



An inspection of

South West South Central

National Probation Service

HM Inspectorate of Probation

NOVEMBER 2018

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Foreword

This is the first report in our new programme of inspections of the National Probation Service (NPS) divisions. We found effective leadership in the South West South Central division, with effort appropriately focused on performance and quality. Robust systems are in place to monitor and improve performance where necessary. A shortage of probation staff was having an impact on the division. The number of probation staff has fallen short of the target since 2015; at the same time the NPS workload has increased. The division has a clear delivery plan to address staff shortfalls, but this had not yet had the necessary impact and, as a result, caseloads in some parts of the division remained high.

Establishing and maintaining a professional relationship with those who are supervised is at the heart of all probation work. The division has recently focused on the quality of assessments, and we found outstanding results in this aspect of its work. The planning of supervision was good, and focused on reducing reoffending and keeping others safe, although contingency plans, spelling out how to respond to any heightened risk of harm to others, should have been more robust. The requirements of the sentence started promptly, levels of contact with those under probation supervision were appropriate, and enforcement action was taken when necessary. The division provided sufficient information to the court to assist sentencing. The division also provided a good service to victims who had opted into the victim contact scheme.

There were some shortcomings in probation practice. In some cases, the delivery of supervision did not focus enough on addressing factors related to offending, and not enough attention was paid to keeping progress under review. Some interventions were working well but the division was not making full use of all services provided by the Community Rehabilitation Companies.

Practitioners are finding the NPS's web-based system for accessing national policies and guidance – known as Excellence and Quality in Process (EQuIP) – increasingly beneficial. Information technology provided to staff is improving. We found, however, that the centrally-managed facilities management contract for maintenance, repairs and cleaning in the NPS was not working well; the process for escalating matters was not effective, and local managers are not empowered to resolve things. We were concerned that outstanding issues compromised public protection and the safety and wellbeing of staff.

This division is performing to a good standard overall. I hope that our findings and recommendations enable it to do better still, although we see that, in some matters, improvement is dependent on centrally driven policies and support.



Dame Glenys Stacey
Chief Inspector of Probation

Overall findings

Overall, the NPS South West South Central division is rated as: **Good**. This rating has been determined by inspecting this provider in three areas of its work, referred to as 'domains'. The findings and subsequent ratings in those three domains are described here:



Our key findings about the organisation were as follows:

- **The leadership team focused on delivering a high-quality service**

The national operating model allows staff to personalise work with those under supervision. The division has a clear strategy for delivering a high-quality service. Progress is monitored and the strategy is regularly reviewed. Staff have a clear understanding of the operational model. The senior leadership team engages effectively with stakeholders in their locality. The risks to service delivery are well understood, and plans are in place to mitigate these risks.
- **Workloads for some staff are too high, which impacts on their ability to deliver a high-quality service**

The division has many vacancies in the local delivery units closest to London. Addressing staff shortages has been a priority for managers in the division. They have used the national guidance on managing demand and have taken multiple approaches to addressing the deficiency. Inspectors judged that workloads in some parts of the division were too high to support a high-quality service for all those being supervised. Access to learning and development and the quality of this provision could be improved. While staff said that their supervision was effective, they also reported that the frequency of supervision was inconsistent.
- **There are gaps in the range of services available to support desistance, and the division does not make full use of services available through the Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs)**

The volume and range of services do not meet the needs of all service users and the division is not making full use of the services provided by the CRCs. Nevertheless, some interventions were working well, as were services to courts and victims. Pre-sentence reports assist the court's decision-making. Staff provide relevant and timely information to the victims of a serious offence, actively involving them in key decisions about the offender.
- **Management information is comprehensive. The management of facilities requires an urgent review**

Managers have a good understanding of performance within the division. Comprehensive arrangements are in place to analyse and benchmark performance. Policies and guidance are accessible to all staff, but staff told us that at times they felt saturated with information and unable to digest it all. Information technology provision is improving and enables staff to deliver and record their work in a timely way.

The division had not been provided with the relevant information, so did not have a clear view on whether its buildings were accessible to staff and service users. The centrally-managed facilities management contract is not working well. Business-critical issues are not dealt with in a timely way. The process for escalating concerns is unclear and ineffective, which could lead to serious health and safety issues for staff. Ultimately, inspectors judged that the lack of an effective and prompt response to concerns about maintenance and repairs of buildings was a serious failing.



Our key findings about case supervision were as follows:

- **Practitioners understood and analysed well the reasons why those they supervised had offended.**

Assessments were a strength of the division's work. Practitioners understood and analysed the reasons why those they supervised had offended. Individuals were engaged with their assessments. Practitioners obtained and used information from other organisations, where relevant. They accurately recorded specific concerns about actual and potential victims.

- **Planning was sufficiently focused on reducing reoffending, but contingency planning to keep others safe should be more robust**

Practitioners used the induction process to involve the individual in planning their supervision. The plans were sufficiently focused on reducing reoffending, as well as being responsive and personalised. The plans needed to record consistently and clearly how diversity needs were addressed. There was sufficient focus on keeping others safe, but contingency plans, designed to specify the response to any increased risk of harm to others, needed to be more robust.

- **Requirements of the order started promptly, but factors related to offending were not consistently addressed**

The requirements of the sentence started promptly. Practitioners were responsive to individuals' changing circumstances and would adapt their approach as necessary. There were good levels of contact with those in the community and in custody. Interventions, however, did not focus sufficiently on addressing factors related to offending. Enforcement decisions were taken appropriately but professional judgements were not always recorded well. The division worked well with other agencies to keep people safe.

- **Progress was not consistently kept under review**

We expect assessments and plans to be kept up to date. We found too many cases where individuals were not involved in reviewing their progress. Some reviews were not completed following a change of circumstances. When reviews were completed, they focused sufficiently on supporting desistance. Practitioners should have made more use of information from other agencies to inform the review, especially in relation to keeping others safe.



Our key findings about other core activities specific to this organisation were as follows:

- **Court reports and case allocation**

The division has effective arrangements in place for preparing court reports and allocating cases. The National Courts Strategy Group, attended by a senior lead for courts on behalf of the division, issues relevant instructions and guidance in relation to court processes. The senior lead coordinates meetings with the court senior probation officers (SPOs) in the division and leads on arrangements for liaison with sentencers. Reports were of a good standard. Child safeguarding information was not always requested, nor were risk of serious harm assessments completed in all relevant cases. These are important to ensure that allocation is well-informed and accurate.

- **Statutory victim work**

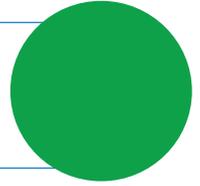
The division has three dedicated victims' units. These were formed recently and are managed by a senior lead and a deputy. Victim liaison teams in the division are managing 5,600 active cases. The new case management system works well. Those people who had opted into the scheme received regular updates about individuals who had been sentenced, made representations about release arrangements and obtained information about licence conditions. The victim liaison officers work well with practitioners in the community and are appropriately involved in Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA). The procedure for following up contact with a victim if there was no response to the initial letter was not clear or consistent.

Service: South West South Central National Probation Service

Fieldwork started: July 2018

Overall rating

Good



1. Organisational delivery

1.1	Leadership	Good	
1.2	Staff	Requires improvement	
1.3	Services	Requires improvement	
1.4	Information and facilities	Requires improvement	

2. Case supervision

2.1	Assessment	Outstanding	
2.2	Planning	Good	
2.3	Implementation and delivery	Requires improvement	
2.4	Reviewing	Requires improvement	

3. NPS-specific

3.1 ²	Court reports and case allocation	Good	
3.2	Statutory victim work	Good	

1 CRC aspects of domain three work are listed in HMI Probation's standards as 4.1 and 4.2. Those for the NPS are listed as 3.1 and 3.2.

Recommendations

As a result of our inspection findings we have made 10 recommendations that we believe, if implemented, will have a positive impact on the quality of probation services in South West South Central.

The NPS delivering services in South West South Central should:

1. review and actively manage workloads to ensure an equitable and efficient distribution of work
2. ensure that appropriate and effective use is made of the services provided by the Community Rehabilitation Companies
3. improve the processes for obtaining relevant information from children's services and domestic abuse units in all relevant cases
4. put in place robust contingency plans to address staff shortfalls, specifically in approved premises
5. undertake the required risk of harm assessments in all applicable cases
6. keep the progress of supervision under review, involving the service user wherever possible
7. ensure that risk management plans include effective contingency plans to address heightened risk of harm to others.

Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service should:

8. work to resolve the difficulties in recruiting sufficient probation staff in the South West South Central division.

The Ministry of Justice should:

9. review the process for prioritising and escalating concerns, set out in the facilities management contract
10. audit the division's facilities to make sure that they are accessible, safe and secure for staff and for individuals subject to supervision.

Background

An explanation of probation services

Over 260,000 adults are supervised by probation services annually.² Probation services supervise individuals serving community orders, provide offenders with resettlement services while they are in prison (in anticipation of their release) and supervise, for a minimum of 12 months, all individuals released from prison.³

To protect the public, probation staff assess and manage the risks that offenders pose to the community. They help to rehabilitate these individuals by dealing with problems such as drug and alcohol misuse and lack of employment or housing, to reduce the prospect of reoffending. They monitor whether individuals are complying with court requirements, to make sure they abide by their sentence. If offenders fail to comply, probation staff generally report them to court or request recall to prison.

