



OFFENDER
MANAGEMENT
INSPECTION
INSPECTION

A report on Offender Management in
Bedfordshire

An inspection led by
HM Inspectorate of Probation

December 2006

FOREWORD

Bedfordshire had a number of significant recommendations from our last inspection, the Effective Supervision Inspection in the autumn of 2005, on which it was continuing to work at the time of this, the Offender Management Inspection. Some of these related to **significant areas for improvement** in its Risk of Harm work. There is no doubt that the area's Board, managers and staff have worked extremely hard to remedy the deficits and it is right to acknowledge these efforts. A restructuring of the senior management team has contributed to the establishment of a firm performance culture in Bedfordshire. These efforts are bearing fruit in some much-improved achievement against nationally-set targets. Carefully structured planning has been an important component and this needs to continue, especially in relation to the meeting of offender needs through contracted services.

The area still has a considerable distance to travel: sentence planning is not good enough and it remains a challenge to deliver quality Risk of Harm work. Victim awareness work warrants more attention and the delivery of unpaid work in particular must improve. There needs to be a greater focus at all levels of the organisation on the achievement of outcomes with offenders.

It is encouraging that Bedfordshire has a much-improved commitment to good performance. We hope that it can continue to achieve national targets, while at the same time fostering an equal commitment to the detail of quality practice with offenders.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

ACO	Assistant chief officer
CO	Chief officer
CDRP	Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership
DRR	Drug rehabilitation requirement
DTTO	Drug Treatment and Testing Order
ESI	Effective Supervision Inspection
FDR	Fast delivery report
HMI Prisons	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons
HMI Probation	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation
HMP	Her Majesty's Prison
ISP	Initial sentence plan
LCJB	Local Criminal Justice Board
MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements
NOMIS	National Offender Management Information System
NOMS	National Offender Management Service
NPD	National Probation Directorate
NPS	National Probation Service
OASys	Offender Assessment System
OMI	Offender Management Inspection
OMU	Offender Management Unit
PO	Probation officer
PPO	Prolific priority and other offender
PSO	Probation service officer
PSR	Pre-sentence report
REM	Race and ethnic monitoring
RoH	Risk of Harm
SDR	Standard delivery report
SLA	Service Level Agreement
TPO	Trainee probation officer
VLO	Victim liaison officer
YOS	Youth Offending Service
YOT	Youth Offending Team

SUMMARY

Assessment and Sentence Planning

Reports to courts were generally of a good standard and well received by sentencers. Offenders were well prepared for sentence. The assessment of offending and criminogenic needs was comprehensively and accurately completed and attention was paid to offenders' learning style, motivation and capacity to change. However, in too many cases basic skills screenings and full assessments lacked sufficient rigour. Sentence planning required improvement and was not central to the management of cases. Plans often lacked detail and did not fully integrate work on interventions. At the planning stage the diverse needs of offenders were not always seen to be taken into account by offender managers. In most cases offenders had been allocated to the correct tier.

Implementation of Interventions

There was evidence that offender managers prepared offenders well for interventions, although they were less effective at sequencing the interventions and coordinating the work of others involved with the case; sentence planning in most cases was rudimentary. There was insufficient contact with prisons to prepare offenders for release, a problem exacerbated by prison overcrowding that led to the frequent transfers of prisoners between prisons. Enforcement of orders and licences was good and, where necessary, breach action was taken promptly and appropriately. More attention needed to be given to victim issues by offender managers. There were some good examples of constructive interventions to help offenders change, for example by referral to an accredited programme, but overall constructive interventions needed to challenge the offender in more cases and the quality and quantity of unpaid work placements needed to improve. Basic skills interventions were underdeveloped, but attention had been paid to diversity issues in most cases.

Achievement and Monitoring of Outcomes

Most offenders had complied with the requirements of their sentence and had not reoffended. In terms of the achievement of sentencing objectives, only that of punishment was consistently achieved. Resources allocated had been consistent with the assessed risk of harm and likelihood of reoffending. There had been no obvious improvement in criminogenic factors in over two-thirds of the cases, but there was evidence of staff responsiveness to Risk of Harm through changes in restrictive interventions. Attitudes and behaviour had also not improved in a similar proportion of cases. Aside from unpaid work, there was little evidence of community benefits from offender supervision. There was continuity of offender management in most cases, but structured sentence planning had not been given a high priority in the majority of cases.

Leadership and Strategic Management

There was evidence of strong leadership amongst the Board and senior management. An effective planning system was in place that had helped ensure that performance objectives were achieved. The quality of management information was excellent and was used strategically to drive up performance and standards. Performance in relation to national targets had improved significantly. Close attention had been paid to the need to develop an effective project management approach to policy development and implementation, and

the use of the European Excellence Model framework within the area had assisted this. There was evidence of engagement with partners at a local and regional level and managers were well regarded. Resource deployment had been guided by a sophisticated resource allocation model that had been used to help plan the implementation of offender management. The management of human resources had been strengthened and a number of processes had been systematised, including the appraisal arrangements. Sickness absence rates still remained high although some reductions had been achieved. The quality and frequency of supervision were good on the whole. Whilst there was a thorough training plan in place, some staff still felt ill-equipped to do their job.

There was impressive evidence of efforts to gather the views of service users in order to plan and implement policies, for example decisions on the correct staffing levels in courts. A number of commissioned services were in place, but the area acknowledged that in the future it would need to develop a more sophisticated approach to the management of this critical area. To this end, more use could be made at an operational and strategic level of Offender Assessment System data to inform planning and identify need.

