



HM Inspectorate  
of Probation

An inspection of probation services in:

**Kirklees PDU**

The Probation Service – Yorkshire and the Humber Region

HM Inspectorate of Probation, November 2024



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## Acknowledgements

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## Foreword

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Kirklees Probation Delivery Unit (PDU) was last inspected by HM Inspectorate of Probation in 2023, when it was rated overall as 'Inadequate'. Since then, leaders have made considerable efforts to address many of the issues we identified. However, despite some notable improvements, we continued to find significant failings in the effectiveness of the casework we reviewed. Consequently, Kirklees continues to be rated as 'Inadequate'.

Leaders had focused attention on building a resilient and motivated staff group and a positive and constructive working environment. The positive culture we observed was testimony to those efforts, as was the reduction in both levels of sickness and staff turnover. This had enabled the service to improve its standing on the majority of metrics of the service's performance scorecard. Leaders had also developed strong strategic relationships across both West Yorkshire and Kirklees which had resulted in unique initiatives. These included expansion of the recovery housing partnership with three other agencies, such as integrated offender management (IOM) and the introduction of a structured intervention programme to address knife crime in the area.

Despite these improvements and the increase in staffing at all grades, practitioner workloads continued to be a substantial challenge and remained too high. This was particularly significant at probation officer (PO) level, where vacancy levels were at 25 per cent.

Work in relation to our service delivery standards remained inadequate. In particular, work to keep other people safe was weak and, while systems to ensure that the receipt of information regarding domestic abuse from the police were largely sound, arrangements to obtain similar information about child safeguarding were inconsistent, although we were encouraged that direct access to safeguarding information would be available from October 2024. Other work was also limited, with poor levels of liaison with partner agencies and insufficient use of commissioned rehabilitative services (CRSs) and other activities. At the heart of much of this was the lack of management oversight by middle managers, who were often very busy undertaking external-facing strategic work.

Kirklees had undoubtedly made progress since our last inspection, and the emphasis on creating a positive and supportive staff group, while also focusing externally on the development of external strategic partnerships, was to be commended. It had created a solid foundation. However, it is now time to shift that focus and work on improving the quality of provision for people on probation and those in the community who need to be kept safe. The focus should be on ensuring that managers have the capacity to oversee appropriately the work undertaken by frontline staff and that these frontline staff, particularly those relatively new to the service, convert that learning into effective practice. With support from the region, I am confident that this can be achieved, although it will not be a quick or easy task.

I wish the PDU and its staff well in taking this work forward.



**Martin Jones CBE**

HM Chief Inspector of Probation

# Ratings

## Kirklees

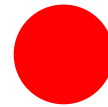
Fieldwork started August 2024

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

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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. ensure that it has sufficient staffing resources to provide a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all people on probation
2. improve the use of interventions and services available for people on probation to support desistance and manage the risk of harm
3. 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
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 child safeguarding enquiries are undertaken in all relevant cases and that the information received is sufficient to manage the case
6. ensure domestic abuse and safeguarding information is analysed sufficiently to inform the quality of assessment, planning and management of people on probation
7. fully take into account the views of people on probation to inform service development
8. ensure that people on probation (with a protected characteristic) have access to appropriate services and interventions.

## Background

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We conducted fieldwork in Kirklees PDU over a period of two weeks, beginning 12 August 2024. We inspected 27 community orders and 15 releases on licence from custody where sentences and licences had commenced during two separate weeks, between 01 January and 07 January, and 29 January and 04 February 2024. We also conducted 36 interviews with probation practitioners.

Kirklees is one of 11 PDUs in Yorkshire and the Humber. The PDU was formed at the time of the unification of the Probation Service in June 2021. Kirklees is part of West Yorkshire, has a population of 442,033,<sup>1</sup> and is part of the West Yorkshire Police area. Proven reconviction data indicates that Kirklees has a rate of 23.8 per cent compared with 27.1 per cent across the whole of Yorkshire and the Humber. Census data from 2021 indicates that 26.4 per cent of its population comes from a Black, Asian, or minority ethnic background.

