levels, and neither caseloads nor workloads are excessive, compared with other areas. This inspection has nevertheless highlighted the complexities in casework that practitioners are facing every day. Our case inspections found that in some, but too few, cases, this complexity was managed well. However, the complexity of casework is the nature of probation work, and getting this right, consistently, is the objective. To achieve better results, practitioners can build on the relationships and systems that have been developed with other agencies and services, and in so doing share much of the responsibility for managing what are often very difficult cases.

Leaders must build on the support available for practitioners. Ensuring that the link between training and practice is made, and that effective practice is reinforced through consistent management oversight, is fundamental to this.

Despite the disappointing case inspection scores, there is much that the PDU is doing well. There is a strong and positive culture, along with staff who want to do a good job. Strong relationships with partners across both North and North East Lincolnshire have resulted in solid strategic and operational provision. It is now important to use these consistently. Similarly, ensuring that middle managers are given the time, space, and focus to offer effective management oversight to support practitioners and make sure that safety is at the heart of all practice will be imperative.

Managers and leader should take heart that most of the mechanisms already in place are likely to bring sustained improvements.

I wish all involved in this important work every success.



Martin Jones CBE

HM Chief Inspector of Probation

Ratings

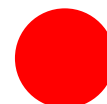
North and North East Lincolnshire PDU

Fieldwork started October 2024

Score **03/21**

Overall rating

Inadequate



1. Organisational arrangements and activity

P 1.1 Leadership

Requires improvement



P 1.2 Staffing

Requires improvement



P 1.3 Services

Requires improvement



2. Service delivery

P 2.1 Assessment

Inadequate



P 2.2 Planning

Inadequate



P 2.3 Implementation and delivery

Inadequate



P 2.4 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. Progress made against previous recommendations can be found at the end of this report.

North and North East Lincolnshire PDU should:

1. ensure middle managers have sufficient capacity to provide the appropriate level of oversight according to the needs of staff members and casework in the team
2. ensure domestic abuse and safeguarding information is analysed sufficiently to inform the quality of assessment, planning, and management of people on probation
3. fully take into account the views of people on probation, to inform service development
4. undertake sufficient liaison with other agencies, to manage both the desistance and public protection needs of people on probation and ensure that actual and potential victims are sufficiently protected
5. ensure that training and staff development are translated into practice, drawing on all available resources and support, including that provided by quality development officers
6. ensure that practitioners draw on all available and relevant services and provision, to address issues underpinning the risk of harm posed by people on probation
7. ensure all MAPPA cases are identified and appropriately managed in line with their level of risk.

Background

We conducted fieldwork in North and North East Lincolnshire PDU over a period of two weeks, beginning 07 October 2024. We inspected 13 community orders and 14 releases on licence from custody where sentences and licences had started during two separate weeks, between 04 March and 10 March 2024, and 25 March and 31 March 2024. We also conducted 23 interviews with probation practitioners.

North and North East Lincolnshire PDU is one of 11 PDUs in Yorkshire and the Humber probation region. North East Lincolnshire has a population of 158,335 and North Lincolnshire has a population of 170,087. The PDU is served by Humberside Police and serves the two local authorities, North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire.

North Lincolnshire has a proven reconviction rate of 26.9 per cent, compared with 28.5 per cent in North East Lincolnshire. Census data from 2021 indicates that 96.2 per cent and 94.3 per cent of the populations of North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire, respectively, are from a white ethnic background, compared with 81.7 per cent across England and Wales.

The Probation Service delivers services across two sites, at Park Square in Scunthorpe and Newchase Court in Grimsby. Newchase Court is a new site, opened in September 2023, and consolidates the two former offices in Grimsby. There are no prisons based in the PDU but there is one approved premises at Victoria House in Scunthorpe.

North and North East Lincolnshire PDU had a combined caseload of 1,393 at the point of inspection, of which 589 were community sentences, 413 were on licence, and 391 were held in custody, and was working with 220 victims. One per cent of the caseload (16 cases) were assessed as presenting a very high risk of serious harm (RoSH), 34 per cent a high RoSH, 52 per cent a medium RoSH, and 13 per cent a low RoSH. Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangement (MAPPA) cases made up 37 per cent of the caseload.