Risk of Harm

Whilst we agreed for the most part on the Risk of Harm classification assigned to cases, the overall quality of this assessment was satisfactory in only half of the sample. Screening and planning were often completed late and the quality of the analysis in many cases was poor. The area had taken steps to ensure that risk management plans were completed using the required format. Unfortunately many plans were not comprehensive and lacked supporting detail. In respect of child safeguarding issues, there was insufficient evidence of management oversight of the cases. Whilst the Risk of Harm classification and Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements status of a case were communicated internally, these were not always shared with external workers. Reviews of Risk of Harm had not always been completed and home visits had not been made in enough high/very high Risk of Harm cases. Work with victims was underdeveloped, but restrictive interventions were monitored and supervision enforced properly in most cases.

The Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements were seen as effective and there were good strategic and operational links between the organisations involved. However, Level 1 cases were not being recorded as such by case managers and were therefore not under the formal oversight of the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements.

The Bedfordshire approved premises were seen to offer a good level and range of constructive and restrictive interventions to offenders posing a high Risk of Harm to the public.

SUMMARY OF SCORES

Outlined overleaf in Chart 1 are percentage scores for each Offender Management Inspection Criterion in sections 1-3. A line of priority for improvement is also indicated. The scores which fall below this line (which is not a line of *sufficiency*) indicate those criteria which form a primary focus for improvement. Table 2 indicates a score drawn from a range of indicators in the *Assessment & Sentence Planning and Implementation of Interventions* section about Risk of Harm work. This score is significant in determining whether a further focused inspection will be carried out. Full details of our *scoring approach* are contained in Appendix 3.

Chart 1: Scoring of sections 1-3:

Offender Management Inspection - Bedfordshire (October 2006)

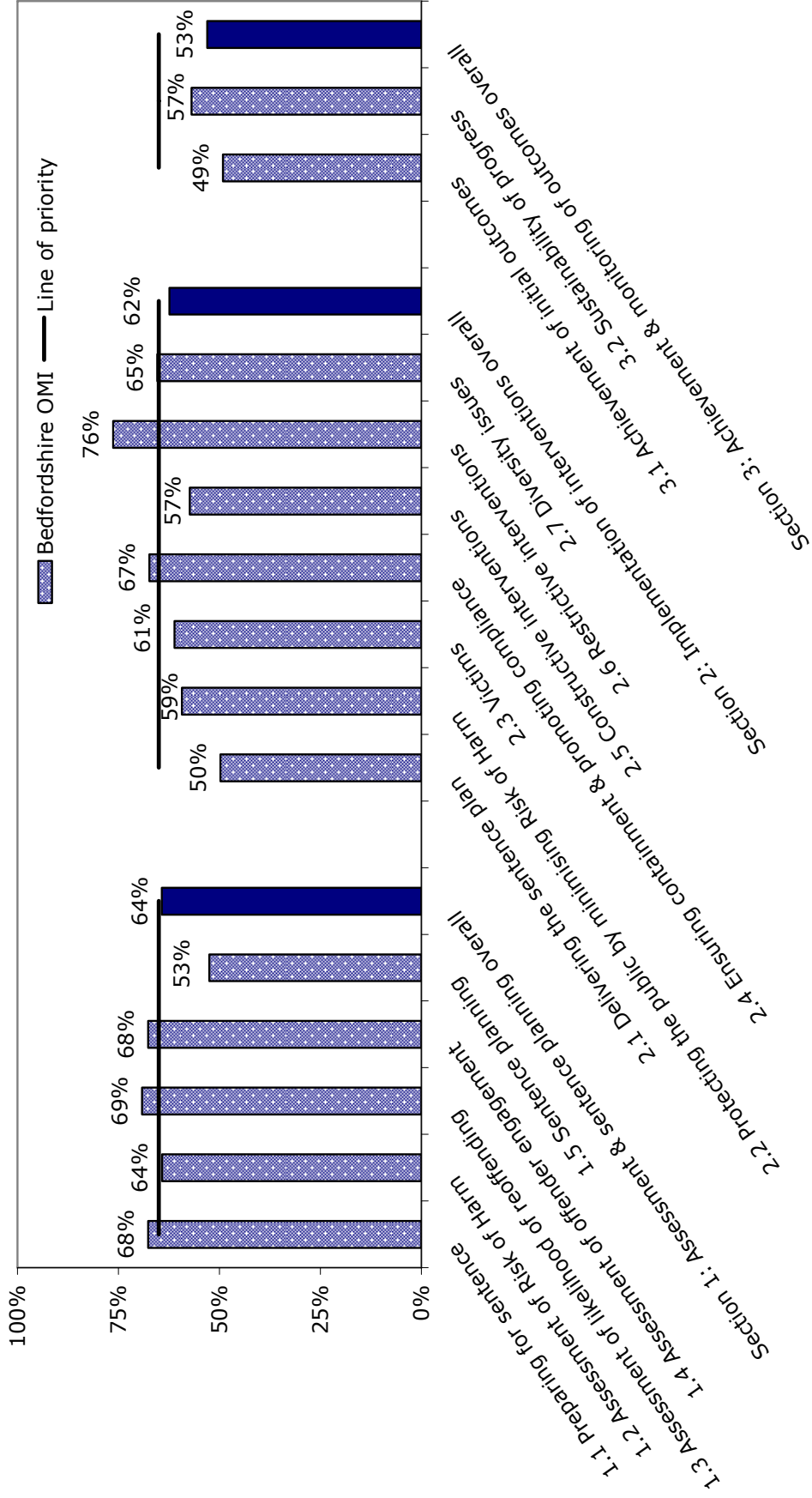


Table 1: Scoring of section 4:

