

Quality & Impact inspection The effectiveness of probation work in Kent

An inspection by HM Inspectorate of Probation
October 2016

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Foreword

This inspection was the fourth in our Quality & Impact inspection programme, designed to assess the effectiveness of work undertaken locally by probation services with people who have offended.

Without relevant reoffending data (due in late 2017) it is not possible to know for sure how effective probation services are in all respects, but the Kent, Surrey & Sussex Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) has made an excellent start in Kent. It had adopted the relatively straightforward operating model outlined in its owner's bid for the contract, with little reliance on third sector or other providers, and had implemented it confidently and quickly. We were particularly impressed with this CRC's commitment to involving individuals fully in planning their own route away from crime. Staff morale was good, with leaders enjoying the confidence of their staff.

The CRC is innovating, and having invested in new hardware it is developing new software to make it easier to deliver effective services. On contractual performance measures, and when compared to others, it is performing noticeably well. We found the quality of its work was generally good. There had been some difficulties as a result of a shortfall in staff trained to deliver certain interventions, and the CRC was also struggling to recruit supervisors for unpaid work, but overall we considered the CRC's development and delivery impressive in many respects.

On National Probation Service (NPS) performance measures, and when compared to other local delivery units, Kent NPS performance is noticeably poor. It is struggling to establish itself, mainly because of chronic staff shortages.

We saw staff at all levels working hard to deliver services to an acceptable standard, but a vicious circle of low staff numbers at the outset; difficulties in attracting experienced candidates; an over-reliance on agency and new staff; and high levels of absence had made delivering services consistently and to an acceptable standard virtually impossible. We found the quality of work mixed.

In our view, the problems faced by the NPS in Kent require a regional or national solution, and we were pleased to see some recognition of that. Looking ahead, the additional staff numbers identified for Kent under the NPS's national E3 standardisation programme should make a significant difference, if delivered.

We hope that the findings from this inspection will help the CRC and the NPS in Kent in their efforts to deliver well and so improve people's life chances.



Dame Glenys Stacey
HM Chief Inspector of Probation
October 2016

Key facts

- 251,170** The total number of offenders subject to probation supervision across England & Wales¹.
- 8,392** The number of offenders supervised by the Kent, Surrey & Sussex CRC¹.
- 37%** The proportion of the CRC cases which relate to a custodial sentence (pre or post-release supervision)^{1 2}. The proportion for all England & Wales was 56%.
- 74%** The proportion of offenders who were recorded as having successfully completed their period of licence or post-sentence supervision with the CRC^{2 3}. The performance figure for all England & Wales was 75%, against a target of 65%.
- 14,339** The number of offenders supervised by the NPS South East & Eastern division of the NPS¹.
- 2,357** The number of MAPPA eligible offenders managed by the NPS in Kent⁴.
- 18%** The volume reduction for the CRC caseload, comparing 2015-2016 annual data to initial assumptions^{2 5}. The reduction across CRCs ranged from -6% to -36%.
- 1 (of 21)** The number of CRCs owned by Seetec.

1 Offender Management Caseload Statistics as at 31 March 2016, Ministry of Justice

2 Figure for the Kent, Surrey & Sussex CRC

3 CRC Service Level 9, Community Performance Quarterly Statistics January-March 2016, Ministry of Justice

4 Multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) Annual Report as at 31 March 2015, Ministry of Justice

5 'Transforming Rehabilitation', National Audit Office, 2016

1. Overall judgements and recommendations

Overview

In our March 2014 inspection of Kent we found much room for improvement in certain areas of practice, most notably assessment. Within the CRC in this inspection, we saw clear signs of improvement in some of the areas we had identified in the former Probation Trust as weak. The quality of practice overall was encouraging and (with the exception of the delivery of unpaid work) progress was noteworthy.

In contrast, the quality of NPS work was mixed. Court work was being delivered to an acceptable standard, and court staff and sentencers we spoke with were content with the services being delivered. Despite this, we found an unacceptable level of cases being misallocated, meaning that offenders were too often supervised by the wrong organisation.

The quality of assessments within the NPS was generally good, although subsequent work was too often insufficiently focused on addressing factors linked to risk of harm issues, and so risks to the public were not sufficiently well managed.

Protecting the public

CRC effectiveness

We found that the assessment of the risk of serious harm individuals posed to others was generally undertaken to an acceptable standard. We found, however, that some staff managing cases that had the potential to cause significant harm did not have sufficient experience, training or managerial oversight.

There had been severe and unacceptable delays in the delivery of some interventions, including the Building Better Relationships programme, designed to tackle domestic abuse. As a result, too many service users did not have an effective challenge to their behaviour quickly enough, to reduce promptly the risk of harm they posed. The situation was improving.

NPS effectiveness

At the pre-sentence stage, cases were generally assessed to an acceptable standard, with no noticeable difference between cases to be managed by the CRC or the NPS. There were clearly many staff with the necessary skills to work with the risk of harm NPS offenders posed, although not all staff were sufficiently alert to or focused on managing risk of harm.

Nearly half of the responsible officers we interviewed felt that they had not had sufficient training to manage the cases for which they were responsible. We thought this proportion too high. Shortages in first-line managers compounded the problem, as responsible officers were not always receiving sufficient guidance or support.

The CRC and NPS working together

The CRC and NPS were generally working together well. There was a danger, however, that information was being lost due to insufficient NPS recording and/or onward communication of relevant information from court reports, particularly oral reports.

Reducing reoffending

CRC effectiveness

Assessments of service users' needs in relation to their offending behaviour were delivered to an acceptable standard in a high proportion of cases. Planning to address these needs was also sufficient in most cases. The CRC's performance in reviewing cases, however, was poor.

The organisation's operating model necessitated the transfer of service users between two teams: the assessment team and the rehabilitation team. This could, in certain circumstances, have acted as a barrier to rehabilitation although staff were generally working hard to mitigate this possibility. Conversely, within resettlement teams the same teams of officers maintained contact with service users as they moved from custody into the community. Despite the fact there is no hard evidence of effectiveness as yet, we thought this practice looked promising.

We found that there had been sufficient progress in delivering the necessary interventions within the first six months of the order in approximately half of the cases we inspected. The CRC acknowledged that not enough staff were trained to deliver programmes, and we found examples of unacceptably long waiting times for some programmes. Waiting times had reduced significantly in recent months.

Substance misuse services in the county were in a state of flux at the time of the inspection. For the sample of cases we inspected, most individuals with drug or alcohol misuse needs could access an effective service. There were reasonable concerns, however, that this might not be so in future.

NPS effectiveness

Most pre-sentence reports were of an acceptable standard, although the lack of suitable IT equipment hindered the development of efficient practices. Feedback from sentencers and court staff indicated that those NPS staff working in courts were held in high regard. There was a problem, however, with the allocation of cases. We found several examples where staff had either not understood the complexities of the allocation procedure, or for some other reason had made errors of judgement.

Overall, for cases managed by the NPS, we found that the assessment of individual offending-related needs was acceptable in a reasonable proportion of cases. Plans to tackle offending were usually sufficient. The delivery of interventions was more problematic; too many cases were being transferred between insufficiently trained temporary or inexperienced staff. This problem was compounded by a lack of oversight from middle managers who were themselves overstretched.

The CRC and NPS working together

Working relationships between CRC and NPS staff were generally positive.

The CRC had produced high quality information leaflets about their services for courts, although NPS staff felt that there was a need for a more dynamic approach to the provision of information, so as to keep them abreast of developments within the CRC.

Abiding by the sentence

CRC effectiveness

CRC effectiveness was mixed, but improving.

The CRC had impressive arrangements to make sure that they listened to the needs of service users, captured their views and took seriously the feedback they received. There was also evidence that in most cases responsible officers had taken the time to engage offenders carefully, to establish what they wanted to achieve from probation, and to deliver interventions in ways that met their diverse individual needs.

There was still work to be done, however, to better understand and deliver rehabilitation activity requirement days as intended by legislation, a common issue nationally.

Most significantly, we found very poor performance with regard to the delivery of unpaid work. Despite the efforts that had been made, there had been insufficient progress on the recruitment of supervisors, leading to a totally unacceptable rate of 'stand downs'. Consequently, offenders were sometimes prevented from abiding by the requirements of their sentence. As mentioned earlier, there were also delays in starting accredited programmes.

NPS effectiveness

NPS performance was acceptable.

Assessments and plans drawn up by responsible officers were usually done in consultation with offenders and took account of their diverse needs. In most cases, there were good levels of contact offered and, where problems with compliance arose, these were usually dealt with effectively.

The CRC and NPS working together

Working relationships between CRC and NPS staff were generally positive. There was good communication between staff, and swift action taken to resolve any difficulties. Practitioners from both organisations worked together to solve problems, for example, in relation to the quality of breach reports.

The problems the CRC had delivering unpaid work caused some tensions, as did the 'fee for service' arrangements where the CRC delivered interventions for NPS cases.

Recommendations

The Community Rehabilitation Company and National Probation Service should:

1. improve the exchange of information about sentencing options by supplementing the high quality information leaflets produced with other methods agreed locally
2. prepare a joint response to the health service commissioners of substance misuse services on the impact of changes in treatment opportunities.

The Community Rehabilitation Company should:

3. make sure that the rate at which service users are 'stood down' from unpaid work placements is significantly reduced
4. monitor the waiting list for access to accredited programmes and make further progress in reducing waiting times
5. improve the availability of specialist provision for enhancing the educational, training and employment opportunities for service users
6. increase the management oversight of probation services officers, particularly during their initial training, so as to support their management of service users posing a medium risk of harm to others.

The National Probation Service should:

7. seek a solution to the problems of the insufficient staff complement, recruitment and retention issues in Kent
8. make sure that the level of misallocations is reduced significantly
9. improve the quality of IT equipment available for use by court staff, and provide computer hardware and software that enables local staff to more easily access national online training packages
10. make sure that all new staff, whether employed directly or via an agency, have access to sufficient training to enable them to undertake the work they are given.

2. The arrangements for delivering probation services in Kent

- the national context
- the local context
- organisational arrangements

National context

In 2014 the UK government extended probation supervision for the first time to offenders released from prison sentences of under 12 months (some 50,000 people each year). Now, over 250,000 adults are supervised by probation services annually, and all offenders released from prison on licence are subject to supervision. In addition, since May 2015, in an initiative known as 'Through the Gate', probation services must provide offenders with resettlement services while they are in prison, in anticipation of their release.

Probation services were formerly provided by 35 self-governing Probation Trusts working under the direction of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS). They are now provided in a mixed economy model, with an expectation of greater involvement of the third sector. The government wishes to promote innovation in probation services, and in June 2014, under the UK government's *Transforming Rehabilitation* programme, probation services in England & Wales were divided into a new public sector NPS and 21 new privately-owned CRCs providing services under seven year contracts with a lifetime value of approximately £3.7bn.

The NPS advises courts on sentencing all offenders, and manages those offenders presenting high or very high risks of serious harm, or who are managed under Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA). CRCs supervise most other offenders presenting low and medium risk of harm. Probation staff assess and manage the risk offenders pose to the community, to protect the public. They help rehabilitate them by dealing with problems such as drug and alcohol misuse, and lack of employment or secure housing, so as to reduce the prospect of reoffending. They monitor whether they are complying with court requirements, so as to make sure individuals abide by their sentence, and report them to court or request recall to prison if they are not.

CRCs operated as companies in public ownership until 01 February 2015 when ownership was transferred to eight separate organisations. Most CRC income is from a 'fee for service' related to the number of offenders under various forms of supervision and the requirements to which they are subject. These payments may be reduced if the CRC fails to meet certain service levels. In addition, there is the possibility of additional income - payment by results - triggered by reductions in reoffending, once relevant reoffending data is available.

The transition from Probation Trusts to the mixed economy model has been challenging (as reported in our series of *Transforming Rehabilitation* reports) and the new expectations of CRCs are demanding. Those serving short sentences are more often prolific offenders, less receptive to rehabilitation. Through the Gate services require persistence and good joint working, and for the moment those arrangements appear the least well-developed.

Nationally, NPS workloads have risen noticeably in the last business year and staffing levels have risen marginally, whereas CRC caseloads (and income) do not match the assumptions underpinning CRC contracts. Caseloads and staffing levels vary across the CRCs.

Local context

Here we report on probation services delivered in the county of Kent by both the Kent, Surrey & Sussex (KSS) CRC and the NPS South East & Eastern division. These services were formerly provided by the Kent Probation Trust. The area is served by Kent County Council with 12 district councils and the unitary authority of Medway. It is coterminous with the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner area. Both the CRC and NPS division provide services to other parts of the south east as well as in Kent.

We provide demographic data and information about the area in Appendix 2. Overall, ethnicity, unemployment and deprivation measures show nothing particularly unusual, although there are several wards that are among the most deprived in the country. Levels of reoffending and the number of previous offences per offender are slightly lower than the national average. The area has a population of approximately 1.8 million people and so has relatively high case volumes overall. The county is sizeable, and the CRC and NPS deliver services from eight locations across the county: Canterbury, Chatham, Folkstone, Gravesend, Maidstone, Margate, Sittingbourne and Tunbridge Wells. The CRC and NPS are co-located in all sites except Maidstone. These arrangements are likely to change as NOMS implements its estate strategy, and the CRC fully implements its plans.