A range of commissioned rehabilitative services (CRS) were delivered across the PDU for people on probation. Igneus delivered the personal wellbeing service and accommodation was provided by Shelter. Together Women provided services for women via Lincolnshire Action Trust. Forward Trust delivered dependency and recovery services. Neurodiversity support, provided through a regional contract with the NHS, was also available, along with the Circles of Support and Accountability.

The Probation Reset¹ policy was implemented during the time of this inspection. Seven of the 27 cases we inspected were subject to Probation Reset. This meant that those individuals had their supervision suspended for the final third of their supervision period. This change was delivered at pace and implemented from 01 July 2024.

¹ Probation Reset is a nationally mandated operational policy change and has been implemented to alleviate probation workload pressures in response to prison capacity challenges. This mandates that supervision of a person on probation, who is eligible according to certain criteria, will be suspended at the two-thirds point of their sentence. These measures aim to target resources at the start of supervision in the community.

1. Organisational arrangements and activity

P 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

Senior leaders were well respected and highly thought of. There was a passion to implement effective services, and strong strategic partnerships that underpinned much of this. Most staff were positive about leaders and the culture of the PDU. However, work to keep people safe remained poor and undermined much of what was positive. As a consequence, this has resulted in an overall rating for leadership of 'Requires improvement'.

Strengths:

- There was a clear vision which reflected both PDU and regional priorities. Until recently, the head of service had been in post for over 10 years, developed strong relationships with many partner agencies and was widely respected by both probation staff and those across external agencies. The recent transition to a temporary head of service had been seamless and demonstrated well-established processes.
- Management structures were well established, with monthly senior management meetings focused on key priorities and working to meet identified objectives.
- Staff understood the priorities set by leaders and communication was effective with monthly all-staff calls and regular question and answer sessions to respond to issues raised by staff. Information sharing through these forums was positive, ensuring that clear messages were communicated, including that relating to standard determinate sentence 40 (SDS40) early release scheme and the probation Reset operational policy. In our survey, 11 of the 12 respondents said that the vision and strategy drove the delivery of a high-quality service for people on probation.
- Probation managers were active participants at all relevant boards and strategic groups across both local authorities, including the youth justice partnership boards, domestic abuse strategy boards, community safety partnerships, combating drugs partnership, violence reduction partnership, the MAPPa strategic management board, and various judicial meetings and forums.
- Strategic partnerships supported innovative multi-agency approaches to service delivery. The service was involved in 17 different partnerships across the two local authorities covered by the PDU.
- Strategic leadership had also filtered to an operational level, with senior probation officers (SPOs) representing the service at many operational meetings to ensure that the strategic vision translated into effective operational delivery. This had been particularly relevant in ensuring partner agencies were well versed in the implementation of SDS40 and probation Reset.
- Risks for the service were managed reasonably well and leaders were responsive when necessary. Key areas of concern were monitored at monthly leadership meetings, with objectives to manage workloads effectively at the forefront.

- A strong focus had been placed on managing effective strategic relationships to oversee the sharing of risk information, particularly in relation to domestic abuse and child safeguarding. The recent 'workaround' in the face of limited staffing resource in North Lincolnshire Children's Services to enable twice-weekly direct access and discussions was indicative of this, as was the work with police to enhance direct data access still further.
- There were positive attempts by senior leaders to focus on issues relating to risk and risk management following the findings of the last inspection. There had been a strong emphasis on the regional case audit tool (R-CAT) data and the direct access by staff to quality development officer (QDO) support, all developed around the regular use of protected development days.