These services are currently provided by a publicly owned National Probation Service (NPS) and 21 privately owned Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) that provide services under contract. Government intends to change the arrangements for delivering probation services, and, at the time of writing, is consulting on some aspects of the future arrangements.

The NPS advises courts on sentencing all offenders, and manages those who present a high or very high risk of serious harm (RoSH) or who are managed under Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements. CRCs supervise most other offenders who present a low or medium risk of harm.

The South West South Central NPS division

The NPS comprises seven divisions: six in England and one in Wales. Services are provided in-house, apart from those commissioned from CRCs. As a national organisation, the NPS has standardised processes and guidance on policies and practice. These documents are available to all staff through an online platform called EQuIP. Use of this system is monitored and staff are kept informed of updates.

The South West South Central division covers a significant part of the country. The division is managed through ten local delivery units: Oxford and Buckinghamshire; Berkshire; Hampshire; Southampton; Portsmouth & Isle of Wight; Bristol & South Gloucestershire; Gloucestershire & Wiltshire; Somerset, Devon and Torbay; Plymouth, Cornwall & Isles of Scilly; and Dorset. There are an additional three business units: Public Protection, Approved Premises and Performance and Quality. The average proven reoffending rate for all adults across the division at the time of the inspection was 34 per cent. The caseload was 12,877, which is 12 per cent of the national caseload. Of these cases, 89 per cent are eligible for MAPPA, which is higher

² Offender Management Caseload Statistics as at December 2017, Ministry of Justice.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly>

³ All those sentenced, for offences committed after the implementation of the *Offender Rehabilitation Act 2014*, to more than one day and less than 24 months in custody, are supervised in the community for 12 months post-release. Others serving longer custodial sentences may have longer total periods of supervision on licence.

than the national average of 73 per cent. The overall volume of NPS work has risen, but staffing levels have not risen at the same pace.

The role of HM Inspectorate of Probation

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation is the independent inspector of youth offending and probation services in England and Wales. We provide assurance on the effectiveness of work with adults and children who have offended to implement orders of the court, reduce reoffending, protect the public and safeguard the vulnerable. 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.

HM Inspectorate of Probation standards

The standards against which we inspect are based on established models and frameworks, which are grounded in evidence, learning and experience. These standards are designed to drive improvements in the quality of work with people who have offended.⁴

⁴ HM Inspectorate's standards can be found here:
<https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/about-our-work/our-standards-and-ratings/>

Key facts

105,922

The total number of individuals subject to probation supervision by the NPS across England and Wales⁵

12,877

The number of individuals supervised by the South West South Central division of the NPS⁵

11,478

The number of MAPPA-eligible individuals managed by the South West South Central division of the NPS⁶

34.4%

The proportion of South West South Central NPS service users with a proven reoffence⁷

74%

The proportion of individuals who were recorded as having successfully completed their community orders or suspended sentence orders with the NPS. The performance figure for all England and Wales was 75%, against a target of 75%⁸

100%

The proportion of pre-sentence reports completed by the NPS within the timescales set by the court. The performance figure for all England and Wales was 100%, against a target of 95%⁹

100%

The proportion of victims surveyed where feedback was positive about the service they received from the NPS. The performance figure for all England and Wales was 96%, against a target of 90%¹⁰

⁵ Offender management caseload statistics at 31 December 2017, Ministry of Justice.

⁶ Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) Annual Report 2016-2017, October 2017, Ministry of Justice.

⁷ Proven reoffending, April to June 2016 cohort, Ministry of Justice.

⁸ NPS Service Level 18, Community Performance Quarterly Statistics, October 2016-December 2017 Q3, Ministry of Justice.

⁹ NPS Service Level 1, Community Performance Quarterly Statistics, October 2016-December 2017.

¹⁰ NPS Service Level 25, Community Performance Quarterly Statistics, October 2016-December 2017.

1. Organisational delivery



The national operating model, as delivered locally, allows staff to personalise work with those subject to supervision. The senior leadership team has a clear strategy for delivering a high-quality service, and this is well understood by staff.

Addressing staff shortages is a priority for the division. Local leaders have deployed national and local strategies to manage demand but staff shortages remain. Consequently, workloads in some parts of the division are still too high to support a high-quality service for all.

The volume and range of services do not meet the needs of all those supervised. The division is not making full use of the services provided by the Community Rehabilitation Companies. Services provided to the courts and to victims of serious offences are working well.

There is a good understanding of performance across the division. Policies and guidance are in place and accessible to staff. Information technology is improving. An audit of the facilities is required to ensure that they are accessible, safe and secure for staff and individuals being supervised. The facilities management contract requires an urgent review.

Strengths:

- The management structure, process and delivery plans are clear.
- Staff at all grades understand the delivery model.
- All staff understand how their performance contributes to the division's overall performance.
- Performance measures are in place to drive improvement.

Areas for improvement:

- As a result of staff shortages, workloads are too high in some areas of the division.
- Services provided by the Community Rehabilitation Companies are not fully used.
- The frequency of individual line management meetings with staff is inconsistent.
- Managers' oversight of the professional judgements made by practitioners was not consistently recorded on the case management system.
- The quality of induction for new staff and those who are changing roles is mixed and insufficiently focused on their specific responsibilities.
- The centrally-managed facilities management contract is not working well.
- Planning to cover staff shortages in approved premises was not effective.

Organisations that are well led and well managed are more likely to achieve their aims. We inspect against four standards.

1.1. Leadership	Good
The leadership of the organisation supports and promotes the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all service users.	

Is there a clear vision and strategy to deliver a high-quality service for all service users?

The strategic aims for the NPS are outlined in HMPPS’s Annual Business Plan and implemented through a national operating model. Divisions of the NPS produce a local business plan outlining how the national model will be delivered.

The business plan for South West South Central incorporates all national priorities, commissioning intentions and local priorities. The management structure, process and delivery plans are clear and there is a process for tracking and reviewing progress against the plan.

Each local delivery unit (LDU) is led by a senior manager who is responsible for delivery and for maintaining the strategic partnerships in their locality. In addition, heads of LDUs hold the divisional strategic lead for an operational business area such as women, courts, or safeguarding. A further three senior managers are responsible for strategic wide work. Senior leaders have demonstrated a commitment to improvement. Almost two-thirds of staff interviewed stated that the division prioritised the quality of work.

Inspectors found that staff at all grades had a very good understanding of the delivery model, but were not aware of the vision highlighted in the business plan:

“we aspire to be recognised as the world’s leading provider of probation services.”

Managers recognised that the division needed to improve engagement with staff, in order to meet the objectives in the business plan. A comprehensive staff engagement strategy is in place and managers have responded to the most recent staff survey by issuing a ‘you said, we did’ summary in relation to issues raised. The results of the November 2017 service user survey, which were generally positive, had been analysed by the senior leadership team. Areas for improvement were identified and acted upon.

The strategy for engaging with external stakeholders was comprehensive. Each senior divisional lead is required to evaluate the engagement strategy and ensure that stakeholders within their locality engage with the division’s work.

We were satisfied that the division was represented on relevant strategic groups, including: those involving trade unions, prisons, the Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs), Community Safety Partnerships, and Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs).

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

Leaders understand the risks to the delivery of a high-quality service. The risk register adequately identifies the risks facing the division, and mitigations and controls are in place. Business continuity documents are held in each business unit.

Does the current operating model support effective service delivery, meeting the needs of all service users?

The NPS’s operating model describes how services will be delivered through the courts, community supervision, custody, services to victims, youth offending services, interventions with people who have committed sexual offences, administrative services and management structures. Probation Instructions (PIs) define how the operational process should be followed. Business plans and PIs are accessible to all staff on EQuIP, the NPS’s web-based system.

The operating model supports a personalised approach with those subject to supervision and meaningful and consistent contact. Each offender has an identified practitioner who is responsible for individualised casework. A wide range of risk factors are taken into account before assignment. Inspectors found that the division was delivering the operating model as intended but with high staff vacancies in some areas of the division, which had a negative impact on practitioners’ ability to deliver high-quality work with all individuals.

1.2 Staff	Requires Improvement
Staff within the organisation are empowered to deliver a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all service users.	

Do staffing and workload levels support the delivery of a high-quality service for all service users?

Addressing staff shortages has been a priority for the division. The number of staff in post has fallen short of the target since 2015; at the same time, the NPS caseload has increased. Recruitment is coordinated through national campaigns. This is a protracted process, over which the division has limited influence. There are many vacancies in the division, particularly for probation officers (POs) in the LDUs closest to London. There are also vacancies for residential workers in approved premises.

The business unit heads, supported by the human resources business partner, regularly produce planning forecasts for every grade of staff, prioritising recruitment to those areas under the most pressure. The workforce planning committee, chaired by the divisional director, meets monthly. It has used the national guidance on managing demand, and has taken multiple approaches to addressing the shortage. Some custody cases in those LDUs with a high workload are managed in other parts of the division. Some staff are paid overtime to complete specific pieces of work. This has the potential to increase staff burnout, over time. Some LDUs have nationally defined ‘red site’ status. This means they can offer a higher salary to attract new recruits. Despite their efforts, the division has not successfully recruited the numbers of qualified POs needed and, as a result, too many POs have unacceptably high

workloads. The excessive workloads do not support high-quality work with individuals. This situation may risk the morale and well-being of staff, potentially contributing to high levels of sickness.

