Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation

Standards for inspecting probation services

Contents

1. Domain one

1.1   Leadership

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

1.1.1   Is there an effective vision and strategy driving the delivery of a high-quality service for all service users?

  a) Does the vision and strategy prioritise the quality of service and adherence to the evidence base?

  b) Are staff, partners, suppliers and other stakeholders sufficiently engaged in delivering the vision and strategy?

  c) Does the organisation's culture promote openness, constructive challenge and ideas?

  d) Are there effective governance arrangements and clear delivery plans that translate the vision and strategy into practice?

  e) Is the impact of the strategy on delivery monitored and regularly reviewed?

  f) Does the leadership team effectively influence partners, suppliers, the courts and other stakeholders to support the delivery of the vision and strategy?

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

  a) Are risks to the service sufficiently understood, with appropriate mitigations and controls in place?

  b) Are appropriate arrangements in place to ensure business continuity in the event of major incidents?

  c) When carrying out changes to systems, processes or staffing is the impact on delivery assessed and appropriate action taken?

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

  a) Does the operating model facilitate meaningful contact and continuity of contact with service users?

  b) Does the operating model encourage personalised approaches with service users, taking account of diversity factors?

  c) Do staff understand the operating model, how the service should be delivered and what they are accountable for?

  d) Is there alignment between the operating model and local plans?

  e) Where there are significant planned changes to the operating model, are these communicated and implemented effectively?

1.2 Staffing

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

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

a) Are staffing levels sufficient?

b) Are staffing levels planned and reviewed with changes made to meet the changing demands and profiles of service users?

c) Do practitioners have manageable workloads, given the profile of the cases and the range of work undertaken?

d) Do middle managers have manageable workloads?

e) Do administrative staff have manageable workloads?

f) Are workloads actively managed, with resources being redeployed, when reasonable and necessary, in response to local pressures?

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

a) Do the skills and diversity of the workforce meet the changing demands and caseload profiles

b) Does the workforce adequately reflect the diversity of the local population and provide the skills to meet diverse needs?

c) Are cases allocated to staff who are appropriately qualified and/or experienced?

d) Where volunteers and mentors are used, are they appropriately selected and supported to fulfil clearly-defined roles?

e) Do all staff have clearly-defined roles which support the delivery of a high-quality service?

f) Is there an appropriate strategy in place that effectively identifies and develops the potential of individual staff?

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

a) Do staff receive effective case focussed supervision that enhances and sustains the quality of work with service users?

b) Is there an effective induction programme for new staff?

c) Is the appraisal process used effectively to ensure that staff are delivering a quality service?

d) Is poor performance identified and addressed?

1.2.4 Are arrangements for learning and development comprehensive and responsive?

a) Does the organisation identify, plan and meet the learning needs of all staff?

b) Does the organisation provide sufficient access to pre-qualifying training routes to support the delivery of a quality service?

c) Does the organisation provide sufficient access to in-service training to support the delivery of a quality service?

d) Does the organisation actively promote and value a culture of learning and continuous improvement?

1.2.5 Do managers pay sufficient attention to staff engagement?

a) Are staff motivated to contribute to the delivery of a quality service?

b) Is appropriate attention paid to monitoring and improving staff engagement levels?

c) Do managers recognise and reward exceptional work?

d) Is appropriate attention paid to staff safety and wellbeing, and building staff resilience?

e) Are reasonable adjustments made for staff in accordance with statutory requirements and protected characteristics?

f) Do staff from all backgrounds have equitable access to promotion opportunities and reward and recognition?

1.3 Services

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

1.3.1 Is a sufficiently comprehensive and up to date analysis of the profile of service users, used by the organisation to deliver well targeted services?

a) Does the analysis capture sufficiently the desistance and offending-related factors presented by service users?

b) Does the analysis capture sufficiently the risk of harm profile of service users?

c) Does the analysis pay sufficient attention to diversity factors and to issues of disproportionality?

d) Is there sufficient analysis of local patterns of sentencing and offence types?

e) Is the analysis used effectively to target services?