In common with others nationally, the NPS area caseload is higher than anticipated, and the CRC's lower. The CRC is the sixth largest in the country by contract value⁶ and Kent represents approximately half of its overall workload. Its caseload shortfall is about average when compared to others (see Key facts). The CRC is owned by Seetec, a private company with other commercial interests, although only one probation contract.

Kent probation service providers have long struggled to recruit and retain experienced probation staff, as London and opportunities to earn more are so readily accessible. Against NOMS's national performance measures, the Kent NPS local delivery unit (LDU) is one of the lowest performers regionally, and the CRC one of the highest.

Organisational arrangements

The CRC

In common with all other CRCs, KSS CRC was subject to monitoring against contractual targets. The first quarter data for 2016/2017 showed that, of the 17 service level targets, 11 were being met or exceeded and 4 were within 10 percentage points of the target. Data on the remaining 2 levels was still to be confirmed. This performance was among the best of any CRC nationally.

Seetec's contract bid assumed a clear operating model built on established notions of good practice, and emphasised the service user's place at the heart of any attempt

⁶ Target Operating Model. Rehabilitation Programme. September 2013

to bring about change⁷. We found that philosophy well-embedded. Seetec’s leaders confirmed that they believed the best way to engage service users in the necessary change process was to work with them on a face-to-face basis, with services accessible in as many local communities as possible. The operating model is based on a model previously found in some Probation Trusts, with organisation-wide teams for the general management functions, and three delivery teams in each location:

Team	Responsibility
Assessment	The assessment and planning of all community sentences
Rehabilitation	To receive cases from the assessment team. Deliver and review the plans periodically for all community sentences
Resettlement	Provide resettlement services to all prisoners (both pre and post-release). Oversee the supervision of all licences and periods of post-sentence supervision

Prior to Seetec taking ownership, the CRC had developed a strong Business Intelligence Unit. This enabled the CRC to anticipate the possibility of a lower caseload and income, and collate data and information to aid strategic decision-making.

The CRC had implemented the model almost immediately upon inception. We found that, although the structure was uniform, each office had a distinct culture and different local challenges.

At the time of the inspection, the CRC was almost fully staffed, and employing more practitioners than at inception, when it had been carrying vacancies. There had not been a downsizing programme or further changes to the planned operating model, as we have tended to find in other CRCs.

Involvement of the third sector

Unlike most other bidders, Seetec had planned to deliver just a small proportion of services through a supply chain. When it became clear that contract income would be less than thought, Seetec had decided to prioritise spending on directly-employed staff rather than external providers.

At the time of the inspection, the only supply chain partners were a charitable organisation, De Paul, contracted to deliver services at one prison, and the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders with a Kent-wide remit to deliver accommodation advice and support to all service users. The De Paul

⁷ KSS CRC website, ‘About Us’ accessed 22 July 2016

contract was about to come to an end during the inspection period, although after renegotiation, the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders contract was set to continue. The other main contracted service, which was also set to continue, was with User Voice, which had a Kent, Surrey & Sussex-wide remit to support service user engagement.

The CRC had developed impressive arrangements for engaging volunteers to support service users.

Resettlement services

Through the Gate services are delivered by the resettlement teams. Most resettlement staff spend part of their week in the community, and part in a prison. Logistical constraints mean that individual service users do not necessarily see the same member of staff both in and out of custody. They are, however, seen by members of the same team, who are able in turn to forge good links between work done in custody and in the community.

Seetec and Kent CRC senior managers emphasised their commitment to spending more on Through the Gate services than was warranted by the Weighted Annual Volume rating these cases attracted, underpinned by a belief that the CRC had a duty to the wider community to tackle the offending of this generally prolific cohort.

There was an active strategy to increase the numbers of released prisoners undertaking accredited programmes. The CRC considers that the new longer periods of supervision for those who served short sentences open up the possibility of offering them a service more likely to tackle their offending. Senior managers also recognised it could have a potentially positive effect on the Weighted Annual Volume formula and, therefore, CRC income.

Staffing

Kent Probation Trust had been carrying significant numbers of vacancies at the time of transition, and the CRC did not, therefore, start with a full complement of staff. As a consequence, major staff reductions were unnecessary, but vacancies were spread unevenly across grades and locations.

Most significantly, there was a lack of qualified probation officers (POs) and staff trained to deliver accredited programmes. The CRC had recruited a number of social work-trained practitioners into PO roles. Managers thought that this had been reasonably successful, albeit some recruits proved unsuitable and were not confirmed in post. The CRC had also recruited a number of new staff in probation service officer (PSO) roles, with considerable success.

There was a training strategy in place to make sure new staff were inducted effectively and commenced working towards a probation work qualification. There had also been a focus on increasing the number of staff able to deliver accredited programmes.

At the time of the inspection, the CRC had few vacancies in Kent. It employed significantly more staff than at inception. A fall in the number of POs had been more than offset by increased numbers of PSOs and senior probation officers (SPOs).

Senior managers indicated that reducing numbers of POs was not a strategic aim, but a consequence of not being able to attract suitable candidates. The only other hard-to-recruit group were supervisors for unpaid work.

Staff morale was described as good. Most of those we interviewed reported feeling valued by the organisation, and trusted senior managers to manage the CRC efficiently and ethically. When asked about the experience of working for Seetec, one practitioner made the following comments, which were not atypical:

“I am very positive about the experience of working in the CRC and feel that the organisation is working hard to make it a positive working environment and to be supportive of staff. I have attended a conference where the organisational plans were discussed and communicated to staff and have also met senior managers from Seetec and thought they had a positive vision for the future”.

This interviewee felt they had a supportive and positive relationship with their line manager and that they received an appropriate level of supervision and oversight for their needs.

Office bases

Most CRC staff remained co-located with NPS staff in locations that had not changed since *Transforming Rehabilitation*. The one exception to this was in Maidstone where CRC staff had moved to new offices in May 2016. The new accommodation was of a high standard, reflecting Seetec’s stated intention to value staff and service users. Staff told us that, where minor problems with the specification of the new buildings had been identified, Seetec had listened to their concerns and found acceptable short-term fixes pending permanent solutions.

Senior managers told us that they had been frustrated by what they described as NOMS’s inconsistent approach to their management of the national NPS estate. Seetec’s bid had been predicated on sharing offices with the NPS, but NOMS had started to require the CRC to vacate shared offices. Sourcing suitable new accommodation was problematic and remained a challenge for the future.

Supporting systems

Seetec had migrated NOMS’s national systems (the case management system, nDelius, and the Offender Assessment System, OASys) onto its own secure computer networks in May 2016. Staff in all the CRC’s offices had been provided with new and improved IT hardware, a welcome initiative.

Seetec had planned to deliver new software to improve case management and had started to develop new assessment, case recording and management information systems. Progress on this had been held back by NOMS’s information security requirements which the CRC believed to be unnecessarily stringent. We have made no evaluation of those requirements.

Only the assessment function of the new software had been given provisional approval by NOMS. It was not possible to roll out this function alone, for technical reasons, and so it seemed unlikely that the new systems could be implemented in the current financial year. This had caused considerable frustration within Seetec.

The NPS

The NPS is a relatively new national, regionalised organisation. Operational services are delivered in-house, save for those commissioned from the CRC. Staff are drawn predominantly from the former Probation Trusts. The NPS is midway through an ambitious programme (known as E3) to standardise processes nationally.

National NPS workloads have risen noticeably in the last 12 months. National staffing levels have also risen, although the effects of this have not been apparent in Kent.

At the time of the inspection, the Kent LDU was not performing as well as required in respect of the 18 NOMS service levels applied nationally. Performance had deteriorated slightly in the business year 2015/2016. Using a red/amber/green rating, eight measures were said to be red, seven amber and three green in the year to date (April to mid June 2016).

The NPS has established a Stabilisation Board to evaluate why performance against the indicators was so poor. Work has started with a focus on court processes.

Staffing

As with the CRC, the NPS area did not start with a full complement of staff. Managers also believed they had been allocated too few staff by the formula used by NOMS to determine to which organisation each of the former Trust's staff would be allocated.

They had continued to struggle to recruit; many NPS teams were either carrying vacancies, reliant on agency staff or had high levels of newly appointed staff, often with little relevant practical experience. As an example, in June 2016 one part of Kent NPS with an establishment of 17 practitioners had 6 agency staff, 3 newly appointed PSOs, a vacancy and an officer on long-term absence, leaving only 6 experienced practitioners.

Well-known difficulties in recruiting experienced probation staff in Kent (see Local context) were compounded by high individual workloads (in part, a consequence of the level of vacancies), making the job less attractive to potential employees.

There had been high levels of sickness absence in most of the months since NPS inception. It was not possible to identify a clear trend, although the problem had been most acute between December 2015 and February 2016, coinciding with the period from which our sample of inspection cases was drawn. During this 3 month period, 1,116 days were lost to sickness, the equivalent of over 200 person/weeks absence. The data showed the greatest incidence of sickness absence in January 2016, with 29 members of staff being absent for an average of 15.5 days per absentee in the month. This posed a very significant problem for the organisation.

The reliance on inexperienced and agency staff was problematic as, although likely to be skilled, they did not necessarily have current practical experience of the specific work they were employed to deliver. Managers acknowledged that there had been difficulties providing sufficient suitable training for this group, for practical reasons (see Supporting systems).

Middle managers were routinely required to oversee staff in two locations, often distant. Covering for vacancies and sickness often further increased their span of control. There was a widespread belief that high workloads were leading to even the more experienced and resilient staff becoming ill. Staff morale was described as being at rock bottom. Despite these problems, senior managers locally had retained the confidence of most staff, who viewed the problems facing local leaders as insurmountable with the limited resources available.

There was little capacity to draft in staff from other parts of the NPS, but NOMS had recently designated Kent as a 'Red Site', thereby creating the possibility of offering additional rewards for staff agreeing to relocate from other divisions. This initiative had yet to bear fruit at the time of the inspection.

A plan to assign the management of approximately 100 long-term prisoners to staff based outside the division had been implemented, with limited success. We were told that other divisions had been asked to 'hold' the cases to ease local workload pressures. Managers reported that when these cases became active, those holding them were keen to transfer them back to Kent, thereby offering little actual respite.

Under the E3 programme, the Kent LDU would be expected to have in the region of 131 operational staff⁸. The current staffing complement was 109, a difference of 22 posts.

Office bases

NPS staff in the Kent LDU had remained in the same (former Probation Trust) premises following the implementation of *Transforming Rehabilitation*. These were sometimes basic, but often well located for the population they served.

Supporting systems

Since *Transforming Rehabilitation*, middle managers had been required, as elsewhere, to take on additional functional responsibilities for human resources, procurement and finance. There was an acute awareness that consequently, many SPO core tasks were not being completed – in particular the oversight, support and supervision of less experienced and agency staff.

SPOs emphasised that there was a significant amount of work generated when staff (whether permanent or temporary) left the service. Making sure that the incoming member of staff had the right skills for the job meant it was never possible to simply transfer a complete caseload. Making defensible decisions about the cases meant taking time to understand the individual circumstances of each offender.

We were told that NPS training was mainly organised regionally, sometimes cancelled, and often not held in convenient locations. As a consequence, some of the required national training for new staff had to be accessed remotely as distance learning using dated NPS systems. National and local IT systems were not compatible and so it was often impossible to complete mandatory training. Managers told us they were not allowed to purchase laptop computers to resolve these problems.

8 Based on the NPS caseload as at December 2015

Our report

In April 2016 we began a new programme of inspection of probation services, and this is the fourth inspection of the programme. We have reported already on the quality of services delivered in the Derbyshire, Durham, and York & North Yorkshire areas.

We inspected probation services in Kent in 2010, and again in March 2014, when services now delivered by the CRC and NPS were still being delivered by the Probation Trust. We summarised the outcomes from our 2014 inspection in the following table:

Outcomes	The proportion of work judged to have been done well enough
Assisting sentencing	86%
Delivering the sentence of the court	74%
Reducing the likelihood of reoffending	63%
Protecting the public	58%
Delivering effective work for victims	64%

We concluded at that time that work to protect the public was not being delivered well enough, whereas work to assist sentencing (court work), deliver the sentence of the court and reduce the likelihood of reoffending was being delivered to an acceptable standard.

In this report, we report separately on the effectiveness of the CRC and NPS in the area in relation to:

- protecting the public
- reducing reoffending
- abiding by the sentence.

We also report on how effective the two organisations are in working together and with others.

We set out our inspection methodology in Appendix 1 and our data analysis from inspected cases in Appendix 3.

3. An evaluation of the quality of probation services in Kent

- Protecting the public
- Reducing reoffending
- Abiding by the sentence

Protecting the public

CRC effectiveness

CRC performance was mixed.

The CRC had correctly *assessed* the risk of serious harm level throughout the period of supervision in most of the cases inspected. Almost 60% of our sample cases were medium risk cases and 46% had a previous or current conviction for domestic abuse. This is not an unusual CRC risk portfolio, in our experience to date.