The head of service (HoS) had been in post approximately eight months at the time of our inspection fieldwork.

Kirklees was operating in green status ('business as usual') under the national prioritisation framework.<sup>2</sup> At our last inspection of Kirklees, in January 2023, the service was operating under amber status, and had been for over 12 months. As a consequence, some activity had been deprioritised at that time. In the 19 months since then, staffing levels had fluctuated and at various points met the criteria to return to amber status. It had been decided, however, to stay in green status, to maintain continuity and ensure consistent messages to staff about the work that should be prioritised. At the time of this inspection, the total number of staff in post was 112, against a target of 123. While most grades were fully staffed, there was a 25 per cent vacancy rate for POs; although actual number had increased in the previous 12 months, from 22 to 33, the target operating number had also increased, to 51.

The PDU operates from two locations – Huddersfield and Dewsbury. It is served by one magistrates' court, in Huddersfield. The closest Crown Court is in Leeds. There are two approved premises in Dewsbury, but the Kirklees service is not responsible for their operation.

Kirklees had a combined caseload of 1,896 at the point of our inspection and was working with 480 victims. The case profile for Kirklees was similar to the average across Yorkshire and the Humber, with 50 per cent of people on probation subject to a community order, 30 per cent on prison licence, and 20 per cent in custody. One per cent of the caseload was assessed as presenting a very high risk of serious harm (RoSH), 35 per cent a high RoSH, 56 per cent a medium RoSH, and eight per cent a low RoSH. Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) cases made up 42 per cent of the caseload.

A range of CRSs were delivered across the PDU for people on probation: Ingeus provided the personal wellbeing service, St Giles delivered the accommodation service, and the Together Women Project (TWP) provided services for women. Change Grow Live (CGL) delivered drug and alcohol services. Neurodiversity support, provided through a regional

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Office for National Statistics (November 2023). UK population estimates, mid-2022.

<sup>2</sup> Prioritising probation framework – Post-pandemic tool to help regions adapt to how they deliver probation services locally, according to numbers of available staff.

contract with the NHS, was also available, along with the Creating Future Opportunities (CFO) activity hub. There was also a dedicated recovery housing project in Huddersfield, delivered in partnership between IOM, CGL, the Probation Service, and Emerging Futures (a housing provider).

The probation reset<sup>3</sup> policy was implemented during the time of this inspection. Six of the 42 cases we inspected were subject to probation reset. This meant that these 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.

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

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<sup>3</sup> 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

Leaders were aware of the challenges to achieving high-quality service delivery, many of which had been identified during the previous inspection, in January 2023. There had been a positive attempt to improve performance and introduce a number of initiatives with partners while maintaining a motivated workforce. While performance against targets had improved, this was not reflected in the quality of work in the cases inspected, particularly in relation to keeping people safe, but also engagement and desistance. The rating of 'Requires improvement' reflects the work done to date to create a positive culture, build external partnerships, and improve aspects of performance.

### Strengths:

- Business planning arrangements and governance structures were in place to ensure that leaders, including senior probation officers (SPOs), were cognisant of the key challenges to the service, and were able to respond appropriately to performance data and ensure the appropriate management of limited resources.
- Communication was managed well, and staff knew what their roles were and what was expected of them.
- There was a strong emphasis on performance and a push to improve activity where shortfalls had been identified, including reducing the backlog of initial sentence plans and initial MAPPAs screenings. Performance had improved against almost all metrics on the performance scorecard.
- Risks to service provision were understood and actively managed, including improvements in space available at the Dewsbury office and revamping women's services. Significant shortfalls in staffing across all grades at the last inspection had been a core deficit, and a focus for leaders since then. There had been significant improvements in staffing for all but PO grades, where there remained a 25 per cent shortfall; this had enabled some reduction in workload pressures.
- The proactive management of workloads by leaders, including the use of overtime and the recent introduction of a caseload management system, where Professional Qualification in Probation trainees supported practitioners, were positive attempts to manage the pressures experienced by many main grade staff.
- Partnership work was strong, with the service represented at a wide range of operational and strategic partnerships across West Yorkshire, and specifically within Kirklees. Principal among these were the Reducing Reoffending Partnership and Serious Violence Duty Partnership in Kirklees, work with the police around public protection and MAPPAs, and engagement with CGL, the substance misuse partnership.
- Several unique and effective initiatives had come from this work, including the implementation of the 'Wrong Look, Wrong Time, Wrong Place' knife crime