According to the division's workload management tool, which is used to track team and LDU caseloads, 37 per cent of staff at PO grade are working at over 120 per cent capacity, with some working at above 160 per cent. Only half of the responsible officers we interviewed said that their workload was manageable. This was higher than the responses in the staff survey, where 45 per cent of staff responded positively to the statement 'I have an acceptable workload'.

Staff expressed frustration that the tool's design does not reflect some duties, such as overseeing the supervision of those placed in approved premises in a different locality, and working jointly with POs in training (PQiPs). They perceive that they do more work than they are credited for. Several staff from other grades, including victim liaison officers and administrative staff, whose workload is not captured in the same way, expressed a similar view in our meetings. Both SPOs and senior managers commented that the breadth of their job and the number of staff for whom they are responsible are unmanageable.

The division has recruited new probation services officers (PSOs) to meet the PSO target staffing levels in line with the Effectiveness, Efficiency and Excellence (E3) operating model requirements. The division has also taken on a high number of PQiPs, who require training and support. At the time of the inspection there were 120 in the division; 28 will qualify in September 2018, 15 by November 2018, 18 by April 2019 and 59 by March 2020. Planning forecasts have taken into account the plans to move some POs into prisons to support the delivery of offender management in custody (OMiC).

Residential workers for approved premises work day, night and weekend shifts. Two staff are required on duty during the night. The second member of staff, provided through the national facilities contract, undertakes security and monitoring work. Approved premises managers stated that they are frequently given very short notice that staff are not available to complete the shift, which requires them to make alternative arrangements urgently. We were concerned to find that, on one occasion, a probation member of staff was left in sole charge of the approved premises during the night. We found it unacceptable that there were no adequate contingency arrangements.

Do the skills and profile of staff support the delivery of a high-quality service for all service users?

The number of equality and diversity monitoring forms completed by staff in 2017 was too low (less than 60 per cent) to be analysed by the division. Managers were aware that the staff profile in some parts of the division was not a reflection of those supervised. The senior leadership team had implemented a successful strategy to increase the rate of completion of diversity monitoring forms and during the inspection we were informed that these had now been completed by over 60 per cent of staff.

All grades of staff have defined roles set out in the operating model. Cases are assigned to a practitioner using the nationally defined case allocation criteria. The allocation process is robustly monitored by the performance team and adjusted when necessary. The majority of practitioners stated that they were allocated cases for which they have had appropriate training and experience.

The Human Resources Directorate in HMPPS is responsible for learning and development. The divisional training manager, deputy divisional training manager, and practice assessors deliver the qualifications framework for case administrators, POs and PSOs. The division has a training plan for all grades of staff, but it is not yet fully individualised as far as skills improvement is concerned.

The learning and development packages developed and delivered by HMPPS do not always meet the needs of the division. Furthermore, the training required is not always available or held at a suitable location. On occasions, training has been cancelled at short notice. Several new administrative staff commented that they had received essential training in case management (nDelius and OASys) after they had completed assessments and managed cases, rather than before.

A training sub-group, chaired by the deputy divisional training manager, was set up in April to coordinate work to meet the division's training needs. The sub-group manages the PSO learning and development timetable, monitors enrolments to reduce the risk of cancellations, monitors attendance records and reports to managers quarterly. The sub-group plans to undertake a training needs analysis, support the evaluation of training, and actively promote learning and development activities across the division.

The quality and development officers (QDOs) provide welcome support for learning. Each LDU is assigned a QDO. Their work is managed by the performance and quality team. They work with practitioners individually and in groups to focus on promoting high-quality work. Staff can self-refer or be referred by their manager. Additionally, the sexual offending interventions team supports practitioners with case management.

Staff told us that the positive culture of learning in the division is affected by pressure of workloads. They reported that most training is now e-learning rather than classroom-based training, which means there is less opportunity to absorb and apply learning. Of the staff we interviewed, 64 per cent stated that the organisation provides them with sufficient access to in-service training. This was higher than the 43 per cent positive response to the national staff survey question about timely access to appropriate learning and development opportunities.

All the staff we interviewed received induction when they joined the division, but some commented that the programme varied in quality. They said that it focused mainly on essential health and safety and induction into the office. Staff said that they would welcome an additional role-specific induction. They appreciated the opportunity to shadow more experienced staff. Peer support was common among all grades of staff.

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

Three-quarters of staff interviewed stated that they received supervision that improved the quality of their work and helped them to sustain it. The NPS line management framework sets out requirements for supervision of staff and management oversight. The division has introduced some elements of it in advance of full implementation. We were informed that the process will be fully implemented by the end of March 2019. Regularity of line management supervision meetings varied widely, from twice a year to once a month. We noted that the frequency differed significantly for some grades of staff, such as administrative staff, middle managers and senior managers.

We were assured that managers and practitioners regularly had informal conversations about professional judgment, but management oversight of cases was not consistently recorded in contact logs. There was an effective appraisal system in place, capability issues were identified and there was an established process for addressing poor performance.

Do managers pay sufficient attention to staff engagement?

Throughout the organisation we found hard-working staff who, through personal pride and professionalism, were committed and motivated to deliver high-quality work. Staff did feel that they were listened to, but they said they would like more acknowledgement and reward for the work that they do. The division has a reward and recognition committee, which includes a representative from each LDU. It is managed by the head of performance and quality, and chaired by the deputy director. We saw regular nominations for exceptional practice, which was also highlighted in staff bulletins. There have been recent nominations and winners for Butler Trust and Probation Awards.

In October 2017 HMPPS launched its well-being strategy; the division followed in March 2018. Business units identified local champions and developed local action plans to promote a healthy culture. They shared best practice throughout the division. We were informed that some business units held wellbeing days to promote a range of interventions.

Of the staff we interviewed, 54 per cent felt that sufficient attention was paid to safety and well-being. Several staff told us that their line managers paid specific attention to monitoring stress levels. Our figure was lower than the 64 per cent reported in the staff survey. Some administrative staff told us that there was no acknowledgment of the distressing material that they read.

Support for staff is also provided through a free and confidential employee assistance programme available to staff 24 hours a day. Business units can access centrally funded support for their teams from the well-being team. Staff reported that in just under three-quarters of cases, where necessary, reasonable adjustments were made to their working arrangements. It is commendable that there has been a sharp decline in days lost to sickness from December 2017 to April 2018.

1.3. Services	Requires Improvement
A comprehensive range of high-quality services is in place, supporting a tailored and responsive service for all service users.	

Is there a sufficiently comprehensive and up-to-date analysis of the profile of service users, to ensure that the division can deliver well-targeted services?

The division provided information to inform the commissioning process based on offender profile and by considering data relating to previous spending, the availability of alternative free services, analysis of OASys data on service users’ needs, feedback from LDUs and the anticipated impact of the Effective Proposal Framework. The information provided a basis on which to approach the CRCs to see what they could

offer and what the division was prepared to purchase. Some services identified were not available from the CRCs, and on some occasions the division was not prepared to accept the CRCs' offer.

Does the division provide the volume, range and quality of services to meet the needs of the service users?

The volume, range and quality of services are variable across the division, with less provision in some rural areas. Some services come from the rate card and some are free services. CRC services were not always available to individuals who posed a high risk of harm to others. Managers liaise with health services on an ongoing basis to develop and identify gaps in relation to offender health across the division.

Accommodation services are limited. There is a national accommodation strategy. One of its objectives is to establish a national approach to engaging with local authorities. Divisions are responsible for developing good local relationships to ensure that the accommodation needs of offenders are given appropriate priority. Each LDU has an accommodation lead. The division had accessed ring-fenced funding in order to commission accommodation services. In over three-quarters of the cases we inspected, staff reported that they had access to the required range of services.

Women represent four per cent of the division's caseload. All women are offered the opportunity to be supervised by a female practitioner. A directory of services for women is accessible to all staff. A senior lead and women's champions are identified to work with LDUs on providing services for women. The division acknowledges that there are not enough services for women. The current action plan is under review. It will focus on the content of the Ministry of Justice's Female Offender Strategy, which was published in June 2018.

The division has trained PSOs to deliver group supervision to offenders. In some LDUs, practitioners deliver ten group work sessions focusing on practical issues, citizenship, fostering positive identity and an individual's responsibilities while subject to supervision. PSOs will also provide case management support, which will include coordinating access to rate card services, such as accommodation locally. This will help POs to manage their caseloads, relieving them of some of their workload, while the case remains allocated to the PO. The response to this new process has been mixed. Some practitioners feel it may disrupt existing relationships with individuals.

One-quarter of the service users managed by the division have committed sexual offences. The South West South Central Divisional Sex Offender Unit (DSOU) is responsible for delivering sexual offending programmes across the division. The primary accredited programme delivered was Horizon, a nationally accredited group work programme designed for medium-risk male sexual offenders. The division was the first to pilot the programme. In 2017/2018, 53 group sessions were delivered to 409 men in 14 locations.

The DSOU team is exploring the viability of introducing the Becoming New Me+ programme for men with intellectual disabilities who have committed sexual offences. Maps for Change is delivered on a one-to-one basis. This is a toolkit for working with men who have committed sexual offences who are assessed as posing a low risk of reoffending and for whom an accredited programme is unsuitable. The Offender Personality Disorder Project, a national programme, is delivered locally and is working well.

Are relationships with providers and other agencies established, maintained, and used effectively to deliver high-quality services to service users?

