



Inspection of Adult Offending Work:

Inspection Framework

1. Background

The *Inspection of Adult Offending Work* started in April 2013, and replaces the Offender Management Inspection programme.

The title reflects our commitment to the principle that we inspect the quality of work with offenders, whoever delivers it – a principle that is enshrined in the Transforming Rehabilitation programme. In practice this means that in future we will inspect the work of a range of providers, including those from the private and voluntary sectors, as well as work retained by the National Probation Service.

Key features of the inspection:

- **We focus on the quality of practice** - As in the Offender Management Inspection, the programme is based on the inspection of work with individuals who have offended. In each case we will follow the 'individual's journey' - that is, we firstly examine the quality of the *assessment* of the factors which need to be addressed to reduce the likelihood that they will reoffend; secondly the quality of *work* that is done to change their behaviour; thirdly the evidence of *outcomes* – that is, whether the work has been effective in preventing offending and protecting the public. This is a logical sequence which considers whether practice is well-targeted, effective and supports desistance.
- **We look for evidence of outcomes** - Measures of longer term reoffending rates are not within the scope of inspection. However, we report on shorter term progress, including data about reoffending during the period of supervision inspected. Our reports are based on five outcomes:
 - assisting sentencing
 - delivering the sentence of the court
 - reducing the likelihood of reoffending
 - protecting the public
 - delivering effective work for victims

2. Inspection arrangements

- **Inspections are currently based on the existing structure of Probation Trusts.** We select our inspection sample from the geographical area covered by the Probation Trust. We divide the largest Probation Trusts into “clusters of Local Delivery Units (LDUs)” and inspect a proportion of the work of the trust. As the new structure of the National Probation Service and the Community Rehabilitation Companies is implemented, we will continue to plan our inspections around a cluster of LDUs, in most cases aligned to Police Force Areas.
- Our inspection case samples vary from 50 to 90 cases, depending on the size of the area inspected.
- **Each case inspection will focus on the quality of:**
 - The assessment of the individual, and the planning of their sentence;
 - The services or interventions that are provided to reduce the likelihood of reoffending;
 - The work to assess and manage the risk of harm to other people;
 - The work to maximise compliance with the sentence as well as the actions taken to enforce the requirements;
 - The statutory victim contact work and the work to protect victims.

In each case we will consider the work of the offender manager, responsible officer and others in undertaking these functions.

- **Each inspection takes place over a period of two weeks** - During the first week we inspect a sample of cases. In the second week following the inspection (Week +2) we arrange to meet with managers from the Trust and from relevant provider organisations, and with sentencers. This may take place on site, or we may arrange telephone or video conferences where providers are based in other locations¹.
- **Case sample:** during the first half of 2013-2014 we focused on the inspection of work with those who have committed violent offences. We have published reports following each of the six local inspections; additionally in early 2014 we will publish an aggregate report in which we will use data from case inspection to highlight good practice and identify areas for improvement.

From October 2013 – March 2014 we will examine a range of cases, and we have enhanced our focus on the work of the Probation Trust to protect

¹ Occasionally, (e.g. when Bank Holidays intervene), inspection Week +2 takes place in the third week after the fieldwork.

children. In some cases there will be no concerns about protecting children; in others there could be potential issues which may, or may not, have been identified; in other cases, probation staff will have a key role in multi-agency child protection work. This broad approach allows us to examine the extent to which probation staff identify and respond appropriately to these matters.

- **Inspection of leadership and management** - The main focus of our inspections is the quality of work with those who have offended. However, we also comment on leadership and management in our reports *where this provides explanation or context for the findings about practice*. We therefore provide an opportunity for organisations to tell us about relevant factors – for example, local characteristics and needs; the way in which gaps in provision are identified and filled; work that has been done to improve the quality of service delivery. Meeting with managers and service providers are held two or three weeks after the case inspection; this allows us to analyse data from the case inspections and use this to inform the meetings.
- During both inspection weeks, our inspection teams follow up lines of enquiry triggered by the findings from case inspections. This may involve meeting local managers, talking with practitioners or administration staff, or general observation of office practice. The culture and environment of an office can have a significant impact on the engagement of offenders with the services provided. Where relevant, we may comment on such matters in our report.
- **Service user views** - We recognise the importance of the views of service users, but equally do not wish to duplicate existing surveys. We have therefore agreed with NOMS that, at present, we can make use of the annual survey that is already conducted. We are currently reviewing this approach and considering different options for the future.
- We also meet with sentencers to ascertain their views, and we ask Victim Liaison Officers to send questionnaires to victims who are in contact with the Probation Trust.
- **Announcement of inspection** – each inspection is announced individually ten weeks before the fieldwork week. A manual, outlining what the inspection will involve and what preparations need to be made is available on our website. From the date of the announcement, our inspection and support staff are available to offer advice and support.
- **A four year inspection programme** - The whole inspection programme will run over a four year period, during which time each area of England and Wales will be inspected.

3. Future developments

During the early part of 2014 – 2015 there will be a short break in our inspection programme to allow for the transition to the new delivery arrangements, and to provide an opportunity to review and develop the inspection methodology. We plan to continue to inspect by 'area'; the 'unit of inspection' is likely to be aligned with Police Force Areas/ clusters of Local Delivery Units. Each inspection will include cases from both the National Probation Service and the Community Rehabilitation Companies. The criteria established for the *Inspection of Adult Offending Work* will continue to be relevant, but the case inspection tool will be split to ensure a different emphasis is placed on the work of the different organisations.

We recognise that preparing for an inspection involves time and effort and, particularly at a time of major organisational change, can feel like an unwelcome diversion. We believe, however, that it is precisely at this time that inspection is so important, so that the focus on practice is not lost in the period of change. We also believe that the continuity of the inspection process should not be lost as new providers come on stream. The arrangements outlined above are designed to mitigate both these eventualities and provide the public with the assurance to which it is entitled about the continuing quality of work undertaken with people who have offended under the new arrangements of *Transforming Rehabilitation*.

Liz Calderbank

HM Chief Inspector of Probation
October 2013