structured intervention programme, funded through the Serious Violence Duty Partnership and the expansion of the Recovery Housing Partnership as part of a joint initiative between IOM, the Probation Service, CGL, and Emerging Futures.

- There was a positive culture across the PDU, with a strong emphasis on teamwork and support. This was reflected in the climate assessment undertaken in April 2024 and the staff survey undertaken at the end of 2023. In our survey, 19 out of 21 respondents said that the culture of the PDU promoted openness, constructive challenge, and ideas.
- There was a strong emphasis on wellbeing. Regular events took place across the PDU, including 'Wellbeing Wednesdays' and PAM assist office sessions. Reflective sessions were incorporated into monthly development days. A wellbeing plan was part of the annual business plan.
- The HoS had a high profile in the PDU, and staff and managers spoke very positively of them. Quarterly 'all staff calls' and monthly 'headspace' meetings, where the HoS was available to take questions, helped staff feel connected to the leadership. This was facilitated further by the HoS choosing to be based within the open-plan office in Huddersfield.
- Staff were generally positive about their learning. Learning opportunities were communicated reasonably well and there was a particular emphasis on the use of protected development days.

#### **Areas for improvement:**

- Despite leaders driving some positive and innovative work, this was not enabling the PDU to deliver a consistently high-quality, personalised, and responsive service for all people on probation. This was reflected by the 'Inadequate' casework rating across all four service delivery standards.
- Work relating to engagement, desistance, and keeping other people safe was weak, particularly child safeguarding. The service recognised some of these shortfalls and had negotiated to have direct access to safeguarding databases, and will be co-located with safeguarding teams from October 2024 to drive improvement.
- Management oversight of cases was particularly poor. In nearly all cases we saw, we assessed this as missing, insufficient, or ineffective.
- Despite improvements against performance metrics, too few practitioners understood the principles of effective casework. While, in most cases, managers did understand this, our case inspections suggested that they were not communicating it effectively to their team, or ensuring that such learning was transferred to frontline delivery or including it in their oversight.
- SPOs were responsible for around 10 practitioners each but also a range of external focused activity. While most were keen to undertake this work, there was a need to focus primarily on the quality of practice across the service, especially for those practitioners with relatively little experience.
- Work regarding engaging people on probation had not been prioritised and further work was required to develop consultation further and use peer mentors and advisers.

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## P 1.2. Staffing



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

Requires improvement

The 12 months leading up to this inspection had seen increases in the number of staff across all grades, and both sickness levels and staff turnover had improved. Nevertheless, practitioners were still managing high workloads and, despite regular supervision, and most staff having completed core training, we did not see learning reflected in the quality of practice. More was required to ensure that practitioners were supported in managing their casework effectively and that workloads were reduced to more manageable, and sustainable, levels. Taken as a whole, this resulted in an overall rating for staffing of 'Requires improvement'.