Areas for improvement:

- Despite the strengths in leadership, this was not translating into effective service delivery for people on probation. This was reflected in the 'Inadequate' casework rating across all four service delivery standards. Of particular concern was work relating to keeping other people safe and against all four standards fewer than half the cases we reviewed reached a sufficient level in this regard.
- We were especially concerned about the deterioration in the quality of public protection work in the cases inspected despite the learning identified in the previous inspection. The focus and oversight on quality from middle management was not driving necessary improvements in line with the recommendations identified. For example, the implementation of services was sufficient to support the safety of other people in only 15 per cent (four out of 27) of the cases we reviewed.
- Staff in both focus groups and in interviews raised concerns about the level of support they received. Seven out of 12 people in our survey said that their welfare was not given sufficient attention.
- The engaging people on probation initiative remained largely at a regional level, although there had been some examples of effective change through mechanisms such as feedback from those on probation. This had resulted in a staff member from the Department for Works and Pensions being based in the probation office, to improve information sharing and the coordination of services.
- R-CAT data was being used but was not effectively incorporated into developing staff and focusing on the most important factors in relation to service delivery.
- There was inconsistency across the middle manager group in delivering management oversight, team meetings and supervision, with Scunthorpe generally faring better than Grimsby. As a consequence, it was unclear how messages from senior leaders were being received at an operational level or how staff were responding to feedback.

P 1.2. Staffing



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

Requires improvement

Staffing levels were reasonable, and this was reflected in relatively low workloads and case numbers for practitioners. Improvements in sickness were also indicative of this development. However, despite this, reasonable levels of training, and a strong focus on protected development days, these improvements were not impacting sufficiently on work with people on probation. Management oversight was insufficient. The rating of 'Requires improvement' reflects these findings.

Strengths:

- Staffing levels were positive and reasonably stable. PO vacancies were approximately nine per cent and probation services officers (PSOs) were slightly over-recruited, by around seven per cent. This stability was further reflected in relatively low levels of sickness (an average of eight days lost per year).
- There was an almost even split of PSOs between experienced and newly recruited staff, but almost two-thirds of POs had more than three years' experience. This had enabled a positive environment for new staff to learn, while not creating an excessive burden for staff being shadowed.
- There was a strong, and positive, emphasis on PSO training, ensuring that they had covered key aspects of practice before taking responsibility for managing particular cases.
- The PDUs business objective of average workloads not exceeding 110 per cent on the workload management tool had been achieved, with figures of 109 per cent for POs and 94 per cent for PSOs at the time of the inspection announcement. Staff on the Professional Qualification in Probation programme had an average workload of just 68 per cent. Average caseloads also remained relatively low, at 32 for POs and 40 for PSOs.
- Staff overall were positive about training they received. Eleven out of 12 people in our staff survey said that there was a culture of learning and continuous improvement that was promoted actively across the PDU. This was reflected in the availability of training and monthly protected development days, which focussed on key identified needs via R-CATs and feedback through the embedding quality and learning initiative. QDO surgeries were also available for practitioners.
- Ten out of the 12 respondents to our survey said that supervision was provided sufficiently frequently and enhanced the quality of their work.
- The administration team worked collaboratively and was motivated and positive about its working environment, despite resourcing challenges.

Areas for improvement:

- While caseloads and work levels were not excessive compared to many PDUs, 10 of the 19 individual practitioners we interviewed during our inspection, and eight out of the 12 respondents to our survey, told us that their workloads were not manageable.

- Despite staff feeling that there was a culture of learning, this was not reflected in the casework we reviewed. Some staff were not attending training, others were not accessing the QDO resource, and, as reflected by the case inspection findings, some were not incorporating their training effectively into their practice.
- Change fatigue was inevitably impacting on the quality of service delivery to people on probation. Staff were having to adjust their priorities and respond to change processes directed from a national level.
- Reasonable staffing levels and relatively low sickness levels were not impacting on the effectiveness of work being delivered particularly in relation to keeping people safe. This was largely due to a disconnect between the training being delivered, quality assurance feedback, and its implementation into practice. In particular, practitioners were making insufficient use of QDO feedback.
- All 23 of the practitioners we interviewed as part of our case review felt that they had the necessary skills and experiences to manage the specific case being considered. This indicated a disconnect between staff confidence and their ability to do work that kept people safe.
- In only 11 of the 27 cases we reviewed was management oversight sufficient to meet the needs of the case. In 16 cases, it was assessed as insufficient, ineffective or absent.
- Middle managers had very high workloads. In the absence of a deputy head of PDU, they were all undertaking strategic and operational roles with partner agencies. This often distracted them from providing necessary support and oversight.