Of the 53 cases in our sample, we assessed 34 as presenting a medium risk of serious harm, 18 as low risk of serious harm and 1 as a high risk of serious harm. We judged that this case had been misallocated (by the NPS), which is detailed in the following example. We also thought the service user clearly presented a high risk of serious harm, and so should have been subject to the escalation procedure.

Alongside rehabilitation, CRCs retain significant responsibilities for *managing* the risk of harm. We judged that in slightly over one-third of cases, the work delivered by the responsible officer was not sufficiently focused on protecting those at risk of harm from the service user, and that the responsible officer had not done all that they could reasonably have been expected to do to manage the risk of harm.⁹

Poor practice example: *Mark had been sentenced to custody without a pre-sentence report (PSR). There was no Risk of Serious Recidivism (RSR) score available for the current sentence, although he had been assessed recently as having a RSR score of 8.2⁹. In addition to the actuarial score provided by the recent RSR assessment, there were multiple factors in Mark's previous and current behaviour to indicate the imminent high risk of potentially serious harm being caused.*

The case was being managed by an inexperienced worker who, while willing, did not have the necessary level of skills or experience to manage such a case. Since Mark was complying with his accredited programme, this was seen to override other significant indicators of escalating harm. When Mark was charged with a further offence, he was subsequently recalled and remanded into custody.

Given the inexperience of the responsible officer, there was insufficient managerial oversight of this case.

No cases in our NPS sample had been escalated from the CRC and we saw none, other than that just described, that we judged should have had been escalated.

⁹ An RSR score of 6.90 or higher should have led to automatic allocation of the case to the NPS

Poor practice example: Eric was released on licence in January 2016. There had been no assessment or plan completed since that time. During the period of his licence, Eric had committed three further domestic abuse-related offences.

The record of contact failed to indicate that the responsible officer fully understood his behaviour or was focused on addressing it. There was a licence condition to attend the Building Better Relationships (BBR) programme, but minimal evidence on file of any referral or preparation for this. There had been a lack of robust challenge to some of Eric's views or of evidence suggesting he had repeatedly breached a restraining order and acted in ways that put his ex-partner at risk.

Following the last alleged breach of the restraining order, a warrant without bail had been issued by the court.

Despite the provision of induction and ongoing training for new staff, we found a number of cases where risk of harm issues were not properly addressed by inexperienced staff, and management oversight had not offered sufficient support to make sure positive outcomes could be achieved. Our concerns in relation to these cases were drawn to the specific attention of CRC managers.

In one in four cases in the CRC sample, staff told us that they did not feel that their training had been sufficient to help them work effectively with the individual offender.

Poor practice example: James was sentenced to a suspended sentence order with 20 rehabilitation activity requirement (RAR) days to be used to deliver work to challenge his domestic abuse. No work had been done on this during the first four months of the order, although six sessions had been delivered over the following three months. The responsible officer indicated that a RAR session aimed at addressing domestic abuse lasted some 20 minutes.

During the inspector's interview with the responsible officer, it emerged that the responsible officer had no real grasp of the risks James posed. The responsible officer was unable to articulate the risk triggers and had no clear insight into the behaviours that had constituted the harassment.

James had told the responsible officer that he had been arrested regarding further allegations against his ex-partner, the victim of his index offence. This was likely to have been in breach of his restraining order. The responsible officer had failed to record this adequately and had made no further enquiries. The responsible officer did not seem to realise the potential significance of this disclosure by the offender or appreciate the implications for child safeguarding or for protecting the victim.

There were good examples of the tenacity of staff to manage risk of harm issues.

Good practice example: *Rob had been convicted of harassment of his former partner. The responsible officer identified the need for drug and mental health services to supplement the work she was doing. She arranged for Rob to have residential treatment in another part of the country, and liaised with the relevant CRC to make sure the risks he presented were monitored. She had delivered interventions within the RAR days he had been sentenced to while he remained in Kent. Ultimately Rob had disengaged from probation and had been subject to appropriate enforcement action to return him to court.*

Interventions were available that could reduce the risk of harm posed by service users, although there had been problems with the delivery of all accredited programmes. As an example, when we interviewed participants on a BBR programme, we were told of significant delays in starting the programme. Of the 3 service users interviewed, 1 had waited 13 months, another 12 months, with the most recent of those interviewed having been sentenced 9 months prior to starting the programme.

Such delays are unacceptable. Managers knew that, but had not been able to remedy the problem quickly because of staffing difficulties. They had increased steadily the numbers of staff trained to deliver programmes. Waiting times were said now to be much shorter, but still our case sample included a number of cases where required programmes had not yet started.

Notwithstanding the delays, the overall feedback on the BBR programme was positive from all participants interviewed, typified by the following response:

Good practice example: *Luke described his relationship with his responsible officer as “brilliant”. He said work on his offending “began straight away, with lots of worksheets. He would give me copies of these at the end of the sessions which helped it all to sink in for me”. Luke was also positive about the group, saying: “I have learned a lot from the group. I am still in touch with my ex (we have children) but I know that I have changed my behaviour towards her. Before we used to argue all the time. Now I just ignore the ‘taunts’ which she makes, and focus on the discussions about the children. I have a new girlfriend now and I know that BBR has had a positive effect on my behaviour with her too. I did wrong, I accepted that from the outset, and have taken my sentence ‘on the chin’ but I won’t be reoffending. I have been much more ‘comfortable’ on probation than I thought”.*

The following table identifies the key enablers and barriers to the work of the CRC contributing to public protection:

Enablers		Barriers	
1.	Feedback from service users subject to programmes was generally positive.	1.	Some staff did not focus sufficiently on their duty to protect the public where offenders were assessed as presenting a risk of serious harm.
2.	Managers had moved as swiftly as they could to remedy staff shortages so as to improve the CRC's ability to deliver programmes.	2.	In some cases it appeared that training for new staff had not encouraged them to be sufficiently investigative about risks associated with their cases.

NPS effectiveness

NPS performance was mixed.

Assessment and planning

The NPS had correctly *assessed* the risk of serious harm level throughout the period of supervision in nearly all of the cases. Of the NPS cases in the inspection sample, slightly more than one-third of cases were assessed as presenting a high risk of serious harm during the period of the inspection, with the remainder being assessed as medium. Two-thirds of the sample were MAPPA eligible cases, with only one case managed as a Level 2.

We found planning to manage the risks posed by offenders less effective than their assessment. We judged that in slightly more than one in three cases, planning to manage the risk of harm to the general public and to children was insufficient. Performance was weaker still when we considered the risks to known victims, where we judged the planning as sufficient in less than half of relevant cases.

Overall, we judged that the responsible officer had been sufficiently focused on protecting those at risk of harm from the offender in six out of every ten cases.

Poor practice example: In the case of Rodney, the assessment correctly identified deficits in temper control and consequential thinking, and problems with substance abuse. The risk of harm he posed would have been reduced by him engaging in alcohol advocacy to reduce alcohol consumption, combined with him attending structured interventions to effect lasting change with thinking and behaviour.

The plan was insufficient as it only identified one objective, namely, to address his alcohol use. The court had ordered 50 RAR days, yet there was no clear plan as to how these would be used.

Additionally, the assessment and plan identified Rodney as a perpetrator of domestic abuse. There had been police call outs to his address but no charges brought. Nonetheless, the children were subject to 'child in need' plans due to emotional distress. The responsible officer had failed, however, to identify that they had a role to play in assessing and managing the risks posed to Rodney's partner and children, with whom he was still living. They thought that this was the responsibility of the social worker. Consequently, the responsible officer had not completed any specific work in relation to risk of harm in this case. Furthermore, there had been no management oversight of the case, which might otherwise have addressed these deficiencies.

Reviewing progress

We judged that the responsible officer had reviewed progress on managing the risk of harm in only four out of every ten cases where it was necessary to do so. Overall, we assessed that all reasonable action had been taken by the responsible officer to keep to a minimum the offender's risk of harm to others in just over half of all cases. In cases that involved statutory partners taking action, we considered that they had taken all reasonable action in slightly more than three-quarters of cases.

Poor practice example: Graham was convicted of a violent offence against his partner. There was a lack of evidence of an active focus on protecting the public; the responsible officer had made no referrals to delivery partners and there were no formal interventions delivered on a one-to-one basis. Furthermore, it was unclear how the responsible officer was monitoring Graham's relationships with intimate partners.

When Graham committed a further offence on the same victim, we would have expected the case to be reviewed, but it was not. Had a review taken place, the responsible officer could have adjusted the type and frequency of the contact in order to sufficiently monitor Graham's behaviour.

Poor practice example: When Terry was arrested for verbal assault on his pregnant partner, there was no consideration given as to how to monitor him and put in place plans to protect his partner. There was no review of the level of risk posed or of the risk management plan. There was insufficient monitoring of the alcohol treatment requirement imposed; instead, the responsible officer relied solely on Terry's account of his progress. He subsequently committed a physical assault on his partner.

There was, however, evidence of the effective management of high risk of harm cases through MAPPA, as the following case illustrates:

Good practice example: Pat had a long history of violent offending, receiving a lengthy custodial sentence in 2012 for malicious wounding. He suffered with mental illness and during his period in custody, was transferred to Broadmoor secure hospital for treatment of his personality disorder. He was released in early 2016 at his sentence expiry date, having been recalled from a previous release.

Prior to his recent release, a Level 3 MAPPA meeting was held with the NPS senior psychologist. This led to Pat receiving ongoing treatment from a specialist London clinic supported by Critical Public Protection Case funding, which covered both treatment fees and travel costs.

Via MAPPA, a range of measures were put in place to aid his resettlement. This included community outreach support; peer mentoring; help with benefits and setting up a bank account; housing support; registration with a GP; and structured activities.

The county-wide High Risk Housing Panel, which met on an eight weekly basis under the auspices of MAPPA, was able to find him accommodation and he was supported in gaining employment on an industrial estate.

In the six months since his release, Pat had not reoffended.

In half of the cases we inspected in the NPS, staff told us that they did not feel that their training had been sufficient to help them work effectively with the individual offender. Nonetheless, there were some good examples of staff demonstrating a natural instinct for public protection work, as in the following example:

Good practice example: *The responsible officer delivered the one-to-one victim empathy workbook and successfully encouraged Ben to complete the relevant homework. He engaged Ben well and helped to develop his motivation, as previous responses to supervision had been disappointing. He also delivered additional work around relationships. Demonstrating an alertness to Child Protection issues, the responsible officer contacted the courts to raise the issue that Ben’s curfew requirement could be putting his partner and her child at risk, seeking advice about how to change this requirement.*

The following table identifies the key enablers and barriers to the work of the NPS contributing to public protection:

Enablers		Barriers	
1.	Staff were able to accurately assess the risk of harm posed by offenders in nearly all cases.	1.	Staff needed to improve their focus on planning and delivering interventions to manage the risk of harm posed by offenders.
2.	Some staff had the necessary skills to engage offenders effectively and manage the risk of harm they posed.	2.	Staff were insufficiently alert, or not sufficiently well resourced, to respond to changes in offenders’ circumstances. As such, they did not reflect often enough any new or increased risks in assessments, plans and interventions.
		3.	Staff reported that training did not sufficiently meet their needs to assist in delivering effective interventions aimed at managing the risk of harm posed by offenders.

The CRC and NPS working together

Working relationships were generally good.

There was no significant difference in the quality of the information provided to the CRC compared with that prepared for cases that the NPS would manage.

We noted during our observation of court practice, however, that it was common for NPS staff to simply scan into nDelius the handwritten notes they had made to assist with the delivery of an oral PSR. Even where we judged that the quality of the oral report was sufficient (as in one case observed at first hand in court), the scanned handwritten notes were not sufficiently clear or detailed to be useful to the CRC responsible officer.

One case we inspected had been wrongly allocated by the NPS to the CRC, due to the non-completion of an RSR assessment and an insufficient assessment of risk of harm at the point of allocation. In our sample of cases we found none where the CRC had instigated the risk escalation process. NPS performance monitoring suggested that there had only been two such cases in the year to date. The performance target for responding to the risk escalation was met in both cases.

The following table identifies the key enablers and barriers to the work of the CRC and NPS working effectively together to achieve positive public protection outcomes:

Enablers		Barriers	
1.	There appeared to be no significant difference in the quality of the information provided by the NPS at the point of allocation between cases allocated to the CRC or NPS.	1.	The transfer of potentially important information on matters of risk contained within oral PSRs could be lost due to the inadequacies of handwritten and scanned notes.
2.	Risk escalation of cases between the CRC and NPS were infrequent but procedures for this appeared to be efficient.		

Reducing reoffending

CRC effectiveness

CRC performance was mixed. Assessment and planning were done to an acceptable standard, but delivery had not progressed sufficiently in about half the cases we inspected, although performance was improving. Review performance was poor.

The basic delivery model had evolved with the use of volunteers and a specific approach to imposing licence conditions.