- There had been improvements in staffing levels across all grades over the previous 12 months, with administrative staff, managers, and Probation Service Officers (PSOs) at or above their designed complement.
- Improvements had been achieved in both sickness and attrition levels in the previous 12 months. Sickness fell from an average of 13 days a year to nine and attrition fell from eight per cent to just over four per cent. Both sickness and attrition levels were lower than the Yorkshire and the Humber regional averages of 12 days and 10 per cent, respectively.
- Practitioner workloads had improved slightly in the previous 12 months and had recently dropped further due to the implementation of the probation reset operational policy.
- Leaders were actively managing limited resources by reviewing caseloads weekly and distributing resources and cases to mitigate the worst impacts of the limited number of POs and the relative inexperience of many staff.
- Case allocation was generally appropriate, with most staff feeling that they had the necessary skills and experience to manage the cases they were responsible for. Managers did not allocate cases to practitioners unless they were suitably knowledgeable and appropriately trained. Although this sometimes added pressure to more experienced colleagues with higher caseloads, it was the appropriate action to take.
- Most staff felt supported by their manager and said that they received supervision sufficiently frequently. Core training was completed by the majority of staff and some other locally or regionally managed training was also available, depending on the roles of staff. Protected development days focused appropriately on areas identified by audits or suggested by staff, and most staff found them useful.
- The ethnicity of the workforce reflected the profile of both the people on probation and the general population of Kirklees.

### Areas for improvement:

- Despite an increase in the number of POs in the preceding 12 months, there remained a 25 per cent deficit in this key grade of staff. This impacted significantly on the ability of the PDU to manage its work, as workload levels for POs were, at

the time of the inspection, at 134 per cent on the workload management tool. Nevertheless, this was a reduction from 144 per cent 12 months earlier.

- Although the head of service had made a commitment to reduce workload levels to 120 per cent by the end of 2024, it was projected that a full PO complement would not be in post for a further 18 months.
- Workloads for PSOs were higher than ideal, at 112 per cent.
- Many staff said that, while there had been improvements in their workload compared with six months earlier, it did not always feel like that. Two-thirds of staff interviewed as part of our case inspections felt that their workload was unmanageable.
- PO vacancies were compounded by the relative inexperience of many practitioners. Fifty-seven per cent of PSOs and 51 per cent of POs had less than three years' experience, and 22 per cent of POs had been in post less than 12 months.
- Our casework and management oversight findings indicate that the supervision of practitioners was not having the necessary impact on service delivery. In too many cases, managers were not offering sufficient guidance or holding frontline practitioners sufficiently to account for the quality and effectiveness of the work they were undertaking.
- There was a need to ensure that practice was clearly focused on public protection, that learning and development was individualised and supported by clear management oversight and, where necessary, direction, and that this linked back to the regionally organised audit process, to ensure that staff learning was effectively built into their development.

### 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

The broad range of services available to support desistance and manage risk was reasonable and reflected the needs of people on probation. There was a focus on innovation and on developing effective strategic links with partners. Despite this, insufficient referrals to services, and often poor liaison with providers, resulted in notable shortfalls in the cases we reviewed. A more consistent and effective approach to managing accredited programmes was required. As a consequence of these findings, we have rated services as 'Requires improvement'.

- There was a reasonable range of services available to meet the needs of people on probation. CRSs were commissioned regionally and the range provided broadly reflected the need, as identified through the PDU's needs analysis.
- Where identified through various local forums, provision specific to the needs of people on probation had also been commissioned. The development and expansion of recovery housing was an excellent example of both responsiveness and co-commissioning. Similarly, the introduction of the Wrong Look, Wrong Time, Wrong Place structured intervention programme, while relatively new, was promising, with six staff trained in its delivery and 21 individuals having already started on it since March 2024.
- Provision of women's services in Huddersfield was reasonable, but this was not the case in Dewsbury, where there was no dedicated reporting or space available to access specialised services. A revamp with a new SPO in June 2024 was already producing some improvements, with funds secured to enable dedicated building access in Dewsbury and funding for women to travel to the dedicated reporting provision in Huddersfield.
- There were effective links with IOM and effective liaison with the police, both in terms of information sharing and wider casework management.
- Overall, relationships with partner agencies and services were positive, with most, including Ingeus and CGL, IOM, and housing advisers regularly attending team meetings to help improve referrals, and each being co-located, at least for part of the week, in the two offices across Kirklees. Positive relationships with Youth Justice Services and the newly launched CFO activity hub ensured effective transitional arrangements and access to employment, training, and education (ETE) provision.
- Information sharing with the police was reasonable. Direct access to police data ensured that consistent information about domestic violence was available to practitioners and was usually of sufficient detail. This was not the case for safeguarding information; however, a similar model of access had been negotiated with children's services and was due to commence in October 2024.
- There were positive relationships with sentencers, with regular liaison meetings and information sharing about the activities of the service.