P 1.3. Services



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

Requires improvement

There was an appropriate range of services available within the PDU. Many of the services were providing positive and effective access, with some encouraging innovation. In the majority of cases the level of coordination with other agencies was sufficient. However, insufficient use was being made of such services to manage the risk posed by people on probation, and more focus was necessary on maintaining effective relationships with partner agencies to manage risk of harm. Taken as a whole, this has resulted in a rating of 'Requires improvement' for services.

Strengths:

- The range of services provided through CRS, and the regional outcomes and innovations fund were suitable to meet the desistance and reducing reoffending needs of people on probation. In our review of cases, 70 per cent of people on probation were referred to services.
- In 17 of the 27 cases we inspected, the level and nature of contact with people on probation to address desistance and reduce reoffending was generally appropriate. In a further seven, the level was insufficient, mostly due to non-compliance. Insufficient or inappropriate contact had been arranged in only three cases.
- There were several initiatives that were providing effective support, including the offender personality disorder pathway and support for those with mental health issues via the Reconnect programme.
- Much of the support provided to people on probation via local and regional initiatives was as a direct consequence of the strategic partnerships in place across the PDU. Included in this was work with 'Wizer', offering people on probation access to mentoring support, dedicated Department for Work and Pensions provision for benefit support, and access to five integrated offender management (IOM) properties.
- We found that there was sufficient coordination with other agencies involved in the delivery of services in 18 out of 27 of the cases we reviewed.
- Both IOM and the women's team operated a concentrator model and were offering effective, co-located services in both the Grimsby and Scunthorpe offices.
- Courts were being kept up to date on service delivery and sentencers were positive about the level of information received and the quality of reports prepared by practitioners for court.
- Strategic arrangements for obtaining both police intelligence relating to domestic abuse and information on children's safeguarding were reasonable. In our case sample, in all 21 of the police requests and in 23 out of 24 children's safeguarding enquiries, sufficient information was received from these services.
- Dedicated services for women were generally appropriate and accessible across both Scunthorpe and Grimsby. The introduction of a 12-week programme specifically designed to support women subject to probation Reset in Scunthorpe was a positive initiative.

Areas for improvement:

- Practitioners were not making sufficient use of the services available to manage factors relating to keeping people safe. In only 12 out of 27 cases (44 per cent) did we find that the level and nature of contact offered was sufficient to manage and minimise the risk of harm.
- In six cases regarding domestic abuse and three cases where there were indicators of child safeguarding, no enquiry had been made to the appropriate services, which meant that potential information to safeguard others was not verified or known.
- Although the majority of practitioners whose cases we assessed felt that there were effective relationships with other agencies to manage the risk of harm, we found that there was effective multi-agency working in only seven out of 23 relevant cases in respect of safeguarding children and nine out of 21 cases in respect of domestic abuse.
- Communication between practitioners and CRS providers was problematic with providers often frustrated at the quality of both referrals and enforcement when necessary. There was a need for greater integration between providers and practitioners, to ensure that work was managed effectively.
- The 12-week programme for women delivered in Scunthorpe was not available for women in Grimsby, so services across the PDU area had not been maximised.
- There were delays in delivering accredited programmes, partly due to low staffing levels and also because the programmes team was delivering programmes across Grimsby, Scunthorpe, and Hull. Typically, people on probation were waiting approximately six months before they were placed on the Building Better Relationships programme. Placements on Horizon were not expected to be available before 2025.

Feedback from people on probation

User Voice, working with HM Inspectorate of Probation, had contact with 56 people on probation as part of this inspection. This was made up of 43 face-to-face and 13 online surveys. Three further in-depth interviews were also undertaken but, while these contributions were included in the overall evaluation, the participants did not complete a survey. Eighty-nine per cent of participants were male and nine per cent female, with 46 per cent on a prison licence and 39 per cent on a community order; 14 per cent said that they were unsure of their status. Eighty-six per cent of participants were from a white ethnic background, and a further four individuals (seven per cent) said that they would rather not disclose their ethnicity.