The operating model in practice - The three team model

The three team model built on existing staff experience and was understood readily by newcomers. Staff within teams had to some extent specialised, and could develop expertise still further. Some, however, expressed concern that they could become deskilled in the work of other teams. Some in the rehabilitation team said they had already lost confidence in their knowledge about licence and post-sentence supervision cases.

Some also felt that, as assessment team members had little chance to undertake ongoing work with service users, they could become unrealistic in their expectations about what could be achieved. Others felt that work pressures between teams were imbalanced, with dealing with offenders posing a risk of harm necessarily more demanding. Some staff suggested staff rotation between teams would be beneficial.

The model has disadvantages for some service users in the short-term, and for overall service delivery longer-term; where an individual is already subject to an order, a further offence or old matter coming before a court necessitates a new NPS court report. If a further order is made, the case is then generally allocated to the CRC assessment team, prior to being further assigned to the original responsible officer. We came across this precise scenario. A service user was interviewed by three members of staff from the two organisations, despite being known and already assigned to a responsible officer with whom he had a good relationship.

Good practice example: *Steve's responsible officer understood that he found it disconcerting to be dealt with by so many people. As the CRC and NPS were still co-located, the responsible officer saw him after his appointments with the NPS and also the assessment team, to maintain the relationship.*

She commented about the division of labour: "This puts relationship-building a bit out of the window; we have been through all the difficult stuff with him in tears, and then he has to see someone else. He did not understand why he had to do this. I saw him after the appointments with the NPS and the assessment team, to support him".

We found instances in our inspection sample of multiple transfers of responsible officer. In our view, the lack of continuity of responsible officer was likely to have had a detrimental effect. With responsibilities at the start of a case necessarily split between the CRC and the NPS, it was important that every effort was made to minimise further disruption to the relationship between the responsible officer and the service user. Senior managers told us that they had recognised the issue and were exploring possible solutions, such as allowing exemptions to this aspect of the model in appropriate cases.

Poor practice example: *Tony had been referred to the BBR programme but had not yet been given a start date. There had been some one-to-one work, but he had had three responsible officers since being given his suspended sentence supervision order six months previously. All of his responsible officers had been agency staff.*

Consequently, there had been a lack of offence-focused work and poor continuity of service user management, both of which would have acted as barriers to rehabilitation.

Involving volunteers

Kent Probation Trust had created a volunteer unit in 2000 that the CRC had further developed. There was now a manager, three volunteer coordinators (PSO grades) and a full-time administrator. The volunteer recruitment process included a Disclosure and Barring Service check and mandatory training which was refreshed and updated periodically.

Good practice example: *There were 70 volunteers in the county with diverse previous experience. They included retired criminal justice staff, students and former service users.*

They were provided with telephones exclusively for use in connection with their volunteering. Volunteers were subject to the CRC's lone-working rules, meaning they had to check in every hour when they were working alone with service users.

They could contribute to the Through the Gate services by meeting prisoners up to 12 weeks prior to release to help them prepare for release. They could offer support in any appropriate area of a service user's life. Contacts could be in the community, at the probation office, or, if required, home visits with the responsible officer were a possibility.

The service was about to expand. Two peer coordinators had been recruited to deliver training for current service users who wanted to become involved as mentors for other service users.

Licence conditions

We were told by responsible officers that all those released on licence were required to have a programme condition imposed, and that it was difficult to get an exemption from managers. Despite the fact that the policy documents we saw were nuanced and appropriate, some staff had not understood the finer points of the policy; others reported that in reality they had felt under pressure to add accredited programmes to licences where the likelihood of a positive completion was not high. CRC managers told us that NOMS were aware of their strategy and had audited licence conditions and not raised significant concerns.

In one case, for example, a condition to complete an accredited programme to address domestic abuse had been applied to an offender who was unlikely to engage and who, indeed, went missing shortly after his release from prison. There had been no referral to the programme or preparation for it.

We were unable to make a definitive judgement at this stage on the effectiveness of adding accredited programme conditions to licences. Ultimately, success will be judged by the longer-term outcomes.

Assessment and planning

Overall, we judged that assessments undertaken shortly after the allocation were of sufficient quality. We found that in most cases, the assessment team had made a sufficient initial assessment identifying the factors linked to reoffending within a timeframe suitable to the case.

In the 53 CRC cases we inspected, the most frequently occurring priority factors for participants to address were thinking and behaviour (47 cases); relationships (28 cases); emotional well-being (24 cases); attitudes to offending (21 cases); drug misuse (18 cases); finance (11 cases); alcohol misuse (10 cases); accommodation (9 cases); lifestyle and associates (9 cases) and education, training and employment (ETE) (8 cases).

We expected to see the priority factors related to reoffending incorporated into the resultant planning. In most cases we found this done in relation to some of the most common factors, including drug misuse, ETE, and thinking and behaviour. Some others, however, were too infrequently reflected in planning. More attention could have been given to accommodation, financial management, relationships, emotional well-being, and lifestyle and associates.

We also assessed if planning sufficiently supported protective factors where they existed; this had been done adequately in two-thirds of the relevant cases. There was room for more improvement in planning to tackle service user offending, although again, most plans were sufficient. Assessment team members had specialised in a particular area of assessment and were confident in their ability to deliver the required assessments and plans.

Delivery

We inspected the cases of individuals sentenced to community or suspended sentence orders or who had been released on licence for approximately six months. At the six month stage, sufficient progress had been made in delivering the required interventions in half of the cases we inspected. In just over one-third of cases, there had been insufficient progress. In the remaining cases, despite all reasonable actions being taken by the responsible officer, the lack of service user engagement prevented progress.

The CRC had worked hard to make sure that interventions were available that would be likely to impact positively on reoffending. It had developed arrangements for delivering groupwork on offending behaviour, motivation to work, anger management, drink-driving and a one-to-one module for domestic abuse work. Responsible officers in some locations had taken the decision to take individual sessions from each programme rather than run the groups as designed.

We found a complex picture of service delivery, however, with the quality and availability of some interventions improving, while others were deteriorating. At the time of the inspection, drugs and alcohol services in the county were being reconfigured. At the start of the year (from when our sample was drawn), there had been dedicated substance misuse teams in the criminal justice charities, Turning Point and the Crime Reduction Initiative (CRI) (subsequently rebranded as Change, Grow, Live). This specialist provision had since been reduced and amalgamated into generic provision.

For cases referred to Turning Point and the CRI at the start of the year, we found some good interventions to address alcohol problems. Responsible officers told us, however, that for more recent cases, there had been significant difficulties gaining access to treatment for service users and obtaining feedback on their progress. The chances of such a service being available to a newly convicted service user appeared to have reduced.

Good practice example: Malcolm had an entrenched alcohol problem and was subject to a community order with a RAR.

When he reoffended, an alcohol treatment requirement was added, to be delivered by Turning Point. This provided him with extra help to address his alcohol misuse, including one-to-one sessions with a key worker and groupwork support.

Building on the motivational work already done, Malcolm was placed on a medically-supervised community detoxification programme. This involved frequent monitoring of his alcohol intake using an intoximeter. Despite a few minor relapses, there were signs of good progress.

Integrated Offender Management

The CRC was a key player in the Integrated Offender Management (IOM) arrangements, holding approximately two-thirds of the cases managed within the IOM teams. Probation managers were involved as members of an inter-agency panel in the selection and deselection of cases requiring the integrated approach. CRC staff spent considerable time working at the police station with the police IOM staff, who were also civilians.

There had been some tensions around when to instigate a recall, which were largely caused by a lack of training for police IOM staff about the powers of responsible officers. This had recently been addressed through training, in conjunction with the NPS.

We saw examples of the intensive support that could be given under the IOM scheme, delivered in partnership with other relevant agencies.

***Good practice example:** Craig, a drug user with a significant history of burglary, was released with stringent licence conditions following a four year sentence. Despite considerable efforts being made to house him, he was homeless at the point of release, but was provided with three nights' accommodation in a bed and breakfast hotel, while waiting for a suitable bed to become available in a project run by Stonham, a local housing agency.*

Once accommodated in a drug-free environment through Stonham, he began to settle and made excellent initial progress. He was subjected to voluntary GPS monitoring, giving the IOM team a high degree of assurance about his movements. He was also subject to drug testing by the CRI.

Unfortunately, Craig relapsed and was arrested for possession of a small amount of cocaine at the hostel. He was appropriately given a final warning on his licence and the IOM team increased his status to being a 'red' nominal, meaning they took a very close interest in his activities, seeing him four times per week. Due to this 'red' status, his activities were monitored closely by police. This led to a swift arrest for new charges of supplying drugs. He was remanded in custody and had his licence revoked.

Meeting the needs of service users

We found that responsible officers were alert to the needs of service users and paid attention to the factors that would increase the likelihood of positive outcomes. Where this necessitated practical actions, we found that these were suitably prioritised.

Good practice example: Jill was a vulnerable woman who had previously been the victim of domestic abuse. While in custody, her flat had been burgled and damaged and important items had been taken. The responsible officer rightly assessed that, until these practical issues were resolved, the impact of any work undertaken would be negligible.

The responsible officer contacted a charity in order to obtain the essential items needed to enable Jill to live in her flat. The practical assistance of obtaining these items strengthened their relationship and increased the likelihood that meaningful work could be carried out. There had been no new offences since release.

Staff in some locations were able to introduce service users to health trainers funded by Public Health England, a promising innovation. These health trainers had a broad remit to prevent ill-health by promoting behavioural change. Typically, they offered six to eight sessions and tailored the intervention to meet the specific needs of the service user. They were able to work with up to 75 probation service users at any one time. They focused on emotional well-being, mental health, and alcohol or drugs issues, while also providing any intervention which would broadly contribute to improvements in either mental or physical health.

Good practice example: Aaron was a 19 year old former heroin user with a burglary conviction against his mother. During a previous community order, contact had been lost with him for some considerable time. When finally rearrested, he was drug-free.

The responsible officer assessed that the most fruitful course of action would be to build his self-esteem so as to support his apparent transition to a non-offending lifestyle. Good progress was maintained and Aaron secured permanent work. The responsible officer adjusted his required reporting pattern to take account of the new employment.

Due to the good relationship with his responsible officer, Aaron felt able to disclose the fact that he had misused some prescription drugs. The responsible officer identified that this was a potentially worrying development and referred him to the health trainers for support. He attended a number of appointments with them and was helped to control his use of prescription drugs.

Most staff had a sufficient understanding of techniques to help substance misusers and tailored their approach to their individual needs (but see concerns about future provision in chapter three).

Good practice example: John was convicted of supplying class B drugs and given a suspended sentence order.

There was a thorough assessment of his individual circumstances, needs and strengths, and good liaison between the various agencies involved in the case. The case record detailed the use of specific techniques, including the 'cycle of change' model, illustrating where John fitted into the change process and what would be needed to move on to next stage of the cycle. John found this useful and was able to describe how he had used the model to explain his progress to his family.

There were good examples of staff making sure that they worked intensively with service users during times when the impact of interventions would be most beneficial. This ability to deliver services flexibly was likely to be a significant enabler of good outcomes.

Good practice example: Damien was a chaotic, homeless drug user who had previously been stealing food for himself. The responsible officer identified a project that could offer accommodation to help him stabilise his lifestyle.

On the day of his release, a meeting was arranged and the responsible officer accompanied him to the project. Damien was assessed for suitability and a place found for him, although the responsible officer had to work hard to encourage him to take up the place, seeing him daily to do so. The responsible officer also arranged for him to be registered with a GP, facilitated the opening of a bank account and organised for his attendance at a local charity where he could receive three meals a day.

It was expected that he would shortly start volunteering at the project where he was currently a service user. Six months after release he was still in the same accommodation.

Reviewing progress and potential impact

We judged that a review of progress against the priority areas designed to reduce reoffending was required in 39 of the 53 CRC cases examined. We found that reviews had been completed to a sufficient standard in slightly fewer than half of the cases. Where it was necessary to adjust planning to take account of the review, this had happened in slightly fewer than half of the cases. We thought this was poor performance.

We assessed what impact the work undertaken to address the relevant factors had had in making the participant less likely to reoffend. We considered that the outcome had been achieved, or sufficient progress had been made against the relevant factor, in around half of the cases. It was disappointing that progress on drug issues and ETE was particularly poor. As mentioned earlier, drug services in the county were in the process of reconfiguration, and there was little available in the way of specialist provision for ETE.

The following table identifies the key enablers and barriers to the work of the CRC to reduce reoffending:

Enablers		Barriers	
1.	The CRC was performing well against the contractual requirements set by NOMS; although these were not qualitative, they were a pre-requisite of good performance.	1.	Despite their best efforts, software implementation was delayed due to issues relating to compliance with NOMS's information security requirements.
2.	Staff morale was good with most staff understanding and supporting the Seetec model of delivery. There had been a successful strategy to recruit new staff and make sure they had a full induction and training.	2.	There was uncertainty about the CRC's ability to continue to share accommodation with the NPS. This put pressure on the CRC to find new suitable accommodation.
3.	Where new offices had been commissioned, these were of a high quality and new IT hardware was available.	3.	The model of service delivery built in an additional transfer of responsibility and a lack of continuity of responsible officers.
4.	The assessment of service users' needs at the start of orders and licences was generally of a high quality.	4.	There was a lack of provision to address ETE needs and substance misuse. This led to some needs that had been assessed as present and identified in planning remaining undelivered.
5.	Responsible officers delivered practical, individualised support and interventions. Delivery was flexible, according to need.		