4.1	General Criterion: LEADERSHIP AND PLANNING	Well Met
4.2	General Criterion: PERFORMANCE AGAINST NATIONAL AND REGIONAL TARGETS	Well Met
4.3	General Criterion: RESOURCE DEPLOYMENT	Well Met
4.4	General Criterion: WORKFORCE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT	Satisfactorily Met
4.5	General Criterion: REVIEW AND EVALUATION	Satisfactorily Met
4.6	General Criterion: COMMISSIONING OF SERVICES	Partly Met

Table 2: Risk of Harm thread

Score for Risk of Harm thread	64%
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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Improvements are necessary as follows:

1. accurate and comprehensive Risk of Harm assessments are completed and regularly reviewed in all cases
2. the quality and timeliness of risk management plans meet the standards defined nationally
3. all Level 1 Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements cases are consistently recorded and accounted for
4. all sentence plans and reviews are completed, on time and to a high standard
5. the quality and quantity of unpaid work placements are sufficient to meet demand
6. the quality of basic skills assessments and interventions is improved
7. increased priority is given by offender managers to issues of victim safety, and victim awareness work appropriate to the case is undertaken with the offender
8. in order to achieve sentence objectives there should be an increased focus on outcomes in the work of offender managers with offenders.

NEXT STEPS

An improvement plan addressing the recommendations above is needed four weeks after publication.

Further focused inspections will be carried out approximately 12 months after the original OMI when HMI Probation has a serious concern about an area's RoH work.

There will not be a further inspection in Bedfordshire.

SHARING GOOD PRACTICE

Below are examples of good practice we found in Bedfordshire.

Setting targets OMI Criterion: 1.5 Sentence Planning	Alan, subject to a DRR, was referred to a specialist substance misuse worker who used a simple but effective method of recording negotiated actions resulting from discussions with the offender. An individual care plan identified clear objectives. The plan had a circle for the offender and a triangle for the interviewer and arrows linked the two. Underneath the arrows were small measurable targets which were easy to understand. Such an approach enabled both the offender and the worker gain a clear picture of progress towards the targets.
RoH management OMI Criterion: 2.2 Protecting the public by minimising the RoH Unpaid work placements	Brian was a sex offender subject to his third period of supervision for sex offences against children which were escalating in seriousness. He was subject to MAPPA oversight and the offender manager worked jointly with the police to monitor and control his behaviour. Brian attended the Sex Offender Treatment Programme, but there were concerns about his home circumstances and the risk he posed to children in the area. The offender manager set up a regular programme of home visits together with a police officer in order to monitor Brian's home circumstances and corroborate information with his family. As a result, the RoH to children in the community was minimised.
Victim safety OMI Criterion: 2.3 Victims	Sean was on licence following his release from prison having served a sentence for assault on his ex-partner. The licence included a condition excluding him from the vicinity of the victim's home. The offender manager had liaised very carefully prior to Sean's release with the VLO dealing with the case to make sure that the victim of the crime was aware of the details of the exclusion condition. This had the effect of allaying many of the understandable anxieties that the victim had about the release of her ex-partner and contributed to the victim safety plan.
Unpaid work placements OMI Criterion: 2.4 Ensuring containment and promoting compliance	Unpaid work staff had developed a system for individual and group supervisors to identify key indicators such as medical condition, risk of self-harm, literacy issues and risks to staff to help place offenders on appropriate work. The attendance recording sheet was coded by letters and numbers only known to staff. Staff carried a small card which provided information about the codes. The initiative enabled supervisors to have access to information very quickly and meant that confidentiality of sensitive information was maintained.

<p>Diversity</p> <p>OMI Criterion: 2.7 Arrangements for interventions take account of offenders' diversity issues</p>	<p>Donna was required to attend the Think First programme, unfortunately there was no female-only group available. The offender manager discussed with her the implications of attending an all-male group and it was agreed she would attend. With Donna's consent the offender manager worked closely with programme tutors on the issues Donna might bring to the group relating to her sexuality and the potential for her to react aggressively to discriminatory language from the other participants in the group. By sharing this information with group tutors and demonstrating commitment to Donna by seeing her for weekly appointments to discuss the group, the offender manager successfully supported Donna through her attendance at the Think First programme.</p>
<p>Improving performance</p> <p>OMI Criterion: 4.1 Leadership and planning</p>	<p>The area had a very clear planning framework underpinned by a comprehensive performance management information system. Details of the area's performance were made available to all managers in the organisation on a monthly basis. The CO ensured that once the information had been distributed he wrote to all managers with a summary of his views on performance. This included observations about areas for improvement but, equally importantly, he acknowledged and praised good performance. This meant that managers were clear about levels of performance required and were appropriately motivated.</p>

OFFENDER MANAGEMENT IN BEDFORDSHIRE

Offender management had been introduced in the Bedfordshire Probation Area in April 2006. The introduction of the arrangements had required a considerable reorganisation of staff and a re-profiling of management resources in order to deliver offender management and interventions. Work to meet the national requirements had been underway for some time, was regularly reviewed and was on target. Following a review of progress in September 2006, the CO had commissioned plans to ensure that the principles and practice of offender management were embedded in the organisation and a conference of local managers was due to be held in January 2007 to take planning and implementation forward.

Work had taken place to make the necessary changes to create more generic OMUs including offender managers for unpaid work requirements. Teams had been split into small 'pods' within the OMUs staffed with a PO, PSO and case administrators working alongside each other. In addition, a public protection and enhanced supervision team managed MAPPA, PPO and DRR cases.

All cases had been allocated to tiers. Efforts had been made to allocate PSRs in such a way as to maximise the potential for offender manager continuity. All staff had been well briefed about the offender management model and their role within it. Although the area had not produced an overarching policy on offender management, a set of process maps had been issued to staff in order to assist implementation of the national offender management model.