**Areas for improvement:**

- Despite over 1,400 referrals to CRSs in the previous 12 months, we did not see this reflected in our case inspections.
- In some cases, it appeared that referrals were not being undertaken either because there was little confidence in what was provided (particularly housing) or that practitioners wanted to undertake some intervention work themselves; however, this work was often ineffective.
- Some service providers expressed frustration that, even though their service was regularly co-located in offices to facilitate liaison, referrals often came from the same small number of practitioners; these were offered in only 15 of the 35 cases we reviewed where CRS provision was identified as necessary.
- At the time of the inspection, child safeguarding information, when requested, was inconsistent in both its reliability and detail, impacting significantly on the ability of practitioners to manage effectively the risk posed by people on probation.
- Mechanisms to resolve local shortfalls and frustrations with service provision were unclear. There was no local forum, and while practitioners could raise concerns in team meetings and with line managers, this model was of limited value.
- Provision of accredited programmes was limited, primarily due to staffing shortfalls in the regional team. Although toolkits were being used for people on probation with such a need, and a triage system was used to reduce the risk of interventions not being provided, delivery was dependent on PDU practitioners. The level of both oversight of this work and practitioner confidence in delivery was unclear.

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## Feedback from people on probation

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User Voice, working with HM Inspectorate of Probation, had contact with 48 people on probation as part of this inspection. This was made up of 36 face-to-face and nine online surveys. Three further in-depth interviews were undertaken but, while these contributions were included in the overall evaluation, the participants did not complete a survey. Ninety-one per cent of participants were male and four per cent female, with 38 per cent on a prison licence and 58 per cent on a community order; four per cent said that they were unsure what kind of order they were on.

- Everyone surveyed said that they had had an induction, although, of those who knew they had a sentence plan, only 69 per cent (29/42) said that they had been involved in its creation. Encouragingly, 98 per cent of respondents (44 out of 45) said that they knew what was expected of them while being supervised, with 78% (35/45) also saying that their probation practitioner had taken time to understand their personal needs during induction.
- Although 18 per cent of people on probation did not find appointments useful in helping them and their rehabilitation, 62 per cent did. One said:

*“It’s a chance to talk over issues and decisions that I may be considering. A way of getting feedback on what I am doing. Listening to advice and support.”*

- Although 18 out of 45 respondent said that they did not need access to services, of those who did need these, 20 out of 27 told us that probation staff had helped them access relevant support. However, in a small number of cases people on probation expressed their frustration at not being able to access the support they required. One commented:
- Most people felt that their engagement with the Probation Service was positive. In 80 per cent of cases (36/45), people on probation reported a positive relationship with their practitioner, 73 per cent (33/45) said that they were able to contact their practitioner when needed, and 71 per cent (32/45) said that they felt listened to. Overall, almost three-quarters (73 per cent) of those in our survey said that they felt well supported in helping them and their rehabilitation. One said:

*“Since I left prison finding work has been a difficult task. I have requested many times to speak to someone regarding assisting me in finding a job. However, probation seems to not provide this service time and time again. In the future I hope to see this change and allow more support to released prisoners into getting back into working life.”*

*“The support I am given is excellent. If I didn't have that support, I would not know how to help myself. I am grateful for the help; I don't know where I would be now without it.”*

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## Diversity and inclusion

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### Strengths:

- Each SPO had lead responsibility for an identified protected characteristic. Work related to this was incorporated into information sharing through the Kirklees management meeting and cascaded to staff.
- There was a strong emphasis on inclusion and wellbeing, with regular events to support staff. The PDU had a 'wellbeing in the workplace plan', with representatives from across all departments contributing to its construction.
- 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.
- The PDU delivered regular 'culture clubs', focused on increasing staff awareness of various issues and ensuring access to a range of resources.
- Provision for women was mixed across Huddersfield and Dewsbury. Huddersfield offered dedicated weekly reporting times and access to the TWP range of pathway provision. While this was not the same in Dewsbury, recent improvements were also resulting in an enhanced service.
- A PO was seconded to Kirklees Youth Justice Service to facilitate the transition from youth to adult services; this was supported further by an SPO, to manage the work at a strategic level.
- The ethnic background of staff in the Kirklees PDU reflected the profile of both the people on probation and the local community.