6.	The IOM team worked well in partnership with others, and put intensive interventions in place both to support service users and to make sure that they were brought to justice swiftly when required.		
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NPS effectiveness

Performance was mixed, but poor in key respects.

Court reports were of a good standard overall. Allocation decisions were of variable quality. Plans were usually of an acceptable standard, although they did not address protective factors often enough. Delivery was poor, mainly due to the intense staffing difficulties already described (see chapter two). Performance on reviewing cases was also poor.

Court reporting

We found that a PSR had been produced in nearly 70% of cases. The reports we saw had proposals that focused on the right issues in 81% of cases. Relative to other LDUs we have inspected, this was a strong performance. We thought that the overall assessment (at the point of allocation) in relation to reducing reoffending was sufficient in 73% of cases.

It was clear that those that worked in the court were thought to be delivering a high quality service. Senior managers told us that they aimed to staff the court with experienced officers, rarely using agency staff.

Good practice example: Other agencies working within the court setting were appreciative of the efforts of the NPS court team. The following testimonial was received by an SPO from a deputy justice's clerk during the inspection:

"The probation team here is always a pleasure to work with, always prepared to put themselves out to help and to ensure we can deal with as many cases as possible to conclusion. An example of this were two extras that came in yesterday afternoon - two new custody cases which we started to hear at 4.00 pm when we thought the court was almost finished - both required serious stand down reports. [NPS staff] willingly undertook these and were very efficient in completing full reports in a reasonable time and enabled cases to be completed by 5.00pm. The legal team is very aware that Maidstone is always a busy court and that [the] team also have this to contend with on a daily basis".

We also interviewed a District Judge who reported that he was equally impressed with the standard of probation court work, again highlighting the quality of reports and the flexibility of staff in delivering them.

Allocating cases

The NPS was less effective in making allocation decisions than we had expected. The rules governing the allocation of cases were complex, although it was not acceptable that 4 of the 28 cases in our NPS sample had been misallocated to the NPS.

***Poor practice examples:** Richard was given a sentence of four months imprisonment suspended for 12 months for an offence that would have been eligible for management under MAPPA had he received 12 months imprisonment. As the suspended custodial sentence was for only four months, the case was not MAPPA eligible. Nonetheless, it had been allocated to the NPS as a MAPPA case.*

A similar error was made in the case of Sue who received a suspended sentence order with two concurrent eight month periods of imprisonment. This was mistakenly calculated as 16 months imprisonment, leading the NPS to believe the case was MAPPA eligible, when it was not.

In another case, Michael was allocated to the NPS on the basis of a sentence of imprisonment of over 12 months, although he was not high risk and the offence was not MAPPA eligible.

Martin received a short custodial sentence for an offence of violence. He was correctly assessed as posing a medium risk of serious harm to others and had a low RSR score. Despite this, he was retained by the NPS. The responsible officer could not account for this.

Assessment and planning

We found that, for cases managed by the NPS, nearly three-quarters had a sufficient initial assessment identifying the factors linked to reoffending within a timeframe suitable to the case.

In the 28 NPS cases in our sample, the most frequently occurring priority factors for offenders to address were thinking and behaviour (23 cases); ETE (16 cases); attitudes to offending (12 cases); lifestyle and associates (11 cases); alcohol misuse (10 cases); relationships (9 cases); emotional well-being (8 cases); accommodation (8 cases); and drug misuse (7 cases).

We expected to see the priority factors related to reoffending incorporated into sentence planning. We found that for most factors this was usually done in a high proportion of cases, but not often enough when the priority factors were relationships or emotional well-being. We also assessed if planning sufficiently supported protective factors, such as family relationships and employment where they existed. We judged that this was so in nearly half of the relevant cases.

Most plans that we inspected were sufficient, particularly in regard to drug misuse, ETE, thinking and behaviour, and attitudes to offending. There was more room for improvement in the areas of emotional well-being (where under half of relevant cases had sufficient planning), and lifestyle and associates, which was sufficiently addressed in only one-third of relevant cases.

Reviewing progress and likely impact

We judged that reviewing progress against the priority areas designed to reduce reoffending was required in 22 of the 28 cases. We found that such a review had been completed to a sufficient standard in only half of these cases. Where it was necessary to adjust planning to take account of the review, this had also happened in one-third of the relevant cases.

***Good practice example:** Colin had an extensive list of previous convictions, many for violent offences. He had not always been compliant with previous community sentences. On this occasion, he had received a 20 month custodial sentence for affray.*

Upon release, the responsible officer drew up an appropriate sentence plan and started offence-focused work promptly. The responsible officer recorded two months into the licence that: 'Colin has completed his victim empathy work with a moderately good amount of input and understanding. We discussed his understanding and there are some shortcomings but upon reflection and discussion he was able to understand the full impact of offending on both direct and indirect victims of crime. He was quite proud to have completed this programme as this is the first offence-related work he has ever completed'.

Six months into the licence, Colin had not reoffended.

We assessed what impact the work undertaken to address the relevant factors had had in making the offender less likely to reoffend. We considered that the outcome had been achieved, or sufficient progress had been made against the relevant factor, in around one-third of the cases. It was disappointing that progress on drug issues, relationships, emotional well-being and mental health was particularly slow.

In common with previous inspections, we found examples of individual staff performing to a high standard. Overall, however, we judged that in too many cases the performance of the NPS was not to a sufficient standard. Given the difficulties with staffing, this was not surprising.

Good practice example: Ian had an extensive criminal history and was released on licence after a violent affray under the supervision of a relatively new PSO. His previous response to supervision had been poor.

The assessment of Ian's offending and the plan to tackle it were appropriate for the needs of the case. Supervision sessions were well planned and effectively delivered. Victim issues were responded to promptly and licence conditions were appropriate and fully monitored. Ian completed the victim empathy workbook and made real progress in relation to his thinking skills, gambling and alcohol misuse.

Seven months after release, Ian had removed himself from some of the inappropriate people who had featured in his previous criminal lifestyle and had not reoffended.

Poor practice examples: Barry was a temporary PSO employed through an agency. Despite his experience in youth justice work, he had no probation experience. He told us that on arrival he was allocated 47 cases, which had now risen to 62, some of which were high risk. He was supposed to receive guidance from experienced staff but felt that they were too busy to provide the level of support he required. He said he had received: "a health and safety induction on arrival but no real probation induction; OASys training was five months after I started".

Martin, who had been in post for eight months, told us that he had only had one formal supervision session with his manager who had been off sick. Other managers had stepped in but support had not been consistent, although he had received some assistance from his practice training assessor. He described his line manager variously as either not available or not approachable when they were in the office.

The problems caused by a high staff turnover were reflected in the views of the responsible officers and the offenders we interviewed. Many offenders felt that having to repeatedly change responsible officer was a barrier to their rehabilitation. In a focus group for NPS responsible officers we heard the following:

"The current situation is not helpful for an individual's rehabilitation. The current arrangements contribute to the revolving door process through the creation of insecurity. It does not help build up rapport with the individual. Offenders have said 'I don't want another officer', or even 'I will come to your

office to see you rather than have another change of officer!’ It takes a lot of time to build up a relationship, and this is about human being relationships, but it is difficult, taking over cases from other officers”.

Another officer quoted an offender as saying:

“You will be the fifth person I have told my life story to”.

The following table identifies the key enablers and barriers to the work of the NPS to reduce reoffending:

Enablers		Barriers	
1.	LDU leadership was strong, with a commitment to delivering the best possible services within the constraints within which they were operating.	1.	There were significant problems recruiting experienced and qualified staff. This problem was exacerbated by high levels of sickness absence. Combined, these factors led to a high turnover of responsible officer for individual offenders, hampering the prospect of successful rehabilitation.
2.	Feedback from courts suggested that staff were seen as flexible and committed and were delivering reports that met the needs of the court.	2.	The proportion of cases that were wrongly allocated (to the NPS) was unacceptably high.
3.	The quality of reports or assessments produced at court was consistent, regardless of the organisation to which the case would ultimately be allocated.	3.	IT equipment in courts was either lacking or inadequate.
4.	Most initial assessments and plans were of a sufficient quality.	4.	Training for new officers and agency staff was insufficient.

The CRC and NPS working together

Working relationships were generally good.

The CRC had produced good quality information leaflets in an electronic format that were publicly available via the KSS CRC website. Unfortunately, due to either the age of the NPS software, or restrictions placed on access, staff in the NPS were unable to access these leaflets through the equipment with which they were provided. The NPS staff told us that they wanted printed copies which had, at the time of the inspection, not been made available to them.

Both the CRC and the NPS seconded members of staff on a part-time basis to the central referral unit of children’s social care services. Court staff reported that this allowed easy access at the pre-sentence stage to information essential for safe sentencing. Due to the complexities in data sharing subsequent to the *Transforming Rehabilitation* programme, no solution had been found that would enable the CRC secondees to provide information to the NPS and vice versa.

Some NPS court staff told us that it was possible to telephone a central number in the CRC and gain a first appointment for offenders receiving community sentences, although some said this was not the case, meaning offenders were sometimes told to await a letter with their first appointment. CRC managers told us that the central point referral system operated in all offices. There was a need for a clearer joint understanding on this point.

The following table identifies the key enablers and barriers to the work of the CRC and NPS working together to reduce reoffending:

Enablers		Barriers	
1.	Good relationships between practitioners from the CRC and NPS had been maintained at a local level.	1.	Secondees to the central referral unit did not cover for each other in times of absence.
2.	Promotional material aimed at the courts had been produced and was available through the CRC website.		
3.	There were generally good processes for the CRC to provide information to the NPS for first appointments.		

Abiding by the sentence

CRC effectiveness

The CRC's performance was noticeably mixed, but improving. It was exceptionally good in some respects and unacceptably poor in others.

The operating model

The CRC had been innovative, and had invested in listening to service users' views. It had commissioned User Voice, an independent charity, to work with them in a number of different ways.

A service user council had been established and meetings were held every two months between service user representatives and the CRC Chief Executive Officer.

Service users always contributed towards selection processes for most roles and were consulted about the developments in service delivery. Two major surveys had been undertaken in November 2015 to assess the success of the CRC in engaging service users. Over a two week period, all service users attending for appointments that had been supervised for at least two months were encouraged to complete a survey. Of the 1,167 service users attending during the period, over one-third responded. This provided a clear benchmark for engaging service users, and gave comprehensive and positive information.

Delivery

We assessed that, in nearly nine out of every ten cases, the service user's individual diversity needs were sufficiently taken into account during the assessment stage. This is exceptionally good performance.

In two-thirds of cases, sufficient effort had been made to fully involve the service user in drawing up the plan. We judge that to be a relatively good performance, reflective of the CRC's intention to put the service user at the heart of their own rehabilitation. One service user told us:

“The probation office was just somewhere I could come to get help for my problems; yes they definitely helped; my probation officer takes time to listen to me and gives me sound advice. It's still hard; I've not got a job and my days are empty. I need to be doing something positive. Probation can help with that”.

At the time of the inspection, when most cases examined were approximately seven months into the supervision period, we assessed that sufficient progress had been made in delivering the requirements of the sentence in over two-thirds of cases.

We also judged that, in the same proportion of cases, contact levels had been sufficient to meet the needs of the case, and that the service user had made the necessary efforts to comply with the sentence.

Where there had been absences, we assessed that on 70% of occasions, these had been dealt with appropriately.

There were, however, some cases where the CRC had failed to deliver as expected, as in the following two examples:

Poor practice example: *One case in our CRC sample showed very little interaction with the offender.*

Vic attended an initial appointment with a duty officer upon his release from custody. A further contact took place with a different duty officer some two weeks afterwards, recording that Vic had attended without appointment saying he had been in hospital for two days. There was no evidence of any other engagement with Vic, or of any work having been done with him. The Thinking Skills accredited programme that had been added as a licence condition had not been started.

Vic committed a further offence of theft from shop. As a result, he was returned to custody after just two months in the community and his licence was terminated.

Poor practice example: *Ralph had not attended sufficient appointments to address his offending behaviour. The first contact with his responsible officer was six weeks after the order was first made. In the first two months of the order, he was seen twice at the probation office. Seven months into the order he had had six appointments in total, but there was no evidence that offence-focused work had taken place or any preparation had been undertaken to participate in the BBR programme as required by his order. It seemed unlikely he would comply with the requirements of the order in the limited time remaining.*

There were also examples of good practice, as the following exemplifies:

Good practice example: *Julie had a lengthy record of previous convictions. She was vulnerable, having been a victim of sexual and domestic abuse and having led a chaotic lifestyle including misusing drugs. Her appointment-keeping was poor.*

The responsible officer convened a special meeting to better understand why she was not engaging with supervision. This approach gave Julie the opportunity to disclose that she felt overwhelmed by some areas of her life, which was preventing her from engaging in a process of change. She was invited to contribute to a revised sentence plan, which, having helped to draw it up, felt like a meaningful document to her.