The division works with four different CRCs across the division. The service directories are on EQuIP and also embedded into the Effective Proposal Framework. The division has compiled a comprehensive directory of free services and has the ability to track which services have been used. Some service users refer themselves to these services and some are referred by probation staff.

HMI Probation's April 2018 thematic report *Probation Supply Chains* found that staff in many areas of the NPS were not making full use of the rate card provision. We found this to be the case in the South West South Central division. Some staff told us that they were reluctant to use the CRCs' services, as they were concerned about the quality and availability. Many sought alternative provision in the community to meet the identified needs of people. We were not assured that there were arrangements in place to monitor the quality of all of the services accessed in this way.

The fact that the division was not consistently collecting data from the CRCs on the effectiveness of the services, attrition rates or number of sessions attended may have contributed to the low use of the available provision. For example, a six-session programme on managing aggression had been delivered with no feedback as to the effectiveness of the programme.

Two recent middle managers' learning and development days have promoted the use of services available through the rate card, and as part of the review of MAPPA level 1 cases, practitioners are expected to consider services to meet the needs of individuals.

There were examples of collaborative working between the NPS and CRCs, who are co-located. The CRC single point of contact responsible for the rate card services and NPS managers work well together.

Throughout the division, managers were liaising with the CRCs through formal Service Integration Groups – meetings to review rate card submission, the volume of services to be purchased and issues concerning CRCs' provision. Regular meetings are held to discuss commissioning intentions and review estimates for purchasing services in the future. We were confident that the division was actively encouraging practitioners to use the services provided by the CRCs.

The division works well with other agencies to keep people safe. As a constituent part of the responsible authority, senior managers are part of the seven MAPPA Strategic Management Boards in the division, and there is appropriate engagement with MAPPA and MOSOVO police. The division also works with the police in relation to serious and organised crime. Counter-terrorism POs, loaned to the joint extremism unit, lead on all relevant terrorist act case management within the division.

The SPO of the serious organised crime unit is in the process of developing an effective delivery plan for those offenders involved in serious group offending, modern slavery and the use of children and young people to traffic drugs. POs attend Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) as part of a coordinated response to domestic abuse, incorporating representatives from community and voluntary agencies working with victims/survivors, children and the alleged perpetrator.

Relationships with child safeguarding boards throughout the division vary. Each LDU has a child safeguarding lead but responses to requests for information from

children’s services were inconsistent. In some cases, the response was timely; in others it was not. The division monitors child safeguarding referrals and registrations and the senior lead with responsibility for child safeguarding is considering ways of improving the consistency of response from other agencies.

Services to court

We conducted a survey of sentencers and held a meeting with a small group of magistrates. The majority were content with the service they received from the division's court staff, who were described as:

“dedicated, hardworking, informative and helpful”.

Most respondents felt that pre-entence Reports provided them with sufficient information to assist sentencing, although they would like to know more about the services available to support sentencing options. The division is developing an interventions guide for sentencers.

Sentencers would also like more liaison with the NPS outside the court setting and feedback on how effective interventions have been with individuals who have been sentenced. The senior leadership team had a strategy for updating each LDU head on liaison arrangements. It was a mixed picture: some sentencers wished to have frequent liaison meetings, while others did not.

Services to victims

In the cases we sampled, victim contact services were working well. A feedback survey is sent to victims following an initial visit. These are completed anonymously and received by the divisional performance and quality team. Information is extracted and analysed centrally. The findings on overall satisfaction of the service provided is then reported back to the division. The division’s victim service received a 100 per cent overall satisfaction rating in its survey. We were informed, however, that the teams within the division receive little detailed feedback from the national surveys, which they find disappointing.

1.4. Information and facilities	Requires Improvement
Timely and relevant information is available and appropriate facilities are in place to support a high-quality, personalised and responsive approach for all service users.	

Are the necessary policies and guidance in place to enable staff to deliver a quality service, meeting the needs of all service users?

Policies to support the delivery of high-quality services are available on EQuIP, which includes the facility to alert staff to new policies. The level of use of EQuIP is monitored. Some staff interviewed said they were initially reluctant to use EQuIP, but found it to be very useful. They said that it provides assurance that they are following the most up-to-date procedure. Policies are typically in the form of Probation Instructions and are reviewed nationally.

There is no senior operational lead responsible for communication across the division. Each business unit head can decide on the best method of communication

and tailor it to their unit. In addition to the weekly divisional newsletter, and monthly divisional director telephone conferences, the division also has a section on the NPS intranet and uses meetings and line management briefings to disseminate information.

The Effective Practice Division in the NPS has recently introduced '7 minute' briefings, and the performance team has produced a new quarterly *Quality Times* newsletter. These provide information and useful guidance for practitioners. The second edition of the newsletter, published in July 2018, explained the subtle but significant difference between performance and quality. Staff told us that they have all the information they need but feel saturated, with little time to digest it.

Do the premises and offices enable staff to deliver a quality service, meeting the needs of all service users?

The division operates from 41 offender contact centres, 18 approved premises, 41 courts and 18 prisons. The division's estates board oversees the property portfolio in terms of key risks and priorities. We were not assured that all of the premises and offices were sufficiently accessible to staff and service users across the division. Auditing of premises, which is the responsibility of the MoJ's Estates Directorate, has been inconsistent since the introduction of *Transforming Rehabilitation*. Managers in the division want to ensure that service users' needs are considered more when making decisions about the estate, but the NPS relies on the MoJ's Estates Directorate for this.

New contracts for facilities management began in January 2018. Services such as maintenance, security, cleaning and the helpdesk are contracted out by the MoJ. Local offices hold the relevant information for managing property and reporting faults. We found that the contract is not working well and the six-stage escalation process is not effective. At the time of the inspection, more than 500 outstanding work orders had been escalated and remained unresolved in the division.

Issues regarding approved premises, security and repairs to buildings are a cause for concern. There is a process in place for managers to raise issues with the Estates Directorate. The response to attempts by the division to raise issues under the facilities management contract has been inadequate. We heard of examples where the security and safety of approved premises had not been given appropriate priority, despite attempts to escalate the issues raised.

The inspection team was impressed by the resilience of the managers in the division and their determination to do a good job in a challenging environment. It was clear, however, that their ability to resolve practical matters that have a bearing on public protection and on the health and safety of staff and residents, and on their general well-being was severely constrained by the difficulties they face. Their frustration and concern about these matters add significantly to what is already a demanding role.

The MoJ's Estates Directorate is responsible for managing the contracts. Senior managers there recognise that embedding the new contracts has been a complex undertaking and there have been challenges since the service began. MoJ staff informed us that the issues with the facilities management contracts are being overseen at the highest level within the Estates Directorate and that action is being taken regarding the matters that we raised during the inspection.

Do the information and communication technology (ICT) systems enable staff to deliver a quality service, meeting the needs of all service users?

Historically, the ICT systems have not always enabled staff to plan and deliver their work in a timely way. A national ICT strategy is in place. Sites in the South West South Central division were in the process of upgrading their ICT systems during this inspection. The new system was seen as an improvement, and in a dispersed division, the ability to use Skype and work remotely was welcomed. All NPS staff will have migrated to the new system by the end of 2018.

ViSOR is a national confidential database that supports MAPPA. It allows the three MAPPA responsible authority agencies (police, probation and prisons) to exchange information and intelligence on violent and sexual offenders. At present its full potential is not being exploited. There is a plan to make sure that all relevant staff have been vetted and trained and have access to the database. Use of ViSOR in each LDU is monitored with the intention that this process will drive better use of the system and more effective information sharing.

Is analysis, evidence and learning used effectively to drive improvement?

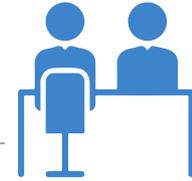
Performance measures are produced nationally. The quality of practice is monitored through Practice Improvement Tools and Assessment Quality Assurance and management oversight. Weekly reports are produced to show how LDUs, teams and practitioners are performing. Weekly performance and quality emails to managers focus on areas of priority. The South West South Central division's monthly dashboard shows all performance activity.

The division has a rigorous process in place for responding to the findings of performance monitoring, where this identifies discrepancies between the division's actual and expected performance. Where necessary, the LDU head prepares an improvement plan in conjunction with the performance and quality LDU's single point of contact. We were pleased to find that all staff were aware of the performance measures in relation to their role and function. They could access their own management information reports to see how their performance contributes to that of the whole division.

The division has a newly formed team to complete serious further offence (SFO) reviews and respond to complaints. The Quality Matters group analyses themes from the SFO reviews. Some staff we met who were not directly involved in SFO reviews told inspectors that they were not aware of thematic learning from SFO reviews being shared with them. We were informed that new ways of disseminating material and making it accessible to staff are being explored with the central SFO team.

Cases managed at MAPPA level 1 – a substantial majority of cases – were actively reviewed under MAPPA procedures. This data is collected for each LDU via management information reports. Issues identified have contributed to the development of practice. Staff from South West South Central have assisted in the development of a national child neglect toolkit available on EQuIP. The divisional forensic psychologist delivers workshops for practitioners in relation to stalking.

2. Case supervision



The division produced good-quality assessments, which focused sufficiently on engaging those under supervision. Using information from a variety of sources, assessments covered all relevant information, including past offending and behaviour, as well as the impact on victims. The detailed assessments outlined the risk of harm that a person posed to others. Plans were in place to address offending-related needs, but did not always prioritise those that were most critical. Contingency planning in response to heightened risk of harm to others required improvement. Contact levels were good, but the implementation of the plans sometimes lacked focus on offending-related needs. Progress was not always reviewed.

