



## Ratings characteristics for the quality assurance of Serious Further Offence (SFO) reviews.

The rating characteristics indicate what will guide a quality assurer to give a specific rating. They provide a framework to support the quality assurer's recommendation rather than being a checklist; we would not expect every characteristic to be present for the corresponding rating to be given.

The characteristics for 'Good' and 'Requires improvement' are closely aligned to the key questions and prompts in the standards framework.

'Outstanding' captures where the review exceeds good, in the following ways:

- highly analytical, in-depth yet concise
- investigative and revealing
- holistic and transparent
- inclusive, using accessible and appropriate language
- well-researched and strongly evidenced.

And, where the review contains a number of the above characteristics and the rest of the review is overwhelmingly of a good standard.

The characteristics for 'Inadequate' capture whether the review is:

- confused with regards the narrative of events
- equivocal and vague
- inward-looking and lacking balance
- characterised by gaps and unanswered questions
- unresponsive and inaccessible
- unfocussed and unclear actions.

Each individual SFO review will have an overall composite rating. The overall rating is calculated by adding the score for each standard rating. The scores are as follows: 'Outstanding' = 3, 'Good' = 2, 'Requires Improvement' = 1 'Inadequate' = 0.

### Banding based on four standards (and number of points on scale of 12)

<b>0-2 points</b>	'Inadequate'
<b>3-6 points</b>	'Requires improvement'
<b>7- 10 points</b>	'Good'
<b>11-12 points</b>	'Outstanding'

We will be rating solely on the quality of each SFO review and how comprehensively it meets the standards in each case. Judgements on whether the 'right' or 'wrong' course of action was taken by practitioners are for local SFO reviewers themselves to make.

## **1. Analysis of practice: the SFO review provides a robust and transparent analysis of practice.**

### **Outstanding**

*The SFO review provides a fully robust and transparent analysis of practice.*

The review provides a highly analytical and in-depth analysis of assessing, planning, implementation and reviewing work during the period under review, in a concise manner. The reviewing manager considers whether all reasonable actions were taken by the probation service. The review analyses fully all crucial decisions, missed opportunities and underpinning reasons for the deficiencies in the case, where they exist. The review contrasts probation's findings of risk of harm and need in assessment, to the work undertaken in the planning, delivery and reviewing phases, with clear focus on risk of harm, where it is present. The reviewing manager has taken an investigative approach when exploring underpinning issues or beneficial and positive work, where it exists to determine underpinning issues. The significance and the impact of the all crucial gaps are clear.

The review provides context for the work carried out by the key responsible officers, including manageability of workload, the experience and skill of relevant staff, office culture and the quality of management oversight and supervision. This information will be further evidenced by interviews with the relevant middle and senior managers.

The review contains additional research into the quality of working arrangements between probation and other partnership agencies where appropriate. The review, where necessary provides a comparison between local/service level agreements and the realities of practice on the front line. The reviewer's findings are robustly supported by the information elicited during explorative interviews with all relevant staff.

### **Good**

*The SFO review provides a sufficiently robust and transparent analysis of practice.*

The review provides a sufficiently robust and transparent analysis of assessing, planning, implementation and reviewing practice in the case. The reviewing manager considers whether all reasonable actions were taken by the probation service. The review analyses all crucial decisions, missed opportunities, underpinning reasons for the deficiencies and good practice in the case, where they exist.

The review contrasts probation's findings of risk of harm and need in assessment, to the work undertaken in the planning, delivery and reviewing phases, with a focus on risk of harm, where it is present. The reviewing manager has taken an investigative approach when exploring underpinning issues and the significance and the impact of the most crucial gaps are clear.

The review provides context for the work carried out by the key responsible officers, including manageability of workload, the experience and skill of relevant staff, office culture and the quality of management oversight and supervision. There is sufficient examination of collaboration with other agencies, with evidence-based judgements presented. The reviewer's findings are supported by information elicited during interviews with relevant staff.