Since then she had kept all her appointments, and had disclosed some highly sensitive information about herself. She had not reoffended for five months.

Rehabilitative activity requirement

As we have found elsewhere, there was widespread confusion in Kent about RAR days and how they should be used. Some staff reported pressure from their managers to use all of the RAR days, even though they were expressed as a maximum number. Where all necessary work had been completed, this seemed to be an inefficient use of resources.

Unpaid work

The CRC had broadly managed to recruit sufficient staff in most areas of work, the notable exception to this was in respect of supervisors for unpaid work. Managers told us that, despite many rounds of recruitment and changes to job descriptions, they had simply not succeeded in attracting enough suitable applicants.

Advertisements for these posts remained on the CRC website at the time of the inspection. We were told that due to technical problems with the website they were defined as 'zero hours contracts'. A more detailed reading of the job description clarified that the intention had been to offer each applicant a significant number of hours on a 'casual' basis. Steps were being taken to rectify this problem, although this remained the position at the time of writing the report.

The impact of this inability to recruit was serious. We saw many instances in case records where service users had been required to 'stand down'; the service user had attended as instructed but was then sent away without being given the chance to work (usually while being credited with one hour for attendance). This was unfair on the service user who might have had to either give up the opportunity for paid work, or at best had missed the chance to do other activities. We judged that it reduced personal motivation and discouraged positive engagement. We found this problem in a number of CRCs in our recent thematic inspection of the delivery of unpaid work¹⁰, although not to the extent that we have found it in Kent.

The scale of the problem varied across the area. CRC data showed that in June 2016, the rate of stand downs in East Kent had been slightly over 10%, while in North and West Kent the rate had been just over 20%. One individual office had a stand down rate of over 30% for May and June 2016. In practice, this meant that in Kent, on 307 occasions in May and 245 occasions in June, service users were denied the opportunity to undertake their unpaid work and, therefore, to progress with their court order. We judged this as clearly unacceptable.

It was noteworthy that performance against the two service levels specifically relating to unpaid work which focus on commencement were both being comfortably met.

The following table identifies the key enablers and barriers to the CRC gaining compliance of individuals with their sentence:

10 *A thematic inspection of the delivery of unpaid work*, HMI Probation, January 2016

Enablers		Barriers	
1.	The CRC valued the opinions of service users. The involvement of the Chief Executive Officer reflected the seriousness with which service users' views were held.	1.	There were some instances of service users not being seen frequently enough to meet the requirements of their sentence and help them bring about the necessary change.
2.	Service users were usually appropriately engaged in drawing up their own plans.	2.	There was a training need among some staff about the appropriate use and recording of RAR days.
		3.	There were insufficient staff employed in unpaid work to meet the demand for placements.

NPS effectiveness

NPS performance was acceptable.

Delivery

In slightly over two-thirds of the cases in our sample, we judged that the service user's individual diversity needs were sufficiently taken into account during the assessment stage.

We also found that in a similar proportion of cases, sufficient effort had been made to fully involve the service user in drawing up the plan. When we interviewed offenders, we found that comments about responsible officers were usually positive. One said:

"The probation officer asked me what I wanted to achieve and involved me in the planning. I feel that she is a good listener, shows compassion, and gives me inspiration when I'm feeling down. She has provided me with good advice about how I can access services the services I need".

Another said:

"Probation officers are good listeners and what I particularly liked was that discussion could be two ways. I thought they would just be asking me questions. I am very pleased that I could ask them questions and they would answer helpfully".

At the time of the inspection, when most cases examined were approximately seven months into the supervision period, we assessed that sufficient progress had been made in delivering the requirements of the sentence in the majority of cases.

We also judged that in most cases, contact levels had been sufficient to meet the needs of the case, and that the service user had made the necessary efforts to comply with the sentence. Where there had been absences, we assessed that on nearly all occasions these had been dealt with appropriately. The following case demonstrated good efforts towards compliance from both the service user and the practitioner:

Good practice example: *Tommy had considerable learning deficits.*

The responsible officer communicated very clearly with him, making weekly routine appointments that he insisted on him keeping on each occasion despite Tommy having a fairly long journey by bus to reach the office.

There were many examples of reiterating and reinforcing of messages to Tommy, including what was required under the conditions of his licence and as a result of the sexual offences prevention order. There was also good liaison with adult social care services who had a supporting role in this case.

There were, however, some examples where the responsible officer had failed to engage with the offender as expected.

Poor practice example: *In Charlie's case, there was no active engagement with him by the responsible officer. Little consideration had been given to how Charlie, a black male who had been incarcerated for eight years and who was moving on release from London to Kent, would settle into a predominantly white community.*

There was no home visit to see his accommodation and form a picture of how he was settling in. There was also no work to tackle his drugs issues, despite this being the main presenting factor when he went into custody.

No meaningful work was done with Charlie, other than in respect of his employment and training needs.

The following table identifies the key enablers and barriers to the NPS gaining the compliance of individuals with their sentence:

Enablers		Barriers	
1.	Assessments and plans were usually drawn up in consultation with the offender, and mainly took account of diversity needs.	1.	In some cases insufficient attention had been paid to diversity issues which may have impacted on motivation and the potential for positive outcomes.
2.	Sufficient progress had been made delivering the requirements of the sentence in most cases.		
3.	Absences were routinely dealt with appropriately.		

The CRC and NPS working together

Working relationships were generally positive.

For cases where an offender known to the CRC appeared before the court, the process of receiving information about their progress on their existing order worked well. A pro forma had been developed to capture this information which court staff thought was an improvement on the practice which existed immediately after inception.

There had been some difficulties embedding the processes required to make enforcement operate smoothly. The CRC and NPS had worked together through the service integration group meetings to resolve these issues.

The CRC and NPS had also worked well together to develop training designed to raise the standard of breach reports. Court staff told us that this had led to an improvement in quality. The number of cases being breached had increased slightly since the time of the creation of the CRC.

Relationships and performance had been improved when administrative staff from the CRC and NPS worked together to increase mutual understanding of the various protocols and processes within nDelius. Through this, CRC staff appreciated that unless processes were followed exactly as mandated, NPS staff could not see CRC-generated documents.

The problems that the CRC had in delivering accredited programmes, and unpaid work mentioned earlier, affected working relationships. The NPS was frustrated that these services, also provided for their offenders, were not as readily available as they would have liked.

Some NPS staff also questioned the payment mechanisms for these services, with full payment triggered by the first attendance (excluding any induction session), regardless of completion. We were told that there would be no difference in payment for an offender ordered to undertake 100 hours of unpaid work, whether they completed one or all hours. The NPS had set up an audit process to make sure that it was not being charged for interventions that had not been started. This was not an issue related to the Seetec contract and was in line with the NOMS's contract.

The following table identifies the key enablers and barriers to the work of the CRC and NPS working together to gain compliance of individuals with their sentence:

Enablers		Barriers	
1.	Communication between the CRC and NPS court staff appeared to be effective in most cases. Where there had been problems, these were resolved through dialogue, resulting in improved performance.	1.	The CRC was not able to deliver all of the services to NPS offenders in a timely and effective manner.
		2.	The mechanisms established by NOMS for the NPS to be charged for the delivery of services by the CRC did not appear to be reasonable.

Appendices

- 1: Inspection methodology
- 2: Background data
- 3: Data analysis from inspected cases
- 4: Glossary
- 5: Acknowledgements

Appendix 1: Inspection methodology

HMI Probation's Quality & Impact programme commenced in April 2016, and has been designed to examine probation work in discrete geographical areas, equivalent to a police/Police and Crime Commissioner area, regardless of who delivers the work. We are interested in the work of both the CRC and the NPS, together with that of any partners working with these organisations.

An inspection team visited the area for two full weeks. In the first week, we inspected a pre-determined number of cases (community orders, suspended sentence orders, and licences) of individuals sentenced or released from prison about six months previously. These cases may not have been fully representative of all the eligible cases, but we tried to make sure that the proportions matched in terms of (i) gender, (ii) ethnicity, (iii) sentence type and (iv) office location – with minimum numbers set for (i) and (ii). Cases were also selected from the full range of risk of serious harm and likelihood of reoffending levels, and from as many responsible officers as possible. In Kent, the sample consisted of 81 cases, 53 of which were CRC cases and 28 of which were NPS cases.

The team then returned two weeks later to follow-up issues that had emerged in the first week, and spoke with key staff, managers and partners. We attempted to speak with those service users who provided their consent to being contacted. In this inspection, we spoke with 15 service users (9 from the CRC and 6 from the NPS) whose cases we inspected.

The inspection focused on assessing how the quality of practice contributed to achieving positive outcomes for service users, and evaluating what encouraging impact had been achieved. Inspectors were mindful that current impact could provide evidence of progress towards long-term desistance. In particular, we were seeking to report on whether reoffending was reduced, the public were protected from harm and individuals had abided by their sentence.

Information on the Role of HMI Probation and Code of Practice can be found on our website:

<http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/about-hmi-probation/>

The Inspectorate is a public body. Anyone wishing to comment on an inspection, a report or any other matter falling within its remit should write to:

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

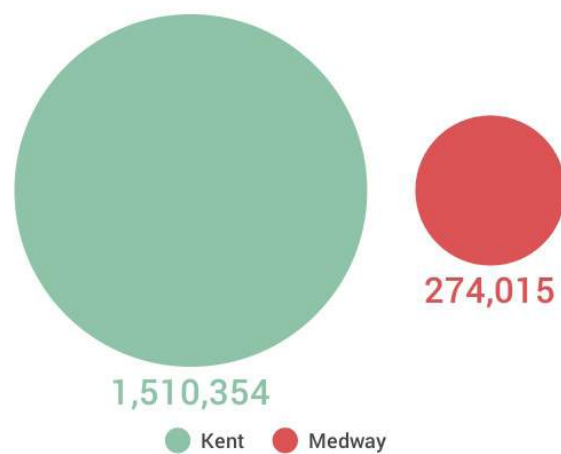
Appendix 2: Background data

This inspection covers the Kent county council area comprising 12 district councils, and the unitary authority of Medway.

Population demographics

The population of Kent was estimated at 1,510,354 in 2014; Medway was estimated at 274,015.

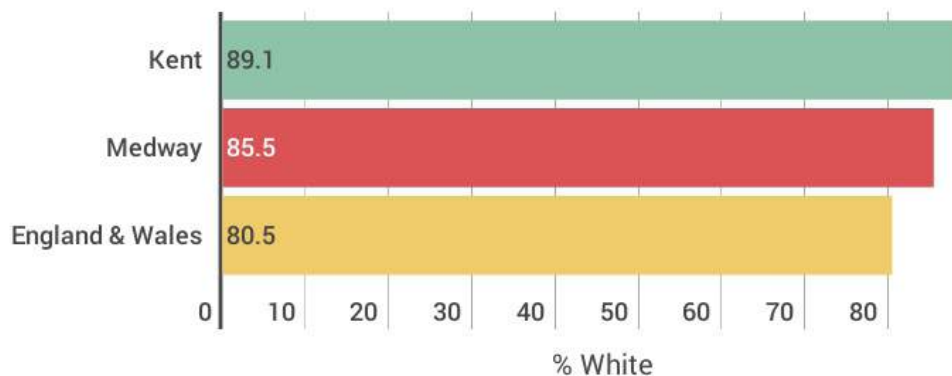
Figure 2.1: Population estimates by local authority, mid-2014



Source: Office for National Statistics, June 2015

Kent and Medway have a higher proportion of residents from white groups than the England & Wales average.

Figure 2.2: Ethnicity by local authority, 2011 census



Source: Office for National Statistics, Dec 2012

Levels of deprivation and crime

As shown by Figure 2.3, unemployment in Kent overall is about the same as the English average. Medway has somewhat higher unemployment.