Strengths:

- Individuals were meaningfully involved in their assessments.
- Offending-related factors were identified accurately and well analysed.
- Information from other sources were sought and used to identify the risk of harm posed to others.
- Requirements of the order started promptly.
- Joint working with other agencies to keep people safe was good.

Areas for improvement:

- Identified diversity needs were not always adequately included in planning.
- Contingency planning in response to heightened risk of harm to others required improvement.
- Professional judgments, especially in relation to enforcement, were not always recorded clearly.
- Practitioners did not always seek to understand why service users did not comply with their sentence.
- Implementation did not always focus sufficiently on addressing desistance factors.
- Reviews did not always take place following a change of circumstances.

2.1. Assessment	Outstanding
Assessment is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the service user.	

Does the assessment focus sufficiently on engaging the service user?

In the majority of cases we inspected, assessments focused sufficiently on engaging individuals and were completed promptly following the start of the sentence or release on licence. There were many examples of practitioners making good use of the induction and self-assessment questionnaires to reflect the individual’s views. Diversity needs and personal circumstances were assessed in over three-quarters of cases. Practitioners had considered how those factors may impact on service users’ ability to engage with interventions. In most cases the practitioner assessed the individual’s readiness to change.

Does assessment focus sufficiently on the factors linked to offending and desistance?

We were pleased to find that the majority of assessments focused on and analysed factors linked to offending and desistance. Practitioners used a variety of sources to inform their assessments. These included previous convictions and information from children’s services, the police and parents. This information enabled practitioners to identify those areas where they needed to focus their work to help the service user change. Offence analysis was good, demonstrating an understanding of how past behaviour was linked to current behaviour. Practitioners recognised strengths, and protective factors in service users’ lives, such as accommodation, employment and supportive relationships.

Does assessment focus sufficiently on the risk of harm to others?

Of the cases inspected, 52 were assessed as very high or high risk of harm to others, and 59 as medium risk of harm to others. We agreed with most of these classifications. Current concerns about domestic abuse and/or child safeguarding were present in around half of the cases in our sample.

In the majority of cases we inspected, assessments focused on keeping others safe were done well. Specific concerns about the risk of harm to actual and potential victims were described well. Most of the assessments included details about past behaviour and previous convictions. In almost three-quarters of the cases inspected, information on risk of harm from partner agencies such as the police, victim liaison officers and children’s services was used and these agencies were involved appropriately.

2.2 Planning	Good
Planning is well-informed, holistic and personalised, actively involving the service user.	

Does planning focus sufficiently on engaging the service user?

Over three-quarters of the service users in the inspected sample were engaged meaningfully in the process of planning their supervision. The individual's involvement made them more likely to take ownership of the plan, which meant that they understood clearly the outcomes they were expected to achieve. Good-quality plans serve as a basis for reviews. We saw good examples of a clear induction process that set out expectations. It was good to see that the views given by service users in their self-assessment questionnaire regarding factors they felt would prevent them from reoffending were incorporated in the plan. We noted that staff worked well with the psychologist in the Personality Disorder Pathway team, who advised on various engagement techniques to involve individuals actively in sentence planning.

Where service users appeared to have no meaningful involvement in planning, this was sometimes because they did not cooperate with the process. In other cases, there was little evidence that any discussion had taken place or that the plan was shared. The planning process did not always take sufficient account of the individual's identified diversity needs. We found one example where the individual was recorded as having a physical disability with no record of how this would be considered in delivering the planned work.

Does planning focus sufficiently on reducing reoffending and supporting the service user's desistance?

Planning addressed and prioritised the key factors that had contributed to the offending behaviour in more than two-thirds of cases. When relevant, planning did not always include how accommodation, relationships and substance use issues would be addressed and did not always prioritise the needs that were most critical. We did not always see a planned schedule of interventions as part of the rehabilitation activity requirements (RAR).

Protective factors, such as employment, and the service user's motivation to change were included in many plans. This made the plans more personalised and built on the individual's strengths.

Does planning address appropriately factors associated with the risk of harm to others?

Of the cases we inspected, 72 per cent were eligible to be managed under MAPPA, or had been accepted locally under category 3. Of the MAPPA cases, 80 per cent were managed at level 1 and 20 per cent at level 2.

Planning focused sufficiently on keeping other people safe in almost three-quarters of cases. We found evidence of appropriate links to other agencies, such as children's services, and good liaison with the police, Multi-Agency Support Hubs and victim liaison officers. Nevertheless, planning to manage the risk of harm posed to children and young people was insufficient in 16 relevant cases and planning did not

adequately address domestic abuse in 17 cases. In over one-third of cases, planning did not set out necessary and effective contingency arrangements to address the heightened risk of harm to others.

2.3. Implementation and delivery	Requires Improvement
High-quality, well-focused, personalised and coordinated services are delivered, engaging the service user.	

Is the sentence/post-custody period implemented appropriately with a focus on engaging the service user?

As motivation is usually stronger at the start of the sentence, it was good to see that, in the vast majority of cases, the requirements of the sentence were implemented promptly, which maximised the engagement of individual service users. Practitioners viewed it as essential to build a rapport with those they supervised. We noted that, from time to time, they followed up sessions with a text message to remind the service user of the next appointment. In one-to-one sessions, practitioners responded to the mood of the person by adapting the length and content of the sessions. Similarly, in most cases they made efforts to enable individuals to complete the sentence. We saw good examples of cases where the practitioner had used the information from the assessment to identify barriers to engagement and had implemented techniques to overcome them. These included holding appointments in a downstairs interview room and arranging sessions around medical appointments. In one case, contact with the individual’s mother also enhanced engagement throughout the course of the order.

Of those in custody, we found that in almost three-quarters of cases there was sufficient contact before the individual left custody. This enabled the practitioner to establish a trusting relationship. We saw several instances in which the practitioner and the approved premises key worker had collaborated to get to know individuals who had recently been released from prison.

Enforcement action was taken promptly in two-thirds of cases where it was required. In 19 cases, professional judgment in managing non-compliance was not clearly recorded. In most cases, practitioners attempted to re-engage individuals, but inspectors felt that, on some occasions, they could have done more to understand why the individual had not complied.

Does supervision focus sufficiently on reducing reoffending and supporting the service user’s desistance?

The delivery of services to support desistance was not as strong as the assessment and planning, and was sufficient in less than two-thirds of cases. This meant that some offending-related areas identified in the assessment and plan were not addressed. In just over half of the cases, sufficient support had been provided to tackle problems related to thinking and behaviour.

There were some delays in accessing accredited programmes, such as Building Better Relationships and Horizon, due to waiting lists. We were concerned to find

that, in relation to drug and alcohol problems, appropriate services had been delivered in only a quarter and just over of a third of applicable cases respectively.

Working collaboratively with other agencies, with an agreed action to address reoffending and share resources and skills, can benefit the service user. The involvement of other services was not coordinated well enough in 34 cases. Key individuals – such as family members and service providers, who would be able to support the individual to desist from offending – were only engaged in half of cases where this was appropriate. The level and nature of contact were insufficient to support desistance in 13 cases.

Does supervision focus appropriately on managing and minimising the risk of harm to others?

Overall, the delivery of services to support the safety of other people was sufficient in just over half of relevant cases. Involvement of other agencies in managing and minimising the risk of harm to others was sufficient in just under two-thirds of cases. We saw examples of good collaborative work with the police and via MAPPA authorities, and liaison with children’s services and domestic abuse units. Some practitioners demonstrated persistence in obtaining information in relation to safeguarding checks from children’s services. In some cases, there was more scope to involve key individuals in the service user’s life to support the effective management of the risk of harm.

Insufficient attention was given to protecting actual and potential victims in over one-third of cases. The level and nature of contact offered to the individual was sufficient to manage and minimise the risk of harm in over three-quarters of cases. Home visits were carried out in two-thirds of the cases where we expected them to have been.

2.4. Reviewing	Requires Improvement
Reviewing of progress is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the service user.	

Does reviewing effectively support the service user’s compliance and engagement?

Reviewing focused sufficiently on supporting compliance and engagement in almost three-quarters of cases. However, in over one third of cases the individual was not meaningfully involved in reviewing their progress. We saw 24 cases where we thought that barriers to compliance and engagement should have been considered, and a similar number where adjustments could have been made to the ongoing plan of work. When reviews were done well, we noted that staff involved the individual by constantly reviewing their progress against the sentence plan throughout the supervision. In just over two-thirds of relevant cases, a written review provided a record of actions taken to implement the sentence.

Does reviewing effectively support progress towards desistance?

Reviews effectively supported progress towards desistance in just under two-thirds of cases. There was evidence within the reviews of the practitioner focusing on aspects that are likely to promote and support desistance, such as employment and accommodation. Reviews were not always completed when individuals had moved out of the approved premises into new accommodation.

In one-quarter of cases there was little information from other agencies, such as substance misuse services. This meant that reviews did not cover all relevant desistance factors and needs. Necessary adjustments to plans to take account of changes in factors linked to desistance and offending were not made in half of the cases where this was necessary. Practitioners needed to make timely alterations to the planned interventions to engage service users and to support rehabilitation.