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

a) Are appropriate services provided, either in-house or through other agencies, to meet the identified needs and risks?

b) Is building strengths and enhancing protective factors central to the delivery of services?

c) Are diversity factors and issues of disproportionality sufficiently addressed in the range of services provided?

d) Are diversity factors and issues of disproportionality sufficiently addressed in the way that services are delivered?

e) Are services delivered in appropriate and accessible locations?

f) Are interventions evidence led and evaluated, with remedial action taken where required?

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

a) Are there effective relationships with other agencies, that support desistance through access to mainstream services both during and after the sentence?

b) Are there effective relationships with other agencies that manage the risk of harm to others?

c) Are courts kept up to date with the services available to support sentencing options?

1.4   Information and facilities

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

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

a) Are policies and guidance communicated to and understood by relevant staff?

b) Is there a clear policy about case recording that supports defensible decision-making and effective communication?

c) Is there clear guidance about the full range of services available, their suitability for individual service users and referral processes?

d) Do policies support an effective interface between NPS and CRC?

e) Are policies and guidance regularly reviewed?

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

a) Are the premises and offices sufficiently accessible to staff and service users?

b) Do the premises and offices support the delivery of appropriate personalised work and the effective engagement of service users?

c) Do the premises and offices provide a safe environment for working with service users?

1.4.3 Do the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) systems enable staff to deliver a quality service, meeting the needs of all service users?

a) Do the ICT systems enable staff to plan, deliver and record their work in a timely way, and to access information as required?

b) Is information exchanged with partners and other key stakeholders as necessary?

c) Do the ICT systems support remote working where required?

d) Do the ICT systems support the production of the necessary management information?

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

a) Do assurance systems and performance measures drive improvement?

b) Is there a sufficient understanding of performance across the organisation?

c) Are service improvement plans supported through evaluation and development of the underlying evidence base?

d) Are the views of service users and other key stakeholders sought, analysed and used to review and improve the effectiveness of services?

e) Does the organisation systematically learn from things that go wrong including SFOs?

f) Where necessary, is action taken promptly and appropriately in response to performance monitoring, audit or inspection?

g) Is learning communicated effectively?

2. Domain two

2.1   Assessment

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

2.1.1 Does assessment focus sufficiently on engaging the service user?

a) Does assessment analyse the service user's motivation and readiness to engage and comply with the sentence?

b) Does assessment analyse the service user's diversity and personal circumstances, and consider the impact these have on their ability to comply and engage with service delivery?

c) Is the service user meaningfully involved in their assessment, and are their views taken into account?

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

a) Does assessment identify and analyse offending-related factors?

b) Does assessment identify the service user's strengths and protective factors?

c) Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information?

2.1.3 Does assessment focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

a) Does assessment clearly identify and analyse any risk of harm to others, including identifying who is at risk and the nature of that risk?

b) Does assessment analyse any specific concerns and risks related to actual and potential victims?

c) Does assessment draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including past behaviour and convictions, and involve other agencies where appropriate?

2.2   Planning

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

2.2.1 Does planning focus sufficiently on engaging the service user?

a) Is the service user meaningfully involved in planning, and are their views taken into account?

b) Does planning take sufficient account of the service user's diversity and personal circumstances which may affect engagement and compliance?

c) Does planning take sufficient account of the service user's readiness and motivation to change which may affect engagement and compliance?

d) Does planning set out how all the requirements of the sentence or licence/post-sentence supervision will be delivered within the available timescales?

e) Does planning set a level, pattern and type of contact sufficient to engage the service user and to support the effectiveness of specific interventions?

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

a) Does planning sufficiently reflect offending-related factors and prioritise those which are most critical?

b) Does planning build on the service user's strengths and protective factors, utilising potential sources of support?

c) Does planning set out the services most likely to reduce reoffending and support desistance?

2.2.3 Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

a) Does planning sufficiently address risk of harm factors and prioritise those which are most critical?

b) Does planning set out the necessary constructive and/or restrictive interventions to manage the risk of harm?

c) Does planning make appropriate links to the work of other agencies involved with the service user and any multi-agency plans?

d) Does planning set out necessary and effective contingency arrangements to manage those risks that have been identified?