## **Requires improvement**

### ***The SFO review provides an insufficiently robust and transparent analysis of practice.***

The review provides an insufficient analysis of assessing, planning, implementation and reviewing practice in the case. The reviewing manager only considers some of the reasonable actions by the probation service. The review analyses some crucial decisions, missed opportunities, underpinning reasons for the deficiencies and good practice in the case, where they exist but some gaps are present.

The review does not fully contrast probation's findings of risk of harm and need in assessment, to the work undertaken in the planning, delivery and reviewing phases. There is a lack of focus on risk of harm, where it is present. The reviewing manager has not taken a sufficiently investigative approach when exploring underpinning issues and the significance and the impact of the most crucial gaps are unclear.

The review provides insufficient context for the work carried out by the key responsible officers, including manageability of workload, the experience and skill of relevant staff, office culture and the quality of management oversight and supervision. Examination of collaboration with other agencies, where appropriate is lacking. The information elicited during interviews with staff is not adequately examined or fails to corroborate the reviewing manager's findings.

## **Inadequate**

### ***The SFO review does not provide a robust and transparent analysis of practice.***

The review provides a limited and/or inaccurate description of assessing, planning, implementation and reviewing of practice in the case. The review fails to consider whether reasonable actions were taken in this case by the probation service. The review omits appropriate exploration of key decisions which the quality assurance process has recognised as a crucial or missed opportunity or a key underpinning reason for a deficiency. There is an inadequate examination of collaboration with other agencies.

The review fails to provide a sufficiently robust and transparent analysis of assessment, planning, implementation and reviewing practice in the case. The reviewing manager has failed to consider whether all reasonable actions were taken by the probation service. The review does not provide an analysis of the key crucial decisions, missed opportunities, underpinning reasons for the deficiencies and good practice in the case, where they exist.

The review fails to, or inaccurately contrasts probation's findings of risk of harm and need in assessment, to the work undertaken in the planning, delivery and reviewing phases. There is no consideration of serious harm, where it is present. The reviewing manager has not explored underpinning issues. The significance and the impact of the most crucial gaps are either unclear or not present in the review.

The review does not provide context for the work carried out by the key responsible officers, including manageability of workload, the experience and skill of relevant staff, office culture and the quality of management oversight and supervision. There is no examination of collaboration with other agencies, even where it is identified as a key finding. The review does not include the 'voice' of the necessary staff, either due to omissions in the review or because the relevant staff were not interviewed.

## **2. Overall judgements: The SFO review provides a clear and balanced judgement on the sufficiency of practice.**

### **Outstanding**

*The SFO review provides a fully clear and balanced judgement on the sufficiency of practice.*

The judgements on the sufficiency of practice are insightful, highly analytical and revealing, with a focus on the appropriate supervision period. The reviewing manager provides in-depth analyses of systemic and/or procedural factors in relation to probation practice and decision making. This includes a holistic consideration of management oversight for all levels of staff. Existing effective practice is correctly identified, explored and recommended for wider sharing. The review sufficiently analyses probation practice and all relevant partner agency involvement to inform the action plan.

The review includes evidence from exploratory and investigative interviews completed and clear judgements about the practice of all relevant staff. There are unequivocal judgements on systematic and procedural factors in relation to probation practice and decision making, which could lead to wider actions where suitable. Where it exists, good practice is highlighted. The reviewing manager has identified and been responsive to, where necessary, what needs to be addressed through staff performance, training and development or discipline. The reviewing manager has drawn clear conclusions about probation's partnership working where improvements have been highlighted.

### **Good**

*The SFO review provides a sufficiently clear and balanced judgement on the sufficiency of practice.*

The judgements on the sufficiency of practice are analytical and balanced, with a focus on the appropriate supervision period. The reviewing manager analyses systemic and/or procedural factors in relation to probation practice and decision making. This includes sufficient consideration of management oversight. Existing effective practice is correctly identified. The review sufficiently analyses probation's multi-agency practice to inform the action plan.

The review includes evidence from the interviews completed and judgments about the practice of all relevant staff. There are sufficient judgements on systematic and procedural factors in relation to probation practice and decision making. Where they exist, good practice is highlighted. The reviewing manager has identified, where necessary, what needs to be addressed through staff performance, training and development or discipline. The reviewing manager will have come to a sufficient conclusion about partnership work to inform the action plan.