Does reviewing focus sufficiently on the risk of harm to others?

In many cases, practitioners did not keep progress under review sufficiently well. In just over half of cases, they had not sufficiently reviewed progress against work to keep other people safe. In 36 cases reviews did not identify and address changes in risk of harm, and in a similar number, practitioners did not make necessary adjustments to the plan to take account of changes in the risk of harm to others. We saw examples where risk of harm to others was reviewed at MAPPA level 2 meetings and on review of MAPPA level 1 status. Nevertheless, in over half of cases, reviews of the risk of harm were not informed by information from other agencies such as the police, and in a similar proportion, the individual was not meaningfully involved in reviewing their risk of harm. We considered this a missed opportunity to gain a full picture of the individual's progress. We found some cases where no review had been undertaken when significant information came to light.

Court work and services to victims

In general, we found that reports provided to the court before sentencing were of a good standard. Proposals made to the court were appropriate. Cases were allocated promptly, but we felt that information provided to organisations responsible for supervision required improvement. Safeguarding information needs to be requested consistently, and risk of serious harm assessments need to be completed in all relevant cases.

We found that victims who opted into the victim contact scheme received regular updates about those individuals sentenced. The victim liaison officers work well with responsible officers and are appropriately involved in MAPPA. There were no clear and consistent procedures for following up contact with victims if they did not respond to the initial letter.

Strengths:

- Pre-sentence reports were of a good standard.
- A good service was provided to victims who opted into the victim contact scheme.

Areas for improvement:

- At the court stage, contact with children's services and domestic abuse units was not made in all relevant cases.
- Risk of serious harm assessments were not completed in all relevant cases before allocation to the appropriate probation provider.
- Reports did not always inform the sentencers of the impact of the offence on the victim.
- The process for following up contact with victims if they did not respond to the initial letter was inconsistent.

3.1 Court reports and case allocation	Good
The pre-sentence information and advice provided to court supports its decision-making, with cases being allocated appropriately following sentencing.	

Is the pre-sentence advice sufficiently well-informed, analytical and personalised to the service user, supporting the court’s decision making?

In just over half of the cases in our sample, reports were written on the same day as the defendant entered a plea or was found guilty. Pre-sentence information provided to the court was sufficiently analytical and personalised and supported the court’s decision-making in the majority of cases.

While records of previous convictions and prosecution papers were available in almost all cases, they were not always used. Report authors drew sufficiently on available sources of information in over two-thirds of cases. Advice to the court considered offending-related factors most of the time, but factors related to risk of harm were not considered in one-quarter of cases.

It was good to see that in most cases diversity and personal factors were sufficiently considered. We noted an example where the report author recognised that a mental health condition had contributed to offending and was a barrier to successful completion of unpaid work. A successful alternative proposal was made. In three-quarters of cases, the report considered the service user’s motivation and readiness to change. Not enough reports – just over half – advised the court of the impact of the offences on victims.

The main proposal made to the court was for community supervision with a rehabilitation activity requirement. In line with findings from HMI Probation’s June 2017 thematic report *The work of probation services in courts*, the number of proposals for accredited programmes was low, but of the 19 such proposals made, 16 were sentenced to a programme.

Is the allocation of the case prompt, accurate, and based on sufficient information?

Allocation to the correct agency was based on sufficient information in just over two-thirds of cases, and was prompt in all but one case. The record of assessment and advice to the court, and information to the agency responsible for supervision were, however, insufficient in 22 cases. Enquiries to the police domestic abuse unit were not made at this stage in 50 cases in the sample – nearly two-thirds of cases where this was required. Enquiries to children’s services were not made, and should have been, in 38 cases – over half the relevant cases.

When information from safeguarding and domestic abuse checks was obtained it was used to inform the assessment and provided a thorough analysis. We found that the necessary risk of harm screening or analysis was not completed before allocation in over half of cases where it should have been, however. This meant that pertinent information was not available at the time the case was allocated. When the risk of harm screening was completed before the case was allocated, it was full and accurate in under three-quarters of cases. We felt that better quality assurance was needed.

3.2 Statutory victim work	Good
Relevant and timely information is provided to the victim/s of a serious offence, and they are given the opportunity to contribute their views at key points in the sentence.	

Does the initial contact with the victims encourage engagement with the victim contact scheme?

Initial contact with victims encouraged engagement with the scheme in more than two-thirds of cases. Almost all initial letters were appropriately personalised, contained contact details of the victim contact officer and were sufficiently informative. A number of initial letters were followed up with a telephone call. In three-quarters of cases, initial contact was made soon after sentencing. The timeliness of the notification from the witness care unit to the division varied widely, which impacted on the unit’s ability to contact the victim promptly. On average, contact was made after six weeks, but this varied from 1 to 31 weeks.

The practice for following up initial contact where there is no response was inconsistent, with some staff following up contact and others closing the case. The guidance does not specify whether initial contact should be followed up, but the division needs to have a consistent procedure. Managers acknowledged that until very recently the procedure had been to send two letters to the known address and if there was no response they would make the case ‘dormant’. They now expect their victim liaison officers to seek out alternative contact information, including telephone numbers and email addresses, from the police, witness care and any other agency known to be involved.

We were informed that, in the last three months, as staffing levels are now near full complement, all teams have adopted the telephone call as a secondary contact system. This is outside of the timeframe of cases in the inspection sample.

Is the personal contact with the victim timely and supportive, providing appropriate information about the criminal justice system?

The personal contact with the victim provided appropriate information about the scheme in just under three-quarters of cases. Information included how the criminal justice process worked, timescales and details of the information they would receive and what input they could have. Clear advice was given to victims about what they could expect at different points in the sentence. In seven cases, victims had not been referred to other agencies or services, or given information about the sources of help and support available. There was a clear record of the response from the victims.

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

One aspect of the scheme involves making contact with victims in good time prior to an offender being released from custody. This was done well, and allowed victims to make appropriate contributions to the conditions of release in all cases. They were given the opportunity to express concerns about the individual’s release. In all but one case, these concerns were addressed and attention paid to their safety in planning for release.

Responsible officers and victim liaison staff worked well together. Practitioners kept victim liaison staff appropriately informed about relevant issues regarding the management of the offender in all but one case. In all but one case that we inspected the victim liaison staff were appropriately involved in MAPPA.

Annex 1: Methodology

The inspection methodology is summarised below, linked to the three domains in our standards framework. We focused on obtaining evidence against the standards, key questions and prompts within our inspection framework.

Domain one: organisational delivery

The provider submitted evidence in advance and the NPS's Divisional Director delivered a presentation covering the following areas:

- How does the leadership of the organisation support and promote the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all service users?
- How are staff in the organisation empowered to deliver a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all service users?
- Is there a comprehensive range of high-quality services in place, supporting a tailored and responsive service for all service users?
- Is timely and relevant information available, and are there appropriate facilities to support a high-quality, personalised and responsive approach for all service users?
- What are your priorities for further improvement, and why?

During the main fieldwork phase, we interviewed 77 individual responsible officers, asking them about their experiences of training, development, management supervision and leadership. We held various meetings, which allowed us to triangulate evidence and information. In total, we conducted 28 meetings. The evidence explored under this domain was judged against our published ratings characteristics.¹¹

We held meetings with the following people and groups:

- senior leaders
- case administrators
- SPOs, middle managers, QDOs and practice tutor assessors.

Domain two: case supervision

We completed case assessments over a two-week period, examining service users' files and interviewing responsible officers. The cases selected were those of service users who had been under community supervision for approximately six to seven months, either through a community sentence or following release from custody. This enabled us to examine the work with these individuals in relation to assessing, planning, implementing and reviewing. Where necessary, we interviewed other people who were significantly involved in the case.

We examined 118 cases from across 10 LDUs. Four cases had to be excluded from our analysis as they did not meet our criteria. The sample size was set to achieve a

¹¹ HM Inspectorate's domain one ratings characteristics can be found here: <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/about-our-work/our-standards-and-ratings/>

confidence level of 80 per cent (with a margin of error of 5), and we ensured that the ratios in relation to gender, type of disposal and risk of serious harm level matched those in the eligible population.

Domain three: sector-specific work

We completed case assessments for two further samples: (i) court reports and case allocation and (ii) victim work.

Court reports and case allocation

As in domain two, sample sizes were set to achieve a confidence level of 80 per cent (with a margin of error of 5). We selected cases in which the court report had been completed nine weeks previously, and in which the service user had been sentenced to a community order, suspended sentence order or immediate custody. We examined 118 cases, ensuring that the ratios in relation to report type and CRC/NPS allocation matched those in the eligible population. We used the case management and assessment systems to inspect these cases, judging the quality of the written evidence in the report provided to court, the quality of information-gathering at the court and allocation stage, and the accuracy of the allocation decision.

We also held meetings with the following individuals/groups, which allowed us to triangulate evidence and information:

- the senior manager with the strategic lead for courts
- SPOs responsible for managing court teams
- court duty staff from different court settings.

Victim work

To inspect initial contact with victims at the start of custodial sentences, we examined 36 custodial cases which had commenced six to seven months previously and where the victim was eligible for statutory victim contact. This sample size was set to achieve a confidence level of 80 per cent (with a margin of error of 5), based on the number of cases where victim contact had commenced. To inspect the timeliness and quality of contact with victims immediately prior to and after release, we drew upon 17 eligible licence cases from our domain two case sample. Published data is insufficient to calculate accurate confidence levels for the sample size for pre- and post-release victim contact.