### Areas for improvement:

- The PDU worked to the regional equality and diversity strategy, but there was no specific strategy for the PDU. Key issues were included in the business plan, but a clearer focus was required that was specific to the PDU.
- Despite 30 per cent of the people on probation being from an ethnic minority background, there were no services presently available specifically to support this group.
- There was no work being undertaken to analyse disproportionality for any groups across the PDU, such as whether ethnic minority people on probation were more or less likely to be breached or recalled, or if women on probation were more likely than males to complete licences or orders.

## 2. Service delivery

### P 2.1. Assessment



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

Inadequate

Our rating<sup>4</sup> 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?	43%
Does assessment focus sufficiently on the factors linked to offending and desistance?	60%
Does assessment focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	<b>29%</b>

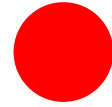
- It was encouraging that, in a reasonable majority of cases (74 per cent), the person on probation was involved meaningfully in their assessment and that their views were taken into account. However, in not enough cases were their personal circumstances or motivation to engage and comply analysed sufficiently. Disappointingly, in only a minority of cases (43 per cent) was the impact of the individual's protected characteristics analysed or considered sufficiently in relation to their ability to engage or comply with service delivery. Consequently, in fewer than half the cases we reviewed did the assessment focus sufficiently on engaging the person on probation.
- Generally, practitioners drew sufficiently on the information available to ensure that the assessment focused appropriately on offending and desistance. However, despite this, in too few cases was this information analysed sufficiently to be effective.
- Of greatest concern was work relating to the assessment of factors most linked to keeping people safe and public protection. Systems and processes to receive information from the police regarding domestic abuse were reasonably well established, but this was less so for obtaining child safeguarding information. In all cases where a request for police information was requested, sufficient information was received, although in eight cases the information received about child safeguarding was deemed insufficient. Overall, while 37 out of 42 cases we reviewed had sufficient information available regarding domestic abuse, this was the case in only 23 out of 40 relevant safeguarding cases.

<sup>4</sup> 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.](#)



- It was reassuring that the PDU had negotiated direct access (as was the case for domestic abuse checks) to child safeguarding databases from October 2024, and that staff undertaking this work would be co-located with the safeguarding team.
- However, obtaining information about domestic abuse or child safeguarding was only one part of the assessment of risk to keep people safe. Analysing the information to create an accurate assessment was also crucial, and in only 17 of 41 cases where risk was a relevant factor did the practitioner identify sufficiently and analyse clearly any risk of harm to others. In too many of the cases we reviewed, practitioners did not follow up when insufficient information about safeguarding was received, or did not include significant and relevant information to ensure that the assessment was accurate and sufficiently detailed to inform an effective plan.
- It was also often the case that additional information that was relevant to an effective assessment of risk of harm, including previous convictions, a previous period on licence, or a community order, was available from other sources or from other agencies engaged currently or in the past with the person on probation. However, in only around a third of assessments did practitioners draw sufficiently on available sources of information and involve other agencies where appropriate.