Figure 2.3: Unemployment by local authority, July 2014 to June 2015

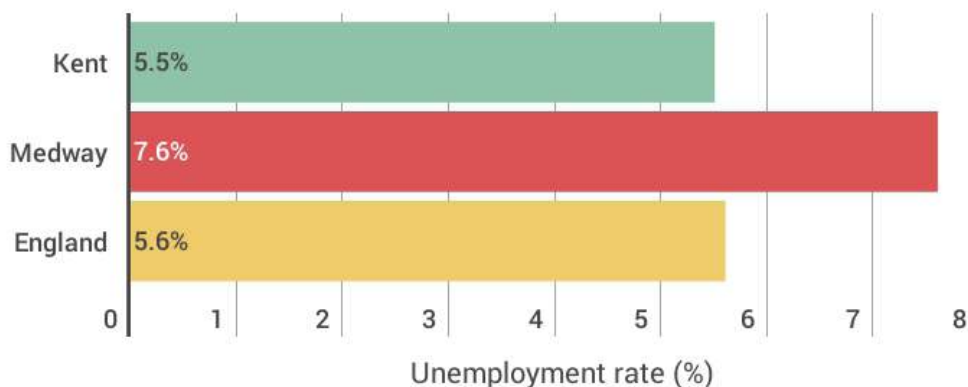
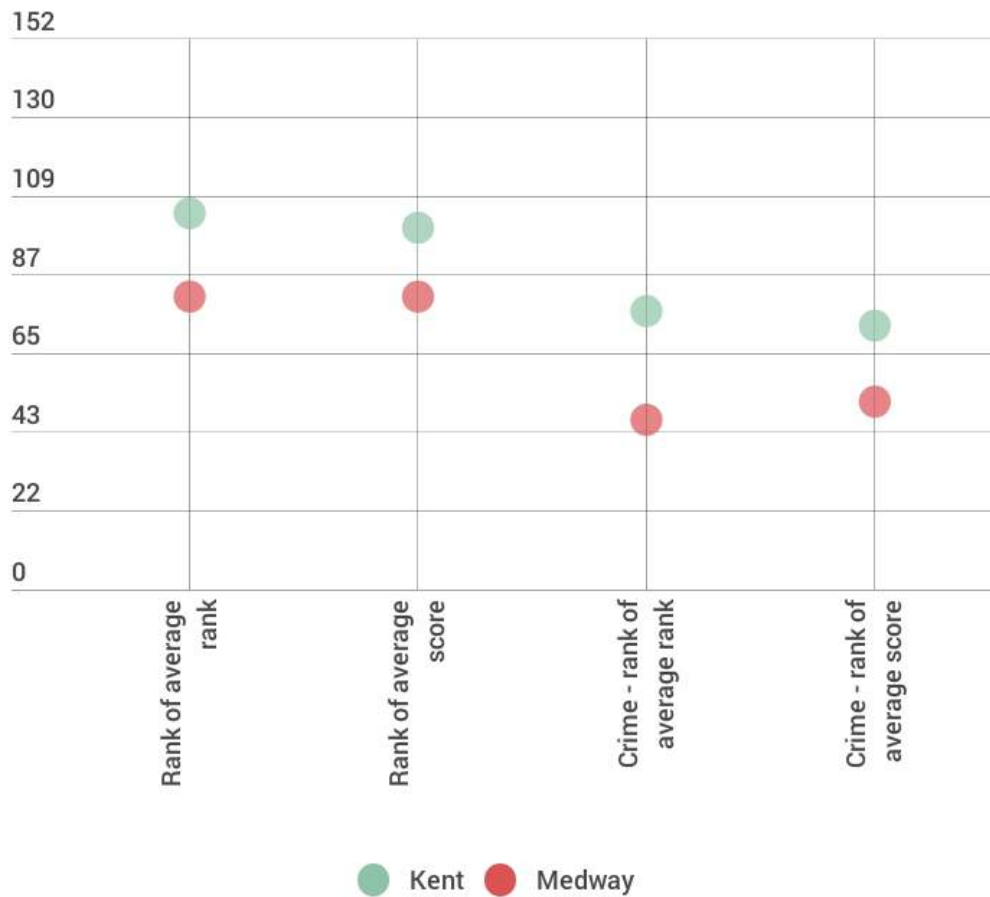


Figure 2.4 sets out indices of deprivation. The first two measures are based on the seven domains of (i) income, (ii) employment, (iii) education, skills and training, (iv) health and disability, (v) crime, (vi) barriers to housing and services, and (vii) living environment. The second two measures focus on the crime domain, based upon crime rates relating to violence, burglary, theft and criminal damage. The 'average rank' summarises the average level of deprivation across each local authority as a whole, based on the ranks of the lower level areas in each authority (with population weighting). In the 'average scores', highly polarised areas tend to score higher, with less averaging out than in the average ranks. Across all measures, the local authority with a rank of 1 is the most deprived, and the area ranked 152 is the least deprived.

Kent has lower than average general deprivation levels than England overall, and has an average crime problem. Medway has higher general deprivation and crime levels than Kent.

Figure 2.4: Multiple deprivation measures by local authority, 2015



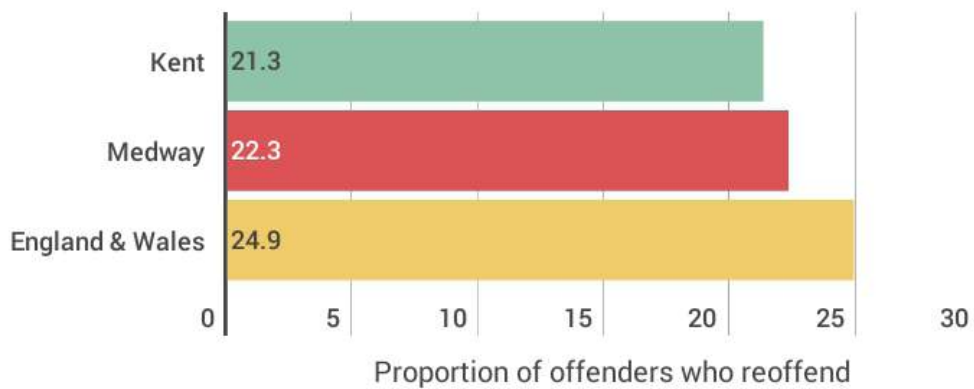
Source: Department of Communities and Local Government, Sept 2015

Levels of reoffending

Reoffending rates for the two local authorities are set out in Figure 2.5, based upon adult offenders who were released from custody, received a non-custodial conviction at court (including fines and discharges) or received a caution (i.e. not just those who were released from custody) in the period April 2013 to March 2014.

Kent and Medway have slightly lower reoffending rates than the England & Wales average.

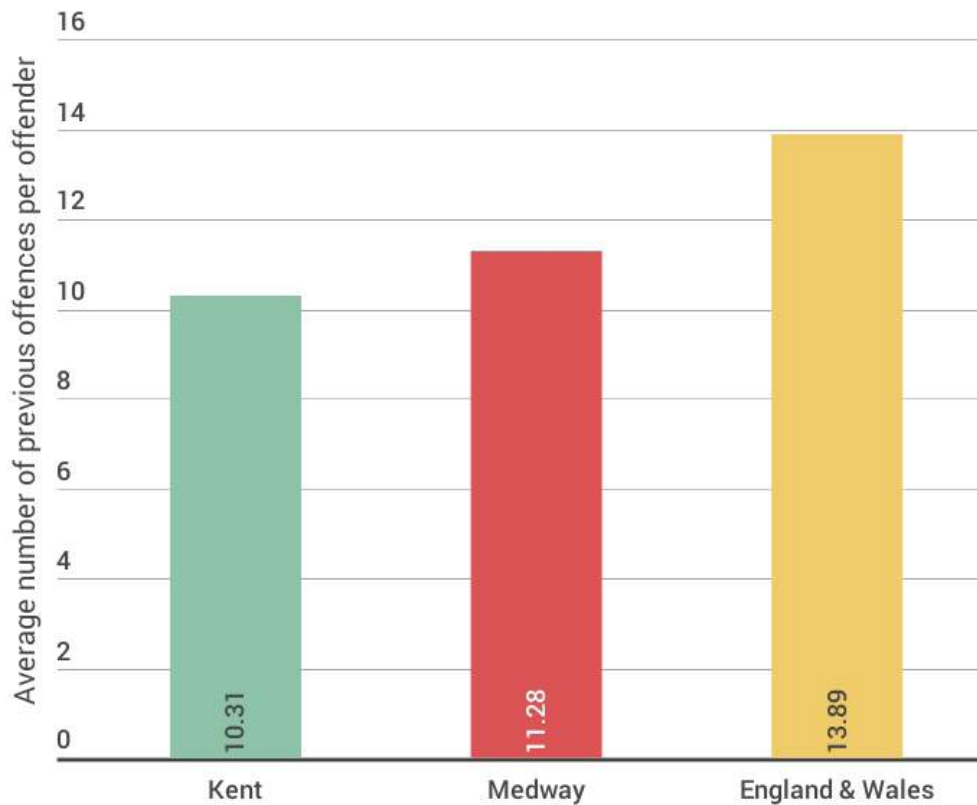
Figure 2.5: Reoffending rate by local authority, April 2013 to March 2014



Source: Ministry of Justice, April 2016

There were somewhat fewer previous offences on average for the Kent and Medway offender cohorts than for England & Wales as a whole (see Figure 2.6).

Figure 2.6: Offending histories by local authority, April 2013 to March 2014



Appendix 3: Data analysis from inspected cases

These charts illustrate key findings from relevant practice inspection cases. These are combined figures for the area as a whole (not separate CRC and NPS figures) due to the small numbers involved. These charts show absolute numbers rather than percentages. The size of the bar chart segments provides an idea of proportion, while the number gives an idea of how large the sample was.

Figure 3.1: Reducing reoffending

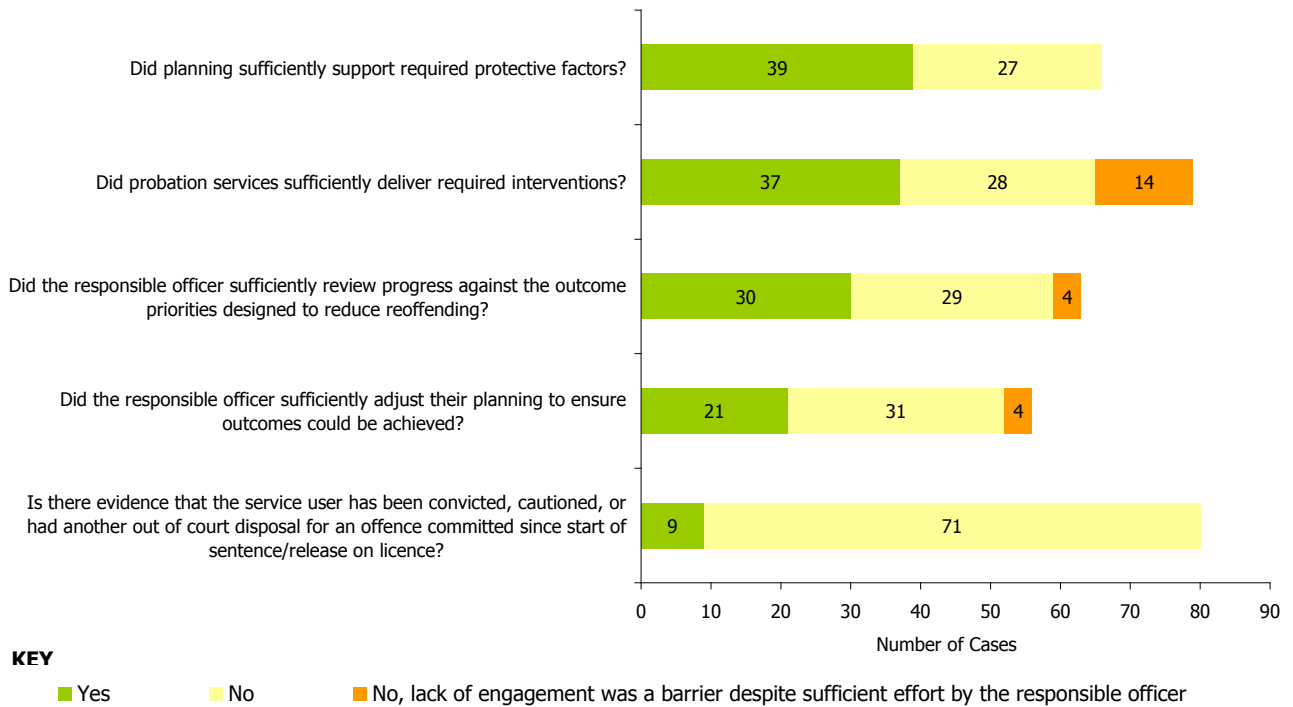
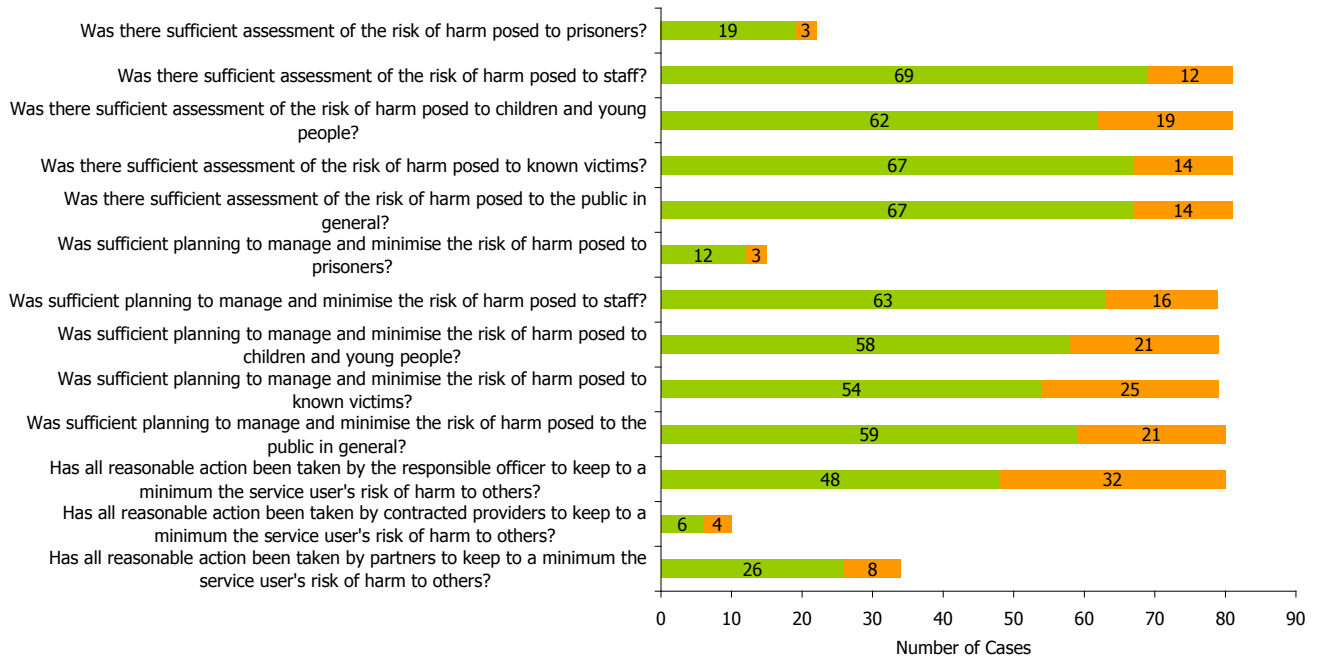