Staff were positive about offender management and saw many advantages to it, particularly those relating to continuity of contact with an offender. Not surprisingly there was still more work to do to ensure that offender management worked as efficiently and effectively as it should. A number of staff had had to adapt to the challenge of taking on new roles and learning about different areas of the probation task. There also remained some organisational problems. These included the very late allocation of offender managers to prisoners due to be released from custody and an over-reliance on reporting centres for some offenders subject to supervision that meant that the continuity of contact with an offender manager was disrupted.

Relationships with HMP Bedford were extremely positive and there were examples of very good liaison with staff in the prison. Efforts had been made to ensure that prisoners due to be released to Bedfordshire would, wherever possible, serve the final weeks of their sentence at HMP Bedford, thus assisting the offender management process at a critical point. Contacts with other prisons were more problematic owing to the number of prison establishments and their distance from Bedfordshire. The frequent transfers of prisoners, often at short notice, also made effective offender management difficult.

NOMIS had been delayed and was due to be implemented in Bedfordshire in September 2007. There were no reported problems with OASys connectivity. Offender managers did report that on occasion they had difficulty in gaining ownership of OASys from prisons but this did not appear to be due to technical problems.

OFFENDER MANAGEMENT IN HMP BEDFORD

We visited HMP Bedford to hear of progress with the NOMS offender management model.

HMP Bedford is a local, adult male prison. It was rated as delivering exceptionally high performance by the Prison Service and HMI Prisons' last two inspection reports were generally positive. The prison was operating close to its capacity of 494 prisoners. A third were on remand or unsentenced. The number of prisoners recalled for breaches of licence conditions were increasing.

The prison's constructive efforts to implement the offender management model had been hampered by the delay in the confirmation of funding from NOMS, overcrowding across the prison estate causing prisoner movements and delays in the receipt of OASys.

The OMU was due to become operational in November 2006. A desk top planning exercise had been completed and the necessary structures and systems within the prison were in place or advanced, subject to regular review. Heads of offender management, reducing reoffending and the OMU had been appointed. New job descriptions had been written, with prison-wide re-profiling of staff resources. However, the action plan had, until recently, been held up because of lack of confirmation of funding from NOMS. Running costs had recently been agreed, but not yet paid. There was still no agreement to pay the necessary capital costs, to provide suitable accommodation and information technology equipment for the OMU. Essential training by the business change support team, and secondment of a PSO, had similarly been held up because of lack of funding. The uncertainty undermined planning and staff commitment.

Offender management arrangements were integrated across the prison, building on existing practice and structures, including partnerships with a wide range of external providers, statutory, private and voluntary. Two of the three offender supervisors initially planned had been identified because they were already OASys trained. The initial focus was to be on high-risk PPO and MAPP cases with sentences over 12 months, estimated to be around 15% of the population. A well-established public protection team and established lines of communication, outside and inside the prison, enabled early recognition of high RoH cases.

Collaboration was not entrenched in all cases even at a basic level. Many prisoners arrived without OASys assessment, although this was less likely for Bedfordshire offenders. Prison staff then had to commence OASys, using the PSR and other court documentation, which generally did arrive with them. In the days following reception at Bedford, OASys, legal services, categorisation and allocation staff, collaborated to assess and commence sentence planning, prioritising high risk and discharge. With the help of external providers, reintegration planning commenced following reception. External providers were integrated and regularly attended planning meetings. The prison had recently arranged an away-day for external providers to promote collaboration between providers as well as within NOMS.

Apart from short duration substance misuse work, Bedford prison ran no offending behaviour programmes. A needs assessment had been conducted earlier in the year. The prison sought to move people to prisons where needs could be met, but was hindered by waiting lists and the competing pressures of overstretched services. To cater better for the generally short duration population, likely to be still on the waiting list when the time

came to discharge them, the prison was pursuing the possibility of collaboration with Bedfordshire Probation Area to develop short, focused courses within HMP Bedford.

Liaison with Bedfordshire probation staff was described as positive. There had been offender management planning meetings and a Memorandum of Understanding was in hand. However, as far as other probation areas were concerned, there were significant gaps in communication with external probation offices. Typical problems were difficulty in identifying constantly changing offender managers and failure to allocate cases within a probation office until immediately before release date, without planning for potential early release on home detention curfew.

A third of the population came from within a 50 mile radius but, because of estate-wide overcrowding, the prison was receiving from further afield than Bedfordshire and neighbouring counties. To make way for prisoners arriving from courts as far away as the south coast, the prison was regularly instructed to despatch north drafts of prisoners selected by the Prisoner Management Unit. In only a limited number of cases could the prison hold prisoners who needed to remain at Bedford, or agree transfers in or out in pursuance of individuals' sentence and resettlement plans, although it was more successful in ensuring that Bedfordshire prisoners served the final month of their sentences in HMP Bedford. In the case of prisoners transferred from other prisons, there was often a delay in the transfer of OASys from the last prison. If they were moved again it was difficult for the process to catch up with the person. Irresistible pressures to move people to manage overcrowding rather than offending undermined the prison's considerable efforts to put into effect the offender management model.

In summary HMP Bedford had enthusiasm for the offender management model, but it was in the early stages of planning its implementation. It had serious doubts about its ability to implement the model in the context of a lack of resources and extremely severe population pressures.

SERVICE USERS' PERSPECTIVE

Offenders

There were five focus groups: two with unpaid work groups, two with accredited programme groups (Think First and Drink Impaired Drivers) and one at the approved premises in Bedford. In total 38 offenders were interviewed. Comments from unpaid work groups were mainly positive. Offenders were clear about the expectations of supervision and felt involved in the sentence planning process. The work was seen as demanding, but some concern was expressed about the range of placements on offer not making best use of offenders' skills. There was also some concern about being offered work instructions and then being 'stood down' because the placement was over-subscribed. Offenders valued feedback from the beneficiaries of unpaid work because it helped them to see that what they were doing was of benefit to the community.