### **Requires Improvement**

*The SFO review does not consistently provide a clear and balanced judgement on the sufficiency of practice.*

The review describes rather than analyses some of the systemic and/or procedural factors in probation practice. Some judgements lack clarity and/or a fair balance of evidence. The review draws some conclusions based on practice outside of the perimeters of the investigation. There is inconsistent exploration and analysis of decision making and insufficient consideration of management oversight. Existing effective practice has not always been correctly identified, where it exists. The review fails to link sufficiently to other reviews.

The review is not sufficiently analytical of practice in the case. The review takes a descriptive rather than analytical approach to the systemic and/or procedural factors in relation to probation practice and decision making. This includes insufficient consideration of management oversight. Not all existing effective practice is correctly identified. The review insufficiently analyses probation's multi-agency practice to inform the action plan.

The review lacks evidence from the interviews completed and judgements about the practice of relevant staff. There are insufficient judgements on systematic and procedural factors in relation to probation practice and decision making. The reviewing manager has not identified all of what needs to be addressed through staff performance, training and development or discipline. The reviewing manager will have come to an insufficient conclusion about probation's multi-agency work which has resulted in limited or incorrect actions for the action plan.

### **Inadequate**

*The SFO review does not provide a clear and balanced judgement on the sufficiency of practice.*

The review lacks evidence from staff interviews. There are inaccurate judgements provided regarding systematic and procedural factors, or an absence of consideration of these issues.

Where it exists, good practice is not highlighted. The reviewing manager has failed to identify, where necessary, what needs to be addressed through staff performance training and development or discipline. The reviewing manager has not commented upon relevant multi-agency work in the case.

The review does not provide an analyse of practice in the case. The review takes a descriptive rather than analytical approach to process and overlooks the systemic and/or procedural factors in relation to probation practice and decision making. Management oversight is not explored in the view and existing effective practice is not correctly identified. The review does not comment upon probation's multi-agency practice, where it is relevant to the case.

The reviewing managers has not interviewed the relevant staff members and therefore the review contains significant gaps regarding judgements about the practice of relevant staff.

### **3. Learning: The SFO review enables appropriate learning to drive improvement**

#### **Outstanding**

*The SFO review fully enables appropriate learning to drive improvement.*

The action plan evidences well-researched learning to drive improvement, where it exists, for individuals and probation services. Identified learning is imaginative yet simple, with practical and achievable actions. The review gives a clear explanation why specific areas of learning were not included in the action plan. It also explains where learning has already been taken forward or where changes have already been made to local or national policy to effect change.

The action plan robustly addresses all appropriate deficiencies and good practice identified at a local and national level regarding probation's multi-agency working. Every action contains SMART objectives. The action plan is responsive to the training and/or learning needs of staff involved. The action plan clearly focuses on ensuring that all relevant learning is identified and is translated into developmental actions that can be progressed and monitored to ensure similar errors are not made in the future.

#### **Good**

*The SFO review sufficiently enables appropriate learning to drive improvement.*

The action plan enables appropriate learning to drive improvement at all levels, where it exists. Where appropriate, it sufficiently identifies areas for improvement at the local and national level. The action plan sufficiently captures all learning and practice improvement. It also explains where learning has already been taken forward or where changes have already been made to local or national policy to effect change.

The action plan is responsive to the training and/or learning needs of staff involved. The action plan addresses deficiencies identified at the local and national level in the review and contains SMART objectives. The action plan focuses on ensuring that all relevant learning is identified and translated into developmental actions that can be progressed and monitored to ensure similar errors are not made in the future.

#### **Requires improvement**

*The SFO review insufficiently/inconsistently enables appropriate learning to drive improvement.*

The action plan only partially enables some of the identified learning to drive improvement, where it exists and not all levels of staff have been considered for learning.

The review insufficiently identifies areas for improvement at the local and national level. The action plan does not capture all learning and/or practice improvement identified, nor does it explain where learning has already been taken forward or where changes have already been made to local or national policy to effect change.