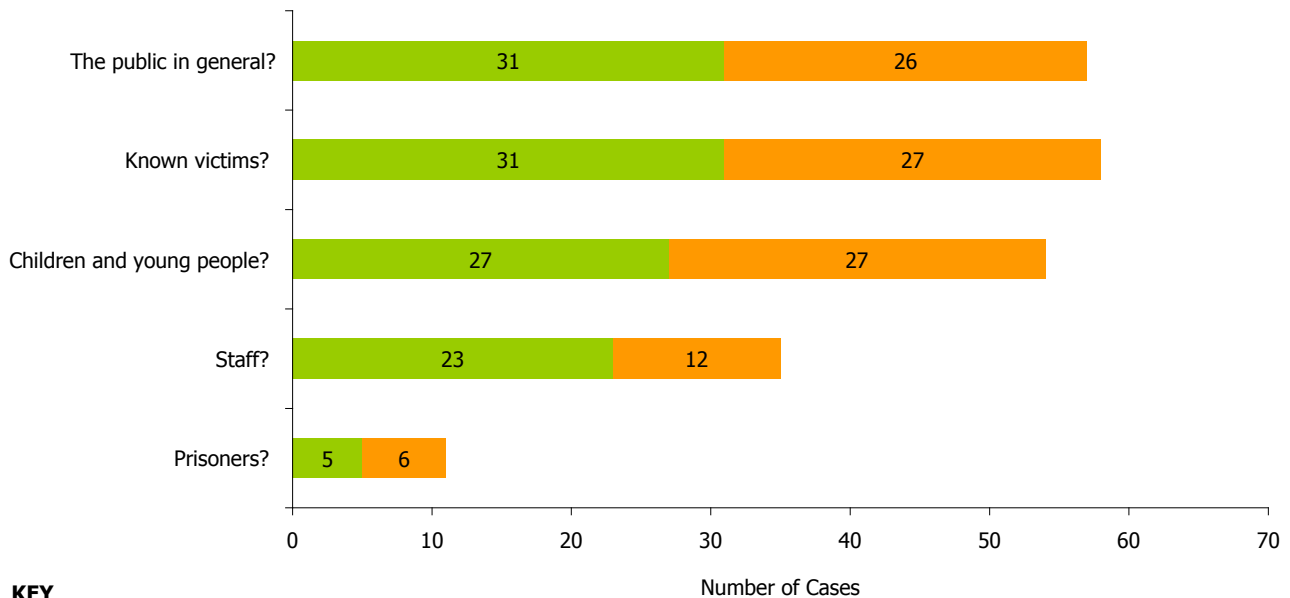
Figure 3.2: Public protection



KEY
■ Yes ■ No

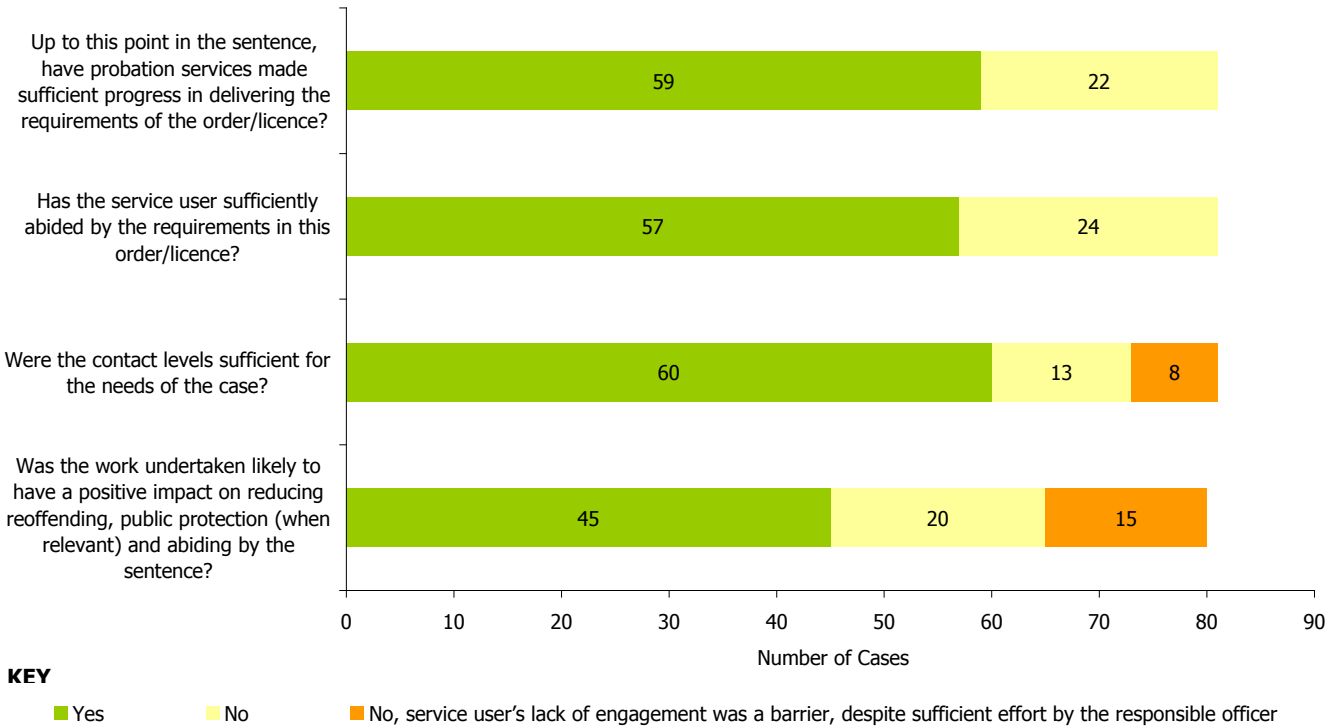
Figure 3.3: Public protection

Up to this point in the order/licence, has the responsible officer made sufficient progress in influencing the risk of harm posed by this service user to:



KEY
■ Yes ■ No

Figure 3.4: Abiding by the sentence



Appendix 4: Glossary

Alcohol Treatment Requirement	A requirement that a court may attach to a community order or a suspended sentence order aimed at tackling alcohol abuse
Allocation	The process by which a decision is made about whether an offender will be supervised by a CRC or the NPS
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
BBR	Building Better Relationships: a nationally accredited groupwork programme designed to reduce reoffending by adult male perpetrators of intimate partner violence
Central referral unit	The unit acts as the first point of contact for new safeguarding concerns or enquiries. Staff at the unit include representatives from the local authority (children and adult social care services), the police, health bodies, probation and other agencies
CRC	Community Rehabilitation Company: 21 such companies were set up in June 2014, to manage most offenders who present a low or medium risk of serious harm
CRI	Crime Reduction Initiative: a voluntary organisation providing various services including those for substance misusers, recently renamed CGL (Change, Grow, Live)
E3	E3 stands for 'Effectiveness, Efficiency, and Excellence'. The E3 programme was created following the <i>Transforming Rehabilitation</i> programme in June 2014. The basic principle is to standardise NPS delivery, redesigning the NPS structure with six key areas of focus, including: community supervision; court services; custody; youth offending services; victim services; and approved premises
ETE	Education, training and employment: work to improve an individual's learning, and to increase their employment prospects
IOM	Integrated Offender Management brings a cross-agency response to the crime and reoffending threats faced by local communities. The most persistent and problematic offenders are identified and managed jointly by partner agencies working together
KSS CRC	Kent, Surrey & Sussex CRC
LDU	Local delivery unit: an operation unit comprising of an office or offices, generally coterminous with police basic command units and local authority structures

MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements: where probation, police, prison and other agencies work together locally to manage offenders who pose a higher risk of harm to others. 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
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
nDelius	National Delius: the approved case management system used by CRCs and the NPS in England & Wales
NOMS	National Offender Management Service: the single agency responsible for both prisons and probation services
NPS	National Probation Service: a single national service which 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
OASys	Offender Assessment System currently used in England & Wales by CRCs and the NPS to measure the risks and needs of offenders under supervision
OGRS	Offender Group Reconviction Scale: is a predictor of reoffending based upon static risks; age, gender and criminal history
<i>Offender Rehabilitation Act 2014</i>	Implemented in February 2015, applying to offences committed on or after that date, the <i>Offender Rehabilitation Act 2014</i> is the Act of Parliament that accompanies the <i>Transforming Rehabilitation</i> programme
Partners	Partners include statutory and non-statutory organisations, working with the service user/offender through a partnership agreement with the CRC or NPS
Providers	Providers deliver a service or input commissioned by and provided under contract to the CRC or NPS. This includes the staff and services provided under the contract, even when they are integrated or located within the CRC or NPS
PSR	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 qualified responsible officer who has undertaken a higher education-based course for two years. The name of the qualification and content of the training varies depending on when it was undertaken. They manage more complex cases

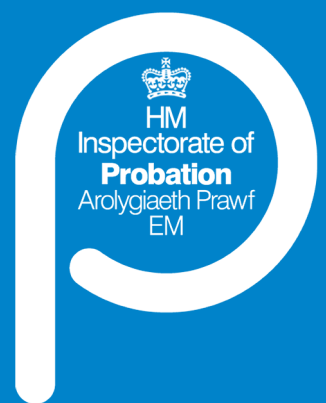
PSO	Probation services officer: this is the term for a responsible officer who was originally recruited with no probation qualification. They may access locally determined training to qualify as a probation services officer or to build on this to qualify as a probation officer. They may manage all but 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
RAR	Rehabilitation activity requirement: from February 2015, when the <i>Offender Rehabilitation Act 2014</i> 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 user for the officer (previously entitled 'offender manager') who holds lead responsibility for managing a case
RSR	Risk of Serious Recidivism: an actuarial calculation of the likelihood of the offender being convicted of a serious sexual or violent offence; this calculation was introduced in June 2014 as a required process in the implementation of <i>Transforming Rehabilitation</i>
Sexual offences prevention order	Introduced by the <i>Sexual Offences Act 2003</i> and replaced sexual offender orders and restraining orders. It is a civil measure available to the court when it convicts a person of an offence listed in schedule 3 or schedule 5 to the <i>Sexual Offences Act 2003</i> , or on the application of the police in respect of a person who has previously been dealt with for such an offence. The order places restrictions on the subject and triggers the notification requirements
SPO	Senior probation officer
Thinking Skills Programme	An accredited group programme designed to develop an offender's thinking skills to help them stay out of trouble
Through the Gate	Through the Gate services are designed to help those sentenced to more than one day in prison to settle back into the community upon release and receive rehabilitation support so they can turn their lives around
<i>Transforming Rehabilitation</i>	The government's programme for how offenders are managed in England & Wales from June 2014

Appendix 5: Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all those who took part in this inspection; without their cooperation, the inspection would not have been possible.

We would like, in particular, to thank the senior managers and their personal/executive assistants for facilitating the inspection and making the necessary arrangements for the fieldwork weeks.

Lead Inspector	Mark Boother, <i>Inspector</i>
Deputy Lead Inspector	Tony Rolley, <i>Inspector</i>
Inspection Team	Joe Coleshill, <i>Assistant Inspector</i> Jo Dowling, <i>Assistant Inspector</i> Andy Griffiths, <i>Assistant Inspector</i> Yvette Howson, <i>Inspector</i> Ruth Johnson, <i>Inspector</i> Nicola McCloskey, <i>Assistant Inspector</i> Sue McGrath, <i>Inspector</i> Vivienne Raine, <i>Inspector</i> Mark Scott, <i>Assistant Inspector</i> Avtar Singh, <i>Inspector</i> Steve Woodgate, <i>Inspector</i>
Support Services	Kevin Ball, <i>Senior Research Officer</i> Adam Harvey, <i>Support Services Manager</i> Oliver Kenton, <i>Research Officer</i> Lynne Osborn, <i>Support Services Officer</i> Alex Pentecost, <i>Head of Operations</i>
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