Offenders were critical of offender managers in that most had not had contact with them during the time they had been attending a group. They were clear, however, about the consequences of non-attendance and had been given a thorough induction. On the whole offenders were positive about the groups, although some viewed the content and structure as being too rigid. Tutors were seen to treat offenders with respect and being fair and helpful.

At the approved premises, the overriding concern for most residents was the need to obtain permanent accommodation after their period of residence had come to an end. Most residents felt that their contact with offender managers had been helpful. Despite the fact that no resident could recall seeing a sentence plan, the interventions provided by the staff at the premises were constructive and helpful. Residents particularly valued the help with substance misuse problems that was offered.

Out of 100 questionnaires, 13 were completed and returned. Most of the comments were positive. Eleven stated that the rules covering supervision, including breach, were fully explained to them. Eight recalled having their sentence plan discussed with them. They reported that the issue that their offender manager had helped them with most was attitudes towards offending. Only two said that they did not have a good working relationship with their offender manager. Nine said that they were more likely to think about the victims of crime as a consequence of this sentence and eight said that they thought they were less likely to reoffend as a result. Only one of the five offenders who served custodial sentences had been visited in prison by their offender manager.

Victims

Ten questionnaires were sent out to people who had been victims of serious crime in the case and three were returned. The views of these victims were broadly positive. All three found the clarity of communication from the probation area good in relation to the first contact. Two of the victims were satisfied with the quality of the subsequent service provided. Their needs were taken account of and they were provided with sufficient information. One victim, however, was less satisfied about the quality of the service they had received.

Three victims attended a focus group. They were very positive and satisfied by the service offered by the probation area. VLOs were seen as empathic and explained things without recourse to jargon. They were quick to answer questions and were reliable.

Courts

Out of 50 questionnaires sent to sentencers, nine were completed and returned. Overall they were satisfied with the work of the probation area. Probation staff were considered to have sufficient knowledge and skills to work effectively in court, the quality of court reports was seen to be satisfactory and the liaison arrangements were good. Sentencers received information about current probation policy and practice and felt that probation engaged effectively with the LCJB. The one major area of concern was that staffing levels in courts were not always seen as adequate enough to provide sentencers with appropriate information to aid decision making.

1. ASSESSMENT AND SENTENCE PLANNING

1.1 General Criterion: PREPARING FOR SENTENCE

Activity in the phase leading up to sentence is timely, purposeful and effective.

68%

Strengths:

- (a) *Almost all of the cases in the community sample (54 out of 59) had had a PSR written for the current offence and 80% were assessed as being satisfactory. Where the court had indicated the level of seriousness, all but one of the reports clearly took this into account. 96% of the reports were of the appropriate type, i.e. FDRs or SDRs. 89% of sentencers who completed and returned our questionnaire were satisfied with the quality of FDRs and 100% with the quality of SDRs.*
- (b) *A clear proposal for sentence was made in 85% of reports. A proposal for a community sentence was made in 94% of the reports, which was followed fully by the court in 87% of cases.*
- (c) *Most reports (94%) were completed on time using the nationally approved format. 78% were based on appropriate risk and needs analysis. There was a report in only one PPO case. This contained a clear and proportionate proposal and – correctly – did not identify the offender as a PPO.*
- (d) *Reports were objective, impartial and free from discriminatory language and stereotype in 85% of cases.*
- (e) *Where self-harm was an issue, this was clearly recorded in all reports.*

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) *It was a matter of concern that 31% of the reports were assessed neither as balanced, verified, factually accurate nor suitably concise.*
- (b) *The OASys template was used in 39 reports, but in 15 cases the use of the template was considered not to have enhanced the quality of the report.*
- (c) *In only 61% of relevant reports was victim information included.*
- (d) *An outline sentence plan was contained in only 23 of the 49 reports (47%) where a proposal for a community sentence had been made.*
- (e) *In five cases the proposal for a community sentence was not followed by the court and the reason for the court's decision was either not clear or not recorded.*

Conclusion:

This criterion represents a priority for improvement.

Strengths:

- (a) *In the majority of cases (87%) the assessed RoH classification – low, medium, high or very high – appeared to be correct.*
- (b) *The RoH analysis accurately reflected the RoH to staff in 84% of relevant cases.*
- (c) *There was effective middle and/or senior manager involvement in the assessment of all high and very high RoH cases.*
- (d) *A RoH screening had been completed in 95% of the community cases and had also been completed or reviewed on release from custody in 89% of cases.*
- (e) *A referral had been made to approved premises in nine cases and eight of these were considered appropriate.*

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) *The overall quality of RoH assessments was described as satisfactory in only 51% of cases. In three cases no assessment had been completed and in a further three it was not clear what the assessed level was. In 12 cases we assessed the classification to be inaccurate.*
- (b) *It was also a concern that offenders who should have been identified as Level 1 MAPPAs were not recorded as such. This indicated a degree of confusion amongst offender managers and their supervisors about the role and purpose of MAPPA.*
- (c) *In 35% of community cases where there was a RoH screening it was completed late and in 13% of all cases it was inaccurate.*
- (d) *The OASys RoH screening and analysis and any other specialist tools had failed to draw on MAPPA, other agencies' and previous probation, prison or YOS assessments in 31% of relevant cases.*
- (e) *There was insufficient evidence of effective middle and/or higher management involvement in respect of child safeguarding issues in seven out of 14 relevant cases.*
- (f) *Whilst in most cases RoH classification and MAPPA level of management had been communicated to staff, not all partners working with offenders were routinely provided with this information.*
- (g) *In five out of eight cases (63%) there was no acceptable explanation about why a full RoH analysis had not been completed when the screening document had indicated that it should have been done.*
- (h) *The RoH analysis was assessed to be of a sufficient standard in only 58% of relevant cases.*
- (i) *Insufficient attention had been paid to victim issues in 38% of relevant cases.*
- (j) *Risk management plans in community orders were comprehensive in 39% of cases (licences 36%) and structured according to the required format in 50% of cases (licences 39%). The plan was completed within five working days of the order being made or the cases assessed as high/very high RoH in 50% of relevant*

cases. The plan was completed prior to release in 36% of relevant licence cases. In relevant cases the analysis did not accurately reflect the RoH to children in 31%, to the public in 33%, and to known adults in 29%.