High-quality well-focused, personalised and coordinated services are delivered, engaging the service user.

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

a) Do the requirements of the sentence start promptly, or at an appropriate time?

b) Is sufficient focus given to maintaining an effective working relationship with the service user?

c) Are sufficient efforts made to enable the service user to complete the sentence, including flexibility to take appropriate account of their personal circumstances?

d) Post-custody cases only: Was there a proportionate level of contact with the prisoner before release?

e) Are risks of non-compliance identified and addressed in a timely fashion to reduce the need for enforcement actions?

f) Are enforcement actions taken when appropriate?

g) Are sufficient efforts made to re-engage the service user after enforcement actions or recall?

2.3.2 Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the service user's desistance?

a) Are the delivered services those most likely to reduce reoffending and support desistance, with sufficient attention given to sequencing and the available timescales?

b) Wherever possible, does the delivery of services build upon the service user's strengths and enhance protective factors?

c) Is the involvement of other organisations in the delivery of services sufficiently well coordinated?

d) Are key individuals in the service user's life engaged where appropriate to support their desistance?

e) Is the level and nature of contact sufficient to reduce reoffending and support desistance?

f) Are local services engaged to support and sustain desistance during the sentence and beyond?

2.3.3 Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?

a) Is the level and nature of contact offered sufficient to manage and minimise the risk of harm?

b) Is sufficient attention given to protecting actual and potential victims?

c) Is the involvement of other agencies in managing and minimising the risk of harm sufficiently well coordinated?

d) Are key individuals in the service user's life engaged where appropriate to support the effective management of risk of harm?

e) Are home visits undertaken where necessary to support the effective management of risk of harm?

2.4   Reviewing

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

2.4.1 Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the service user's compliance and engagement?

a) Does reviewing consider compliance and engagement levels and any relevant barriers, with the necessary adjustments being made to the ongoing plan of work?

b) Is the service user meaningfully involved in reviewing their progress and engagement?

c) Are written reviews completed as appropriate as a formal record of actions to implement the sentence?

2.4.2 Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the service user's desistance?

a) Does reviewing identify and address changes in factors linked to offending behaviour, with the necessary adjustments being made to the ongoing plan of work?

b) Does reviewing focus sufficiently on building upon the service user's strengths and enhancing protective factors?

c) Is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies working with the service user?

d) Are written reviews completed as appropriate as a formal record of the progress towards desistance?

2.4.3 Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

a) Does reviewing identify and address changes in factors related to risk of harm, with the necessary adjustments being made to the ongoing plan of work?

b) Is reviewing informed by the necessary input from other agencies involved in managing the service user's risk of harm?

c) Is the service user (and, where appropriate, key individuals in the service user's life) meaningfully involved in reviewing their risk of harm?

d) Are written reviews completed as appropriate as a formal record of the management of the service user's risk of harm?

3. Domain three

3.1   Court reports and case allocation

The pre-sentence information and advice provided to court supports its decision-making, with cases being allocated appropriately following sentencing.

3.1.1   Is the pre-sentence information and advice provided to court sufficiently analytical and personalised to the service user, supporting the court's decision-making?

a) Does the information and advice draw sufficiently on available sources of information including child safeguarding and domestic abuse information?

b) Is the service user meaningfully involved in the preparation of the report, and are their views considered?

c) Does the advice consider factors related to the likelihood of reoffending?

d) Does the advice consider factors related to risk of harm?

e) Does the advice consider the service user's motivation and readiness to change?

f) Does the advice consider the service user's diversity and personal circumstances?

g) Does the advice consider the impact of the offence on known/identifiable victims?

h) Is an appropriate proposal made to court?

i) Is there a sufficient record of the advice given, and the reasons for it?

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

a) Is there a sufficient record of the assessment and advice to the court, for the purposes of allocation and the communication of relevant information to the organisation responsible for supervision?

b) Is the case allocated promptly to the correct agency?

c) Where necessary, has a full and accurate risk of serious harm assessment been completed prior to allocation?