- The majority of respondents (50 out of 56) did know what was expected of them while they were on probation, and 82 per cent also told us that their probation practitioner took the time to get to know them.
- Disappointingly, only 28 out of the 51 people who said they had a sentence plan said that they had been involved in its creation. This corresponded, largely, with what we found in our own case sample, whereby in only 13 out of the 27 cases was the person on probation assessed as having been meaningfully involved in the creation of their sentence plan.
- Most respondents were positive about their experience of being on probation, with almost 70 per cent (39 out of 56) saying that they found their appointments useful in helping them and their rehabilitation, and over 90 per cent (51 out of 56) saying that they were able to have an appointment that was convenient for them. One person told us:

“I feel that seeing probation is really important as they help with supporting me and keeping me positive, putting me in touch with a good support network and keeping me out of trouble.”

- Furthermore, most people said that the distance they had to travel to get to their appointments was reasonable (42 out of 56) and that they felt safe accessing the office (53 out of 56).
- Most people felt that they had a good relationship with their PO (48 out of 56) and that they were treated fairly by them (47 out of 56). One said:

“She is a good listener with a wealth of knowledge regarding probation.”

- It was encouraging that 47 out of 56 people in our survey, almost 84 per cent, said that, overall, they felt supported by probation staff. One said:

“Well, I’ve gained in confidence as upon release I was an anxious wreck. I’m now on medication, attending support groups and was shown how to access the job centre upon my release.”

Diversity and inclusion

Strengths:

- Since the previous inspection, the PDU had introduced an equality, diversity, and inclusion (ED&I) team, which comprised various staffing grades across both offices, each taking a protected characteristic to lead on. The team was using a Microsoft Teams channel dedicated to ED&I to share and organise information and, although in its infancy, staff were motivated to participate and spoke well of it.
- Regionally commissioned services were in place with both the Autism Society and the offender personality disorder pathway, with staff from the latter offering support, guidance, and training for staff within North and North East Lincolnshire.
- Provision for women was generally appropriate, with equitable support across both Grimsby and Scunthorpe. The introduction of a 12-week programme specifically designed to support women subject to probation Reset in Scunthorpe had been a positive initiative.
- Partnership services for women, which were co-located on specific days, was a specific strength, focusing on the collaboration of a range of services and providers.
- The service was an active participant in the youth justice partnership boards, and a seconded PO based at each youth justice partnership supported transitions from youth to adult provision. This work was enhanced by the high levels of experience of the secondees.

Areas for improvement:

- There was no work being undertaken to analyse disproportionality of any groups across the PDU, such as whether Black, Asian, and minority ethnic people on probation were more or less likely to be breached or recalled or if women on probation were more likely to complete licences or orders than their male counterparts.

2. Service delivery

P 2.1. Assessment



Assessment is well-informed, analytical, and personalised, involving actively 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 and is driven by the lowest score:

Key question	Percentage 'Yes'
Does assessment focus sufficiently on engaging the person on probation?	59%
Does assessment focus sufficiently on the factors linked to offending and desistance?	70%
Does assessment focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	33%

- In a reasonable majority of cases we reviewed (20 out of 27), the assessment focused sufficiently on the motivation of the person on probation to engage and comply with the sentence, and in 18 out of these cases they were meaningfully involved in their assessment and their views were taken into account.
- Encouragingly, there was an appropriate focus on assessing and analysing offending-related factors related to individuals and, although assessments drew sufficiently on available sources of information in only a little over half the cases we looked at (14 out of 27), there was an appropriate focus on factors linked to offending and desistance in 19 of these cases.
- Of greatest concern, however, was the work relating to the assessment of factors to keep other people safe. In six cases regarding domestic abuse enquiries and three cases where there were concerns about child safeguarding, enquiries were not made. This was disappointing as there were, broadly, systems to ensure that child safeguarding and domestic abuse enquiries were responded to by the police or children's services appropriately. In all 21 of the cases where domestic abuse enquiries were made to the police, the information received back was sufficient, and this was also the case in relation to 23 of the 24 requests made to children's services.
- Obtaining information from such enquiries is only the starting point; using and analysing the information received, in conjunction with that from other sources, is the backbone of assessment. We saw some positive examples of this happening, invariably involving liaison with other agencies, including the police and/or social

² 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.](#)

workers, but also, often, CRS providers and substance misuse services. What these cases all had in common was the drawing on a wide range of perspectives and utilising what was already known about the person on probation.