## P 2.2. Planning



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

Inadequate

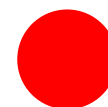
Our rating<sup>5</sup> for planning is based on the percentage of cases we inspected being judged satisfactory against three key questions and is driven by the lowest score:

Key question	Percentage 'Yes'
<b>Does planning focus sufficiently on engaging the person on probation?</b>	36%
<b>Does planning focus sufficiently on reducing reoffending and supporting desistance?</b>	60%
<b>Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?</b>	<b>33%</b>

- In the better cases we saw, the person on probation was engaged in the process of planning, their specific needs were taken into consideration, and there was a clear plan of not only what would be focused on, but also how and when. In too many cases, however, elements were missing. In a reasonable majority of cases (67 per cent), planning was set a level, pattern, and type of contact sufficient to engage the individual and to support the effectiveness of specific interventions, but in too few cases was the person on probation involved meaningfully in planning, or their views considered.
- Given what we found about the insufficient focus on protected characteristics in assessment, it was no surprise that in only 11 of 33 relevant cases did planning take sufficient account of these factors. Examples included practitioners not always taking account of a person's ethnicity or status as a foreign national.
- Planning generally reflected sufficient offending-related factors and prioritised those which were most crucial, but in several cases, plans to address desistance and reoffending did not focus on all relevant factors. While the range of needs of numerous individuals reflected the complexity of many of the cases held in the PDU, the lack of focus on what was often the most critical of factors undermined the effectiveness of many plans.
- Work relating to keeping other people safe let down a lot of planning. Plans relating to risk were most effective where they were clearly structured, focused on key risk factors, and invariably also involved effective liaison with other agencies, including children's services, IOM, CGL, and TWP. However, this was too infrequent, and we found that in only 17 out of 40 relevant cases did planning sufficiently address risk of harm factors and prioritise those that were most critical.

<sup>5</sup> 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 2.3. Implementation and delivery



Worse still, in only eight cases we reviewed, of 34 that were relevant, did we see planning that incorporated the work of other agencies involved in the case.

High-quality well-focused, personalised, and coordinated services are delivered, engaging the person on probation.	Inadequate
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Our rating<sup>6</sup> 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:

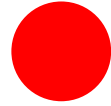
Key question	Percentage 'Yes'
<b>Is the sentence or post-custody period implemented effectively with a focus on engaging the person on probation?</b>	60%
<b>Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support desistance?</b>	<b>21%</b>
<b>Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?</b>	<b>• 21%</b>

- There were strong aspects to the work undertaken by practitioners to engage people on probation during the course of licences or orders. In a reasonable majority of cases, orders or licence periods started on time, and there was a sufficient focus on maintaining an effective relationship with the person on probation in 76 per cent of cases. It was also encouraging to note that practitioners were flexible in their approach to facilitate the completion of orders in 35 out of 42 cases.
- However, despite this, the level and nature of contact were sufficient to reduce reoffending and support desistance in only 22 out of 34 cases where non-compliance had not been a factor. Given the paucity of some elements of assessment and planning, it was not surprising that the focus of contact was not always clear or sufficiently focused on the necessary work. As an example, in all 42 cases we identified thinking and behaviour as an important factor linked to offending, yet in only 10 of these (24 per cent) did we assess that sufficient work had been delivered.
- Practitioners who were interviewed as part of our service delivery inspection felt that there were reasonably effective working relationships to support desistance in 25 of 32 relevant cases, and to manage the risk of harm in 30 of 34 relevant cases. However, this was at odds with our findings, and brings into question how well some practitioners understand effective liaison and coordination. We assessed that there was sufficient involvement or coordination of other agencies in the delivery of services to address desistance in only nine of 36 relevant cases. We also found that this lack of liaison and coordination with partners was apparent in relation to work to keep people

<sup>6</sup> 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.](#)

safe, and although the actual level and nature of contact were sufficient in 26 of 40 relevant cases, the involvement of other agencies in managing and minimising the risk of harm was sufficient in only four of the 29 relevant cases. In particular, concerns centred around safeguarding, and specifically child safeguarding. While there was effective multi-agency working, including information sharing, in respect of domestic abuse in 21 of 27 cases, this was the case in only five of 25 relevant safeguarding children cases.