Conclusion: This criterion represents an urgent priority for improvement.

1.3 General Criterion: ASSESSMENT OF LIKELIHOOD OF REOFFENDING
Likelihood of reoffending is comprehensively and accurately assessed using OASys as applicable.

69%

Strengths:

- (a) *In 82% of cases there was a completed OASys assessment. (There were 14 tier 1 cases in the sample that did not require a full OASys to be completed, although the area was moving to a position where a full OASys was completed on all cases subject to supervision regardless of the tier.)*
- (b) *The overall quality of the assessment of likelihood of reoffending was found to be of sufficient quality in 69% of cases. Criminogenic factors were satisfactorily assessed in 75% of cases and positive influences were identified in 74%.*

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) *Where there were previous relevant assessments available these were not drawn on in 25% of cases.*
- (b) *There were ten PPO cases in the sample, of which seven had had an assessment within five working days of their sentence or release. However, only five of the assessments on PPOs were considered to be comprehensive.*

Conclusion: This criterion represents a priority for improvement.

1.4 General Criterion: ASSESSMENT OF OFFENDER ENGAGEMENT
Potential obstacles or challenges to positive engagement are identified and plans made to minimise their possible impact.

68%

Strengths:

- (a) *In the majority (66%) of cases the offender's intellectual ability, learning style, motivation and capacity to change had been taken into account at the earliest opportunity.*
- (b) *In all cases a REM classification had been recorded.*

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) *A skills for life screening had not been carried out in 38% of cases. In 32 of the cases which had been screened the need for a full assessment was indicated. In 14*

of these cases the full assessment had not been carried out. It was apparent that many offender managers viewed this aspect of practice as optional rather than an automatic process to be applied in all cases. Where assessments had been carried out they lacked detail.

- (b) In 41% of cases full attention had not been paid to the methods most likely to be effective with the offender.
- (c) Diversity issues and any other individual needs were actively assessed in only 61% of cases. Where potentially discriminatory or other disadvantaging factors were identified, no plans were put in place to minimise their impact in 25% of cases.

Conclusion: This criterion represents a priority for improvement.

1.5 General Criterion: SENTENCE PLANNING

The offender manager plans interventions in custody and the community with a view to addressing criminogenic factors and managing any RoH to others. The ISP or unpaid work assessment is designed to describe a structured and coherent plan of work for each offender.

53%

Strengths:

- (a) All relevant cases in the sample had been allocated to a tier and in 71% of community orders the offender was allocated to an offender manager within the required timescales.
- (b) In 71% of cases the planning accurately reflected the tier to which the offender had been allocated.
- (c) In 83% of cases steps had been taken to ensure that the offender fully understood the requirements of the sentence and the penalties should they be breached. 85% of offenders confirmed that requirements about supervision and breach were explained to them.
- (d) In relation to community sentences ISPs drew on other relevant assessments in 73% of applicable cases.
- (e) In 74% of cases interventions identified in ISPs (for tier 3 and 4 cases) were likely to address offending behaviour. As regards all community sentences, the planned contact levels of each requirement were appropriate in 81% of cases.

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) The overall quality of sentence planning was disappointing in 59% of the cases in the sample. The sentence planning documentation was not actively used as a working tool by offender managers, with only 38% of sentence plans found to give a clear shape to supervision. Only 42% focused on achievable change, 56% reflected the sentencing purpose(s) – punish, help, change, control – and only 41% set relevant goals for the offender.

- (b) *Although all offenders in the sample had been allocated to a tier, we found that 17 had been incorrectly allocated.*
- (c) *In 62% of applicable cases the roles and liaison responsibilities of all workers were not clearly defined in the sentence plan.*
- (d) *In seven cases there was no ISP. Where there were sentence planning documents they were not sufficiently sensitive to diversity issues, including vulnerability in 52% of applicable cases.*
- (e) *There was insufficient evidence that the offender had had the opportunity to participate in the planning process in 49% of cases.*
- (f) *From the interventions that were identified in ISPs only 41% promoted community reintegration, 48% met the punitive requirements of the sentence and 51% were likely to reduce or contain the RoH.*
- (g) *ISPs were not completed within the required timescale in 60% of community cases, the appropriate sequencing of interventions was set out in 21% of plans, clarity about who was to deliver the interventions was clear in 52%, all arranged contacts were enforceable in 56% and how any RoH posed by the offender was to be managed was set out satisfactorily in only 33% of cases.*
- (h) *During sentence planning appropriate consideration was given, where relevant, to restrictive conditions/requirements designed to minimise the RoH to others in only 60% of cases in the sample.*
- (i) *For those stand alone unpaid work cases where there was no requirement to complete an OASys assessment, the area had designed a simple sentence plan document. Unfortunately the document lacked detail and needed to contain more information about RoH, likelihood of reoffending and details of interventions planned to make it an effective tool.*
- (j) *Where basic skills or educational needs had been identified, there were few examples of offender managers incorporating these needs into the sentence plan.*
- (k) *There were a number of examples of offenders serving custodial sentences not being allocated an offender manager until the point of release on licence.*

Conclusion:

This criterion represents an urgent priority for improvement.

2. IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERVENTIONS

2.1 General Criterion: DELIVERING THE SENTENCE PLAN

The offender manager facilitates the structured delivery of all relevant elements of the sentence.

50%

Strengths:

- (a) *Arrangements were put in place to prepare offenders thoroughly for interventions in 73% of cases.*
- (b) *There were differences in perception of how well staff motivated and supported offenders. 85% of offenders who completed the HMI Probation questionnaire said that they had a good working relationship with their offender manager who listened to what they had to say. In addition, offenders interviewed in focus groups confirmed that programme tutors and unpaid work supervisors motivated and supported them.*

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) *In cases in the sample we found that offender managers were less likely to be good at actively motivating and supporting offenders throughout their sentence (43%) than had been the case in the returned questionnaires. Similarly, there was insufficient evidence that offender managers had demonstrated commitment to their work with the offender and reinforced positive behaviour.*
- (b) *In 43% of relevant cases arrangements were not in place to reinforce new skills with offenders following interventions.*
- (c) *Where there was more than one requirement in a licence or order we did not find appropriate sequencing of interventions in 44% of the cases. Nor did work in the community build sufficiently well on activity in prison in 11 out of 26 relevant licence cases.*
- (d) *In cases where there was more than one worker involved in the management and supervision of a case, only 57% of cases had the offender manager overseen and coordinated the input of all work. In 61% of cases there was sufficient evidence of good communication between the offender manager and other workers and in 66% of cases there was evidence of good communication between all staff and the offender. These deficits were particularly evident in some stand alone unpaid work requirements where there was limited involvement of offender managers.*
- (e) *Reviews of sentence plans were poor in terms of timeliness (52% on time) and quality. Plans were often 'pulled through' from an earlier plan and were not brought up to date. In only 41% was work with the offender seen to flow from them coherently and 66% lacked objectives and milestones giving a clear direction to supervision. There was also insufficient evidence that continuing ownership of the plan by the offender had been sought in 73% of cases.*
- (f) *Reviews did not integrate other plans in 38% of relevant cases.*

- (g) *There was insufficient positive, proactive and timely work between prison-based staff, offender managers and others to prepare offenders for release in the community in three-quarters of licence cases.*
- (h) *At the time of the inspection sentence requirements were fully implemented in 65% of cases.*
- (i) *There were five cases in the sample that had been transferred in from other areas. Clearly good transfer practice relies on both the transferring and receiving areas working to the correct standards. It was therefore a concern that only two cases were received with an up-to-date OASys assessment (although in the case of the one high RoH case the risk management plan was both reviewed and updated by the receiving area within five working days). In only three of the cases was an appointment with the offender made within the required five days and none of the cases were visited at home within ten days of the area being notified that the offender was living in its area.*

Conclusion: This criterion represents an urgent priority for improvement.

2.2 General Criterion: PROTECTING THE PUBLIC BY MINIMISING RISK OF HARM

All reasonable actions have been taken to protect the public by keeping to a minimum the offender's RoH to others.

59%

Strengths:

- (a) *MAPPA were assessed as being effective in 80% of relevant cases and offender managers and other staff contributed effectively to these arrangements in 78%.*
- (b) *Eleven cases had been recalled in relation to RoH issues. In all but one of the cases this was assessed as part of an appropriate risk management process that had been actioned properly.*

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) *RoH to others had been reviewed no later than 16 weeks from the start of sentence in just 49% of relevant cases. The result was better for reviews being undertaken at least 16 weeks thereafter (68%). However, in only 60% of the cases where there had been a significant change was the RoH reviewed.*
- (b) *Where a review of RoH was done there was insufficient evidence of ongoing planning to protect children, the public, known adults and staff; on average this was found in only 49% of relevant cases. With regard to safeguarding issues, offender managers tended to react to circumstances rather than take a proactive approach to child safety.*
- (c) *Following recall there was no evidence that three offenders had been given a clear explanation as to the reason for their reimprisonment or that efforts were made to re-engage them.*
- (d) *Changes in RoH were anticipated where feasible in 59% of cases, identified in 68% and acted upon appropriately in 74%.*

- (e) *A purposeful home visit to high and very high RoH cases only took place within ten working days of sentence or release in 27% of relevant cases; it was carried out appropriately at a later stage in 20% and repeated as necessary to keep the RoH to a minimum in 33%. Home visits were employed effectively to monitor children's safeguarding outcomes in only eight of the 14 relevant cases in the sample.*

Conclusion: This criterion represents an urgent priority for improvement.

2.3 General Criterion: VICTIMS
Consistent attention is given to issues concerning victims. **61%**

- Strengths:**
- (a) *We were given positive examples in the sample and in focus groups of where the contribution of VLOs had been well used with offenders in statutory victim contact cases.*
 - (b) *The victims who responded to the HMI Probation questionnaire were very satisfied with the clarity of the contact they had received from the probation area.*
 - (c) *A written offer of face-to-face contact was made within 40 working days in nine out of 11 statutory victim contact cases. Three out of the 12 had been offered information about the criminal justice process.*

- Areas for Improvement:**
- (a) *Victim safety (including children) was an issue in 40 cases. This was given a high priority in only 55% of these cases and meant that 18 actual or potential victims had insufficient attention paid to their safety.*
 - (b) *Victim awareness work had been undertaken in only 51% of relevant cases.*

Conclusion: This criterion represents an priority for improvement.