- Disappointingly, we concluded that in 15 out of 27 cases, assessment did not draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including past behaviour and convictions, or involve other agencies where appropriate.
- In too many cases, the assessment focused almost singularly on the individual, without seeing them in a wider context or considering who might be at risk from them. Similarly, we found that in only 15 of 26 relevant cases did the assessment analyse any specific concerns or risks related to actual or potential victims.
- Our case cohort included eight cases subject to MAPPA arrangements, all at Level 1. There were delays in the notification and level setting in three of these. Risk management, in order to keep people safe, was insufficient in five out of the eight cases at the initial assessment and implementation and delivery stages of their sentence.

P 2.2. Planning



Planning is well-informed, holistic, and personalised, involving actively 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 and is driven by the lowest score:

Key question	Percentage 'Yes'
Does planning focus sufficiently on engaging the person on probation?	52%
Does planning focus sufficiently on reducing reoffending and supporting desistance?	67%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	44%

- Where planning was most effective, we saw examples of the person on probation engaged in the process of drawing up the plan with the practitioner, and targets being set that met their needs as well as the need to keep other people safe. People tend generally to be more engaged in the process and be more likely to comply if they feel that planning includes them and that they are invested in it. It was encouraging to see that, in most cases (20 out of 27), practitioners set out the services most likely to reduce reoffending and support desistance, and in the same number of cases the pattern and type of contact sufficient to engage the person on probation were also clearly identified.
- In most of the cases we looked at (18 out of 27), planning sufficiently reflected offending-related factors and prioritised those which were most critical. However, in many cases individuals had complex lives, often with a complex range of needs, and in several of the cases we reviewed some, but often not all, of those needs were identified. As a consequence, sometimes crucial aspects of necessary work were missed.
- Unfortunately, the person on probation was not as engaged in the process of planning as would have been ideal, and this was also identified in our people on probation survey via User Voice. They were meaningfully involved in fewer than half of the cases we looked at.
- Planning specifically in relation to keeping other people safe was often let down by a lack of engagement with other agencies or in drawing on their experiences to help manage the range of risks presented. We saw examples of detailed risk management plans, including contingencies, and plans that had been put together in conjunction with other services and provider organisations, and saw these addressing, for instance, drugs, alcohol, or thinking skills as the means of reducing

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.](#)

risk. However, in only 15 of our 27 cases did we determine that planning sufficiently addressed risk of harm factors and prioritised those which were most critical.

- Work relating to planning to keep other people sufficiently safe was better in the cases we looked at that were on a community order than those on prison licence.

P 2.3. 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 and is driven by the lowest score:

Key question	Percentage 'Yes'
Is the sentence or post-custody period implemented effectively with a focus on engaging the person on probation?	74%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support desistance?	67%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?	15%

- There were some strong elements to practitioners' engagement of people on probation. In all but one case, sufficient efforts were made to enable people on probation to complete their sentence, and in 21 of the 27 cases sufficient focus had been given to maintaining an effective working relationship and in taking account of their diversity needs.
- While the level and nature of contact was deemed to be sufficient to reduce reoffending and support desistance in 17 out of the 27 cases we reviewed, it was not always clear how effective this contact was. To illustrate, although we assessed that in 22 of the cases we reviewed 'family and relationships' was a significant factor in relation to offending, we found that sufficient services had been delivered in only five of these. Similarly, 'lifestyle' was deemed to be significant also in 22 cases, but sufficient provision had been received in only eight cases.
- The greater concern, however, was how the implementation and delivery of services supported the safety of other people in only four of the cases we inspected. In only 12 of the 27 cases were the level and nature of contact offered sufficient to manage and minimise the risk of harm. This meant that, irrespective of the content of contact, its frequency was insufficient from the outset. To compound this, there was effective multi-agency working, including information sharing, in respect of safeguarding children in only seven of 23 relevant cases, and effective multi-agency working, including information sharing, in respect of domestic abuse in only nine out of 21 cases.
- This undermined much of the positive work that had been undertaken early on in cases, where there were systems to ensure effective information exchanges.