3.2 Statutory victim work

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

3.2.1 Does initial contact with the victim/s encourage engagement with the victim contact scheme and provide information about sources of support?

a) Is appropriate initial contact made soon after sentence, with consideration given to the timing of such contact?

b) Are the initial letters appropriately personalised, considering the nature of the experience of the victim/s and any diversity issues?

c) Is clear information given to victims about what they can expect at different points in a sentence?

d) Do the initial letters include sufficient information to enable the victim/s to make an informed choice as to whether to participate in the scheme?

e) Are victims informed about the action they can take if the prisoner attempts to make unwanted contact with them?

f) Are victim/s referred to other agencies or services, or given information about available sources of help and support?

3.2.2 Is there effective information and communication exchange to support the safety of victims?

a) Are victim liaison staff involved in MAPPA where appropriate?

b) Do victim liaison staff share relevant information with the Offender Manager?

c) Are the concerns of the victims addressed and is attention paid to their safety in planning for release?

d) Are victim liaison staff provided with appropriate and timely information about the management of the service user?

3.2.3 Does pre-release contact with the victim/s allow them to make appropriate contributions to the conditions of release?

a) Are the victims given the opportunity to contribute their views to inform decisions about the service user's release in a timely way and supported in doing so?

b) Are views expressed by victims treated appropriately and in accordance with the victim contact scheme?

c) Are victims supported in making a Victim Personal Statement in parole applications?

4.1   Unpaid work (UPW)

Unpaid work is delivered safely and effectively, engaging the service user in line with the expectations of the court.

4.1.1 Is the assessment and planning of unpaid work personalised?

a) Does assessment consider the service user's diversity and personal circumstances, and the impact these have on their ability to comply and engage with unpaid work?

b) Does unpaid work build upon a service users' strengths and enhance their protective factors?

c) Is the allocated work suitable, taking account of the service user's diversity and personal circumstances?

4.1.2 Is unpaid work delivered safely?

a) Does the delivery of unpaid work take account of risk of harm to other service users, staff or the public?

b) Does unpaid work consider issues relating to the health and safety or potential vulnerability of the service user?

c) Where the responsible officer is engaged in other activity/work with the service user, does regular communication take place?

4.1.3   Do arrangements for unpaid work maximise rehabilitative elements and support desistance?

a) Is unpaid work experienced as useful and rewarding?

b) Does unpaid work offer opportunities to develop employment related skills?

c) Do unpaid work supervisors follow the principles of pro-social modelling, demonstrating good behaviours?

d) Is there clear information and consistent application of the rules?

4.1.4 Is the sentence of the court implemented appropriately?

a) Does unpaid work commence promptly and happen regularly?

b) Do arrangements for unpaid work encourage the service user's engagement and compliance with the order?

c) Are professional judgements made in relation to decisions about missed appointments?

d) Are enforcement actions taken when appropriate?

4.2 Through the Gate

Through the Gate services are personalised and coordinated, addressing the service user's resettlement needs.

4.2.1 Does resettlement planning focus sufficiently on the service user's resettlement needs and on factors linked to offending and desistance?

a) Is there a clear and timely plan for how the service user's resettlement needs will be addressed?

b) Does the plan sufficiently draw on available sources of information?

c) Is the service user meaningfully involved in planning their resettlement and are their views considered?

d) Does the resettlement plan identify the service user's strengths and protective factors and consider ways to build upon these?

e) Does the plan take sufficient account of the service user's diversity and personal circumstances?

f) Does the resettlement plan take account of factors related to risk of harm?

4.2.2 Does resettlement activity focus sufficiently on supporting the service user's resettlement?

a) Are resettlement services delivered in line with the service user's resettlement needs, prioritising those which are most critical?

b) Wherever possible, do resettlement services build upon the service user's strengths and enhance their protective factors?

c) Does resettlement activity take sufficient account of the service user's diversity and personal circumstances?

d) Does resettlement activity take sufficient account of any factors related to risk of harm?

4.2.3 Is there effective coordination of resettlement activity?

a) Is there effective coordination of resettlement activity with other services being delivered in the prison?

b) Is there effective communication with the responsible officer in the community, prior to and at the point of release?

c) Do resettlement services support effective handover to local services in the community?