Meetings were also held with the following individuals/groups:

- the senior operational support manager, who deputised for the senior manager responsible for the victim contact service, which included a review of the findings of the annual victim satisfaction survey
- a group of victim contact officers
- a group of victim contact managers.

Annex 2: Inspection results: domains two and three

2. Case supervision

Standard/Key question	Rating/% yes
2.1. Assessment	
Assessment is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the service user	Outstanding
2.1.1. Does assessment focus sufficiently on engaging the service user?	83%
2.1.2. Does assessment focus sufficiently on the factors linked to offending and desistance?	87%
2.1.3. Does assessment focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	81%
2.2. Planning	
Planning is well-informed, holistic and personalised, actively involving the service user.	Good
2.2.1. Does planning focus sufficiently on engaging the service user?	76%
2.2.2. Does planning focus sufficiently on reducing reoffending and supporting the service user's desistance?	68%
2.2.3. Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe? ¹²	70%
2.3. Implementation and delivery	
High-quality, well-focused, personalised and coordinated services are delivered, engaging the service user	Requires Improvement
2.3.1. Is the sentence/post-custody period implemented effectively with a focus on engaging the service user?	76%
2.3.2. Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the service user's desistance?	58%
2.3.3. Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?	57%

¹² Please note: percentages relating to questions 2.2.3, 2.3.3 and 2.4.3 are calculated for the *relevant* sub-sample, i.e. those cases where risk of serious harm issues apply, rather than for the *total* inspected sample.

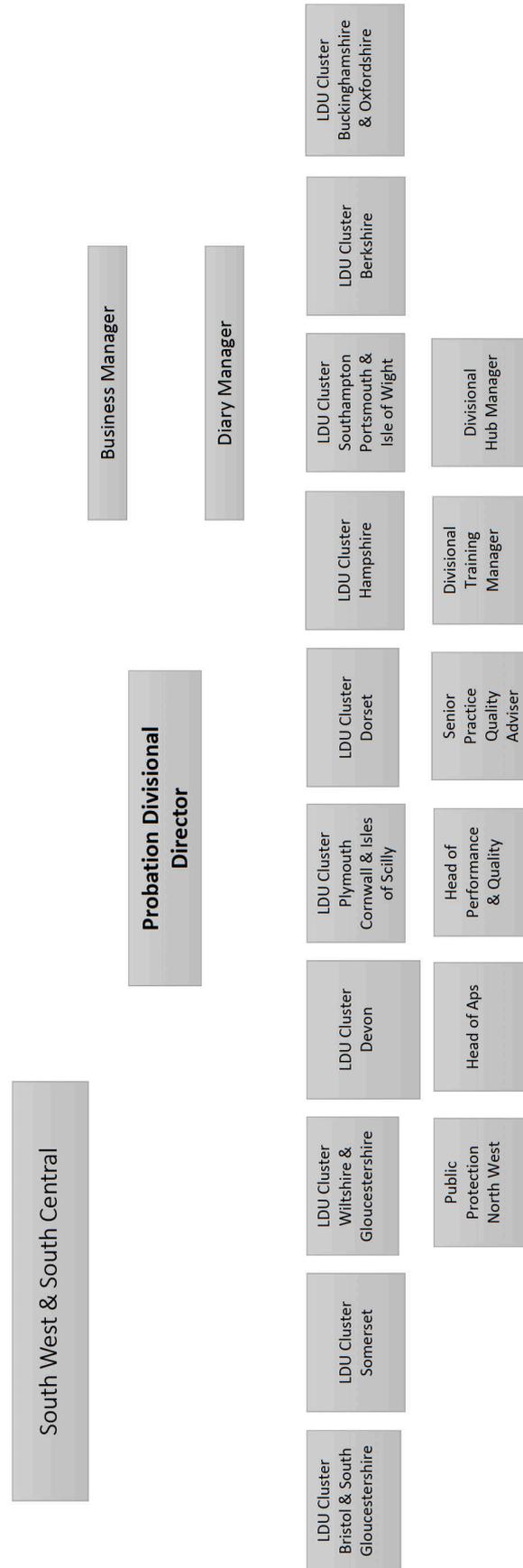
2.4. Reviewing	Requires Improvement
Reviewing of progress is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the service user	
2.4.1. Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the service user's compliance and engagement?	70%
2.4.2. Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the service user's desistance?	64%
2.4.3. Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	51%

3. NPS-specific work

Standard/Key question	Rating/% yes
3.1. Court reports and case allocation	
The pre-sentence information and advice provided to court supports its decision-making, with cases being allocated appropriately following sentencing	Good
3.1.1. Is the pre-sentence information and advice provided to court sufficiently analytical and personalised to the service user, supporting the court's decision-making?	80%
3.1.2. Is the allocation of the case prompt, accurate, and based on sufficient information?	69%
3.2. Statutory victim work	
Relevant and timely information is provided to the victim/s of a serious offence, and they are given the opportunity to contribute their views at key points in the sentence	Good
3.2.1. Does the initial contact with the victim/s encourage engagement with the victim contact scheme?	69%
3.2.2. Is the personal contact with the victim/s timely and supportive, providing appropriate information about the criminal justice process?	73%
3.2.3. Does pre-release contact with the victim/s allow them to make appropriate contributions to the conditions of release?	94%
3.2.4. Is there good communication between offender management and victim liaison to support the safety of victim/s?	94%