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.](#)

P 2.4. Reviewing



Reviewing of progress is well-informed, analytical, and personalised, involving actively 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 and is driven by the lowest score:

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?	63%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	37%

- In some of the cases we looked at, there were examples of the person on probation playing an active role in their review and being engaged in plans. However, while this was the case in over half of the cases we looked at (14), this was still disappointingly low.
- We also saw a number of positive cases where other agencies were consulted about their involvement with the person on probation in relation to desistance, and asked to contribute to the review. Reviews were, overall, informed by input from other agencies involved in the desistance of the person on probation in 14 out of 22 relevant cases.
- However, as with other aspects of service delivery, much of reviewing was let down by the lack of effective risk management. As with the broader involvement of people on probation in the review of their plan, in only six out of 23 cases were they involved meaningfully in reviewing their risk of harm.
- Reviewing was informed by the necessary input from other agencies involved in managing the risk of harm in only 11 out of 25 relevant cases. Moreover, in only eight of 23 relevant cases did reviewing identify and address changes in factors related to risk of harm, with the necessary adjustments being made to the ongoing plan of work.

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.

Outcomes

Strengths:

- Overall, we found that sufficient services had been delivered in relation to accommodation in 11 out of 21 relevant cases. In some cases, this was focused on stabilising existing housing rather than finding new accommodation. This was reflected in the fact that virtually the same number of people were in stable accommodation at the point of our inspection as at the beginning of the order or licence. There had, however, been a slight improvement in the number of those in settled independent accommodation, from three to five.
- We determined that in eight of 15 cases where alcohol misuse was an important factor linked to offending, and in 12 of 20 cases where drug misuse was an important factor linked to offending, sufficient progress had been made to date while the person had been on probation.
- The education, training, and employment status of people on probation also remained stable between the beginning of an order or licence and the point of the inspection. One more person became self-employed in this period and there was a slight reduction in those classified as unemployed, from 11 to nine.

Areas for improvement:

- We found that there had been sufficient improvements in factors most closely linked to offending, both in developing strengths and addressing needs, in only four of the cases we inspected.
- Disappointingly, we also found that there had been improvements to the individual factors identified as related to risk of harm in only five of the cases we inspected.

Previous recommendation	Action taken and impact	Categorisation	Improvement still required?
<i>From previous probation inspection of North and North East Lincolnshire PDU (March 2023)</i>	<i>Summary of action taken and impact</i>	<i>Sufficient progress/ Some progress/ No progress</i>	<i>Yes/no If yes, consider repeating the recommendation</i>
Improve the quality of work to assess, plan for, manage and review risk of harm	Across all four standards of service delivery, North and North East Lincolnshire was rated as 'Inadequate'. Against each standard, fewer than half the cases we reviewed were assessed as sufficient in relation to keeping other people safe.	No progress	Yes
Ensure the delivery of training is prioritised to enhance the skills of the workforce and that there is a blended offer in place of in-person and online staff training	Overall, the staff completion rate of mandatory training was 77 per cent. Some aspects, including domestic abuse awareness and child safeguarding awareness, had higher completion rates. Despite reasonable training and completion rates these were not manifesting in improved casework.	Some progress	Yes
Ensure diversity is prioritised in both strategic and operational practice	Some work had been undertaken in relation to ethnicity, diversity, and inclusion, including the creation of a dedicated team with lead officers responsible for each protected characteristic. The team had a dedicated Teams channel to share and organise information. It nevertheless remained in its relative infancy.	Some progress	Yes

Annexe one – Web links

- Full data from this inspection and further information about the methodology used to conduct this inspection is available [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)