## P 2.4. Reviewing



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

Inadequate

Our rating<sup>7</sup> 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'
<b>Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the compliance and engagement of the person on probation?</b>	45%
<b>Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting desistance?</b>	<b>19%</b>
<b>Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?</b>	26%

- We saw some examples where practitioners had reviewed the order or licence with the person on probation and liaised effectively with external partners also working with them. Where this happened, there was a clear opportunity to consider what was working, what was not, and what might be useful for the future, and to ensure that the person on probation was part of the process rather than having activity, which they may not be committed to, imposed on them.
- However, in far too many cases there was insufficient focus on either engaging or involving the person on probation in the process or liaising with external partners. In only 18 of the 42 cases we looked at was the person on probation involved meaningfully in a review of their own progress or engagement, and in only four of 30 relevant cases was reviewing informed by input from other agencies working with the person on probation.
- Reviewing should focus on keeping other people safe as a matter of priority, but, unfortunately, this work was little better. The person on probation was involved meaningfully in reviewing their risk of harm in only four of 32 relevant cases, and reviews of risk were informed by necessary input from other agencies in only 12 of 39 relevant cases.

<sup>7</sup> 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.

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## Outcomes

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### Strengths:

- There had been a slight improvement in the number of people on probation who were in settled accommodation between the start of their order or licence period and the time of our inspection, from 26 to 27. The number of those classified as homeless had also reduced during the same period, from four to one.
- There had been a slight improvement in the ETE status of people on probation during this period. At the start of the order or licence period, 19 people were unemployed and 14 were unavailable for work, and at the time of our inspection this had improved to 15 and 17, respectively.

### Areas for improvement:

- Disappointingly, in 36 out of the 42 cases (85 per cent) we inspected, there had been insufficient improvements in those factors most closely linked to offending, both in developing strengths and addressing needs. This was virtually the same in relation to improvements to the individual factors we identified as related to risk of harm (37 out of 42; 88 per cent).

## Progress on previous recommendations

Previous recommendation	Action taken and impact	Categorisation	Improvement still required?
<i>From previous Probation Service inspection of Kirklees PDU (March 2023)</i>	<i>Briefly describe action taken and impact</i>	<i>Sufficient progress / Some progress / No progress</i>	<i>Yes / no If yes, consider repeating the recommendation</i>
Complete robust risk assessments that give full consideration of information regarding domestic abuse and safeguarding in all cases	Overall, across our domain two standards, case cohort work was rated as inadequate. This concern focused on issues relating to the management of risk. In only 29 per cent of assessments did we determine that there was a sufficient focus on risk. In particular, this concern focused on a lack of work relating to safeguarding.	No progress	Yes
Undertake all initial assessments and sentence planning as a priority	Although we remained concerned about the quality of some initial assessments and sentence plans, at the time of the inspection there was no backlog in the number completed.	Some progress	Yes
Improve the quality of risk assessment, planning, and reviewing	Risk assessment, planning, and reviewing was still inadequate, with insufficient focus on risk management and liaison with other agencies and services.	No progress	Yes
Ensure information relating to child safeguarding is routinely obtained and used to support effective risk management	In only 17 out of 40 relevant cases we reviewed was sufficient information relating to child safeguarding obtained at the beginning of orders or licences. Furthermore, in only five of 25 relevant safeguarding cases did we assess that there was sufficient liaison with children's services to support the delivery of work.	No progress	Yes

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	There remained a positive culture across the PDU, with staff feeling positive about the service and suitably supported. This was reflected in the recent tackling unacceptable behaviours unit report, staff surveys, and our focus groups.	Sufficient progress	No
Maintain the good relationships between practitioners and people on probation	In our User Voice survey, 80 per cent (36/45) of participants stated that they had a good relationship with their probation practitioner.	Sufficient progress	No
Use data and performance information to help practitioners prioritise the work they undertake.	Data and performance information were used by managers and leaders to determine priorities and support practitioners in prioritising their work. This had focused primarily on performance targets, and far more was necessary to ensure that this was reflected in the quality of practice.	Some progress	Yes



## Annexe one – Web links

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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://justiceinspectorates.gov.uk)