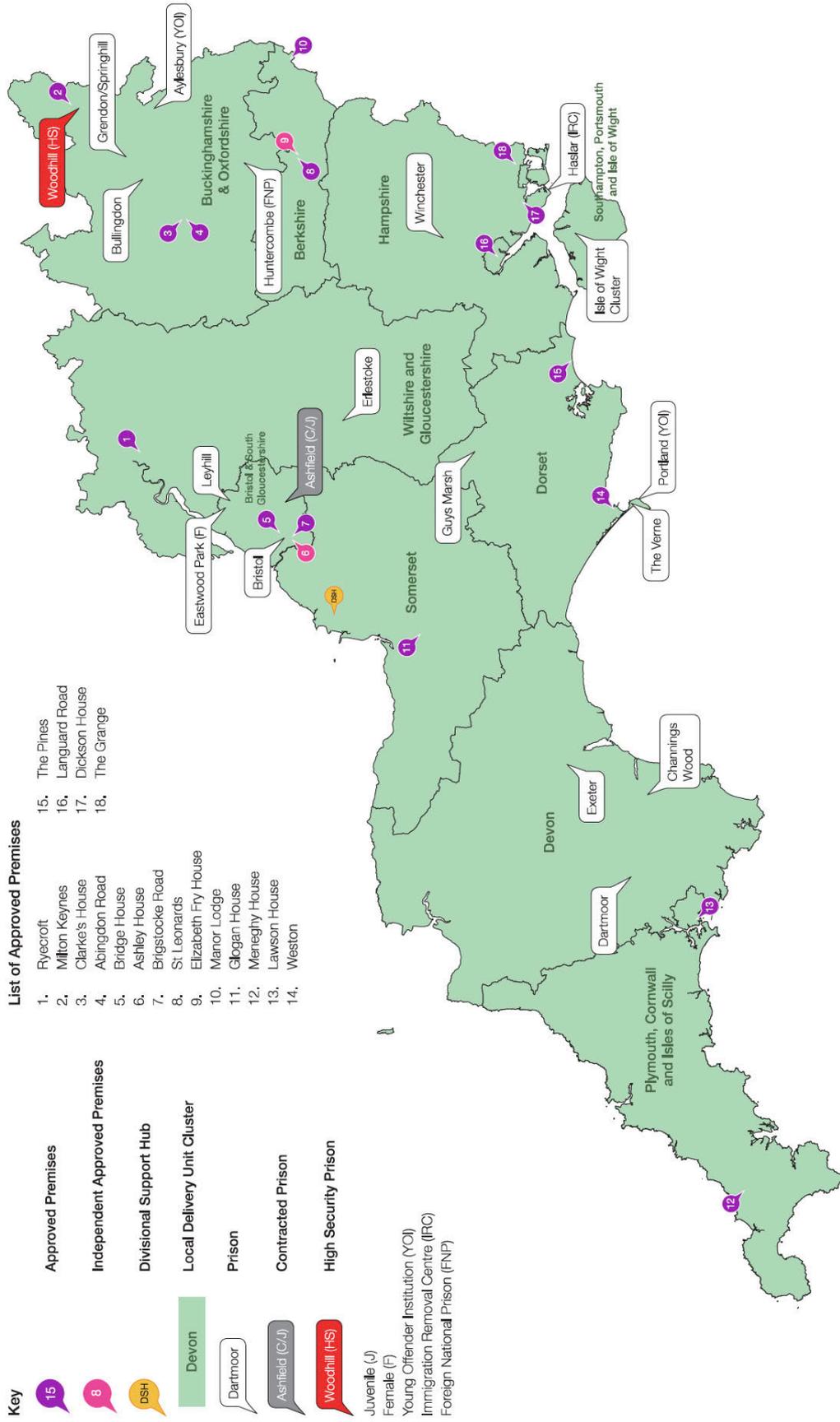
Annex 3: Operating model and map

South West South Central NPS operating model



Source: South West South Central NPS

National Probation Service
South West & South Central Division



Source: South West South Central NPS

Annex 4: Glossary

Accredited programme	A programme of work delivered to offenders in groups or individually through a requirement in a community order or a suspended sentence order, or as part of a custodial sentence or a condition in a prison licence. Accredited programmes are accredited by the Correctional Services Accredited Panel as being effective in reducing the likelihood of reoffending
Allocation	The process by which a decision is made about whether an offender will be supervised by a CRC or the NPS
Approved premises	Premises approved under Section 13 of the <i>Offender Management Act 2007</i> , managed either by the National Probation Service or by independent organisations. An approved premises is used as a short-term residence for an offender considered to present a high risk of serious harm who requires close monitoring and supervision, and support to begin to integrate back into the community
Assessment	The process by which a decision is made about the things an individual needs to do to reduce the likelihood of them reoffending and/or causing further harm
Assignment	The process by which an offender is linked to a single responsible officer, who will arrange and coordinate all the interventions to be delivered during their sentence
Barriers	The things that make it difficult for a service user to change
Becoming New Me	A nationally accredited group work programme designed for men aged 21 years and over who have committed sexual offences and have intellectual disabilities
Breach (of an order or licence)	Where an offender fails to comply with the conditions of a court order or licence. Enforcement action may be taken to return the offender to court for additional action or recall them to prison
Building Better Relationships	Building Better Relationships: a nationally accredited group work programme designed to reduce reoffending by adult male perpetrators of intimate partner violence
Business Plan	A plan that sets out an organisation's objectives. It may also be known as an organisational plan or corporate plan
Child protection	Work to make sure that that all reasonable action has been taken to keep to a minimum the risk of a child coming to harm
Child safeguarding	The ability to demonstrate that a child or young person's well-being has been 'safeguarded'. This includes – but can be broader than – child protection. The term 'safeguarding' is also used in relation to vulnerable adults

CRC	Community Rehabilitation Company: 21 CRCs were set up in June 2014, to manage most offenders who present a low or medium risk of serious harm
Criminal justice system	Involves any or all of the agencies involved in upholding and implementing curfew the law – police, courts, youth offending teams, probation and prisons
Desistance	The cessation of offending or other antisocial behaviour
Diversity	The extent to which people within an organisation recognise, appreciate and utilise the characteristics that make an organisation and its service users unique. Diversity can relate to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, and sex
Enforcement	Action taken by a responsible officer in response to an individual's non-compliance with a community sentence or licence. Enforcement can be punitive or motivational
Equality	Ensuring that everyone is treated with dignity and respect, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, and sex. It also means recognising that diverse groups have different needs, and ensuring that they have equal and fair access to appropriate opportunities
EQiP	Excellence and Quality in Process: a NPS web-based national resource providing consistent information about the processes to be followed in all aspects of the NPS's work. The process mapping is underpinned by quality assurance measures
HMPPS	Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service: from 01 April 2017, HMPPS became the single agency responsible for delivering prison and probation services across England and Wales. At the same time, the Ministry of Justice took on responsibility for overall policy direction, setting standards, scrutinising prison performance and commissioning services. These used to fall under the remit of the National Offender Management Service (the agency that has been replaced by HMPPS)
Horizon	A nationally accredited group work programme designed for medium-risk male sexual offenders
Intervention	Work with an individual that is designed to change their offending behaviour and/or to support public protection. A constructive intervention is where the primary purpose is to reduce likelihood of reoffending. A restrictive intervention is where the primary purpose is to keep to a minimum the individual's risk of harm to others. With a sexual offender, for example, a constructive intervention might be to put them through an accredited sex offender programme; a restrictive intervention (to minimise their risk of harm) might be to monitor regularly and meticulously their accommodation, their employment and the places they frequent, imposing and

enforcing clear restrictions as appropriate to each case. Both types of intervention are important

Licence	This is a period of supervision immediately following release from custody and is typically implemented after an offender has served half of their sentence. Any breaches to the conditions of the licence can lead to a recall to prison, where the offender could remain in custody for the duration of their original sentence
Local delivery unit	An operational unit comprising an office or offices, generally coterminous with police basic command units and local authority structures
MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements: where NPS, police, prison and other agencies work together locally to manage offenders who pose a higher risk of harm to others. Every MAPPA offender is identified as being in one of three categories. Category 1: registered sexual offenders; Category 2: violent or other sexual offenders; Category 3: other dangerous offenders. Each offender is managed under one of three levels of management. Level 1 is ordinary agency management, where the risks posed by the offender can be managed by the agency responsible for the supervision or case management of the offender. This compares with Levels 2 and 3, which require active multi-agency management
MARAC	Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference: part of a coordinated community response to domestic abuse, incorporating representatives from statutory, community and voluntary agencies working with victims/survivors, children and the alleged perpetrator
MoJ	Ministry of Justice: the government department with responsibility for the criminal justice system in the United Kingdom
MOSOVO	Management of Sexual Offenders and Violent Offenders: the accredited training course provides police Public Protection Unit practitioners with the skills and knowledge to enable them to identify and manage sex offenders, violent offenders and other dangerous offenders falling within the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)
nDelius	National Delius: the approved case management system used by CRCs and the NPS in England and Wales
NPS	National Probation Service: a single national service that came into being in June 2014. Its role is to deliver services to courts and to manage specific groups of offenders, including those presenting a high or very high risk of serious harm and those subject to MAPPA in England and Wales
OASys/eOASys/ OASys R	Offender Assessment System: currently used in England and Wales by the CRCs and the NPS to measure the risks and needs of offenders under supervision

Offender management	A core principle of offender management is that a single practitioner takes responsibility for managing an offender through the period they are serving their sentence, whether in custody or the community
OMiC	Offender Management in Custody – the model will see the responsibility for the management of NPS offenders during the custodial phase of their sentence shift from offender managers based in the community to new joint National Probation Service and Public Sector Prisons teams within establishments
Partners	Partners include statutory and non-statutory organisations, working with the participant/offender through a partnership agreement with a CRC or the NPS
Personality Disorder Pathway	Personality Disorder Pathway: provides a pathway of psychologically-informed services for an offender group who are likely to have a severe personality disorder and who pose a high risk of harm to others or a high risk of reoffending in a harmful way
PSS	Post-sentence supervision: introduced by the Offender Rehabilitation Act 2014, the PSS is a period of supervision following the end of a licence. Breaches are enforced by the magistrates' court
Pre-sentence report	This refers to any report prepared for a court, whether delivered orally or in a written format
PO	Probation officer: this is the term for a responsible officer who has completed a higher-education-based professional qualification. The name of the qualification and content of the training vary depending on when the training was undertaken. They manage more complex cases
PSO	Probation services officer: this is the term for a responsible officer who was originally recruited with no professional qualification. A newly appointed PSO is required to complete nationally determined training within 12 months from commencement in post. They may manage all but the most complex cases, depending on their level of training and experience. Some PSOs work within the court setting, where their duties include the writing of pre-sentence reports
PQiP	Professional Qualification in Probation
Providers	Providers deliver a service or input commissioned by and provided under contract to a CRC or the NPS. This includes the staff and services provided under the contract, even when they are integrated or located within a CRC or the NPS
QDO	Quality development officers were introduced under phase 1 of E3, beginning their role early in 2017. They are managed through the divisional Performance and Quality team. They are qualified POs who are a divisional resource, frequently working collaboratively, but retaining a particular remit for an allocated LDU. Their focus is to help improve the quality of practice within offender management and court work

Rate card	A directory of services offered by the CRC for the NPS to use with its offenders, detailing the price
RAR	Rehabilitation activity requirement: from February 2015, when the Offender Rehabilitation Act 2014 was implemented, courts can specify a number of RAR days within an order; it is for probation services to decide on the precise work to be done during the RAR days awarded
Responsible officer	The term used for the officer (previously entitled 'offender manager') who holds lead responsibility for managing a case
SPO	Senior probation officer: first line manager within the NPS
SFO	Serious Further Offence: where a service user subject to (or recently subject to) probation commits one of a number of serious offences (such as murder, manslaughter or rape). The CRC and/or NPS must notify HMPPS of any such individual charged with one of these offences. A review is then conducted with a view to identifying lessons learned
Stakeholder	A person, group or organisation that has a direct or indirect stake or interest in the organisation because it can either affect the organisation or be affected by it. Examples of external stakeholders are owners (shareholders), customers, suppliers, partners, government agencies and representatives of the community. Example of internal stakeholders are people or groups of people within the organisation
Supply chain	Providers of services commissioned by the CRC
Thinking Skills Programme	An accredited group programme designed to develop an offender's thinking skills to help them stay out of trouble
Third sector	The third sector includes voluntary and community organisations (both registered charities and other organisations such as associations, self-help groups and community groups), social enterprises, mutuals and co-operatives
Transforming Rehabilitation	The government's programme for how offenders are managed in England and Wales from June 2014
Unpaid work	A court can include an unpaid work requirement as part of a community order. Offenders can be required to work for up to 300 hours on community projects under supervision. Since February 2015, unpaid work has been delivered by CRCs
ViSOR	ViSOR is a national confidential database that supports MAPPA. It facilitates the effective exchange of information and intelligence on violent and sexual offenders between the three MAPPA responsible authority agencies (police, probation and prisons). ViSOR is no longer an acronym but is the formal name of the database
Workload management tool	A tool to calculate the overall workload of an individual responsible officer. It takes into account numbers and types of cases



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