Responsivity to staff needs has not been given clear considered in the action plan. The action plan contains gaps regarding deficiencies identified at the local and national level in the review. Some of the actions are not SMART. The action plan is inconsistent with the findings of the review. As a result, not all relevant learning has been translated into developmental actions that can be progressed and monitored to ensure similar errors are not made in the future.

## **Inadequate**

*The SFO review does not enable appropriate learning to drive improvement.*

The action plan fails to identify key learning to drive improvement, where it exists, and the incorrect level of staff have been considered for learning.

The review does not identify relevant areas for improvement at the local and national level. The action plan does not capture learning and/or practice improvement identified, nor does it explain where learning has already been taken forward or where changes have already been made to local or national policy to effect change.

The action plan largely fails to include the appropriate learning and there has been no consideration of staff needs. The action plan contains significant gaps regarding deficiencies identified at the local and/or national level in the review. The objectives in the action plan are not SMART. The action plan is inconsistent with the findings of the review. As a result, limited relevant learning has been translated into developmental actions that can be progressed and monitored to ensure similar errors are not made in the future.

## **4. Victims and their families: The SFO review is appropriate to share with victims and meets their needs.**

### **Outstanding**

*The SFO review is fully tailored to meet the needs of victims.*

The style and language used in the review is inclusive, simple to read where any use of professional jargon or acronyms are explained and contains clear explanations of process, only where necessary. The review is accessible to a reader with no knowledge of the work of probation, and sensitive to the impact that findings might have on victims. The reviewing manager anticipates what information might be most pertinent to the victim and set this out clearly early on in the review.

The review clearly and concisely explains the significance of deficiencies and missed opportunities during the case and the impact these had. The review threads a narrative of the risks which are most relevant to the circumstances of the SFO, through the review. This will provide full transparency and focus on the issues which are mostly likely of concern for the victim.

The review presents well-evidenced judgements with clear and relevant examples to inform the reader and support understanding.

### **Good**

*The SFO review is sufficiently tailored to meet the needs of victims.*

The style and language used in the review is inclusive, simple to read where any use of professional jargon or acronyms are explained and contains explanations of process, only where necessary. The review is accessible to a reader with no knowledge of the work of probation, and sensitive to the impact that findings might have on victims. The reviewing manager has considered what information might be most pertinent to the victim and sets this out clearly in the review.

The review sufficiently explains the significance of deficiencies and missed opportunities during the case and the impact these had. The review attempts to thread a narrative of the risks which are relevant to the circumstances of the SFO, through the review. This will provide transparency and focus on the issues which are mostly likely of concern for the victim.

The review presents clear judgements with relevant examples to inform the reader and support understanding.

### **Requires improvement**

*The SFO review is insufficiently tailored to meet the needs of victims.*

The language used in the review is at times ambiguous and includes some professional jargon and/or acronyms without necessary explanation. The review fails to explain some basic probation processes, which would provide clarity. The review is somewhat accessible to a reader with no knowledge of the work of probation, and sensitive to the impact that findings might have on victims. The reviewing manager has not fully considered what information might be most pertinent to the victim and as a result this has not been set out clearly in the review.

The review insufficiently explains the significance of deficiencies and missed opportunities during the case and the impact these had. The review has not successfully threaded a narrative of the risks which are relevant to the circumstances of the SFO, through the review. The review fails to focus on the issues which are mostly likely of concern for the victim.

The review presents unclear judgements with gaps in the supporting evidence.

### **Inadequate**

*The SFO review is not tailored to meet the needs of victims.*

The language used in the review is broadly ambiguous and contains significant professional jargon and/or acronyms without necessary explanation. The review fails to explain some basic probation processes, which would provide clarity. The review is inaccessible to a reader with no knowledge of the work of probation and is indifferent to the impact that findings might have on victims. The reviewing manager has not considered what information might be most pertinent to the victim and as a result this information has been omitted.

The review fails to explain the significance of deficiencies and missed opportunities during the case and the impact these had. The reviewing manager has not identified or analysed the risks relevant to the circumstances of the SFO. The review fails to focus on the issues which are mostly likely of concern for the victim.

The review presents unclear judgements with gaps in the supporting evidence.