2.4 General Criterion: ENSURING CONTAINMENT AND PROMOTING COMPLIANCE (Punish)
Contact with the offender and enforcement of the sentence is planned and implemented to meet the requirements of national standards and to encourage engagement with the sentence process. **67%**

- Strengths:**
- (a) *In 85% of cases the offender was offered a full and timely induction following sentence to a community order or after release on licence.*
 - (b) *The frequency of appointments conformed to national standards in 81% of cases.*

- (c) *Attention to monitoring attendance across all interventions (86% of all cases) was good, as was action to support compliance. Judgements about the acceptability of absences were consistent and appropriate in 77% of cases.*
- (d) *There were eight cases that required the enforcement of exclusion and/or curfew requirements; seven of these cases were dealt with satisfactorily.*
- (e) *Breach action was instigated within the required timescale in 75% of relevant cases, although it was resolved within the required timescale in only 65% of cases.*
- (f) *The quality of the case record was good overall, with 73% being well organised with clear REM details in 87%, although only 69% contained all relevant documentation.*

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) *Sufficient contact and liaison with prisoners before release to promote offender management in the community was not undertaken in 72% of cases, and in 56% of cases when such contact and liaison had taken place it was assessed as unlikely to promote effective offender management in the community post-release.*
- (b) *The frequency of appointments was sufficient both to meet RoH considerations presented and support the achievement of sentence plan objectives in only 53% of cases and should have been increased beyond the minimum. In addition, the frequency of appointments facilitated the requirements of the sentence in only 63% of cases.*
- (c) *The frequency of appointments conformed to national standards in only 54% of unpaid work cases. In addition, the frequency of work sessions facilitated the requirements of the sentence in only half the cases. It was clear that a significant number of offenders were offered work instructions but were then 'stood down' owing to a lack of supervisors or work projects. This was considered to be unacceptable practice.*
- (d) *There was a lack of good quality unpaid work placements available and as a result there were only 46% positive matchings to the offender, 61% seen as suitably demanding and only 71% providing a benefit to the community.*
- (e) *It was a concern that only five out of the ten PPO cases had had enhanced levels of contact and a pattern of reporting supportive of all elements of the sentence.*
- (f) *The recording of case information needed to improve. In only 67% of cases was it assessed as clear, timely in 71% and sufficient in 60%.*

Conclusion:

This criterion represents an urgent priority for improvement.

2.5 General Criterion: CONSTRUCTIVE INTERVENTIONS (Help and Change)

Interventions are delivered to identified ends and to meet the requirements of the sentence: help and change.

57%

Strengths:

- (a) *Sufficient work and resources were directed at community reintegration issues in 77% of cases where it was needed.*
- (b) *One-fifth of cases in the sample had an accredited programme requirement. 67% of these had commenced the programme as set out in the sentence plan, although in five of the six cases where this had not happened there was not a clear and acceptable explanation for it.*

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) *In only 59% of cases was evidence found that constructive interventions challenged the offender to accept responsibility for their offending and its consequences.*
- (b) *A total of 37 cases required some input in relation to basic skills. In 13 of these cases the arrangements for the delivery of an intervention had not been set up. This appeared to be a reflection of the fact that the contractor had withdrawn from the contract voluntarily and the new provider had taken time to become embedded into the work and structure of the area.*
- (c) *Offender managers prepared reports and attended review hearings as required in five out of the seven DRR cases in the sample.*
- (d) *The two approved premises in Bedfordshire offered a range of constructive interventions, for example pro-social modelling; however, the interventions were not featured as part of the ISP.*

Conclusion:

This criterion represents an urgent priority for improvement.

2.6 General Criterion: RESTRICTIVE INTERVENTIONS (Control)

Interventions are delivered to identified ends and to meet the requirements of the sentence: control.

76%

Strengths:

- (a) *Restrictive interventions were monitored fully in 87% of cases. Whilst all reasonable actions were taken to minimise harm in 75% of cases, that did leave seven cases where more could have been done.*
- (b) *There was a good range of restrictive interventions available in the approved premises which were being used effectively with three out of four offenders who required this level of enhanced supervision. A recent change to national policy meant the Luton approved premises was unable to accept sex offenders due to its proximity to a school and, as a result, the sex offenders had to be accommodated in other areas.*

- (c) *Licence conditions were comprehensive and necessary in 72% of cases and proportionate to the RoH and likelihood of reoffending in 80% and 76% respectively.*
- (d) *In four out of five PPO licence cases, where the offender had drug issues, an additional licence condition was added in relation to drug misuse.*

Area for Improvement:

- (a) *Licence conditions were not proportionate to the protection of victims in 32% of cases. In a number of cases we took the view that additional conditions would have enhanced the quality of supervision.*

Conclusion:

Performance against this criterion was good.

2.7 General Criterion: DIVERSITY ISSUES

Full and proper attention is paid to diversity issues.

65%

Strengths:

- (a) *The identified diverse needs of offenders had been properly addressed in 71% of relevant cases. The approved premises were seen to meet the needs of two out of three residents in the sample.*
- (b) *Issues relating to disability had been appropriately addressed in all the cases where it was relevant.*
- (c) *Offenders were clearly informed in 85% of cases that discriminatory behaviour would not be tolerated.*

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) *There was room for improvement in meeting the needs of offenders with literacy and dyslexia issues (54% were satisfactory).*
- (b) *Informed consent to singleton placement in a mixed setting had not been obtained in two out of six relevant cases.*
- (c) *When a singleton placement in unpaid work or on an accredited programme had been made staff were only able to evidence that attention had been paid to staff composition in a quarter of the cases and arrangements to support offenders' engagement in a little over a third.*

Conclusion:

This criterion represents a priority for improvement.

3. ACHIEVEMENT AND MONITORING OF OUTCOMES

3.1 General Criterion: ACHIEVEMENT OF INITIAL OUTCOMES

Planned objectives are efficiently achieved.

49%

Strengths:

- (a) *There was evidence of responsiveness to RoH by either an increase in restrictive measures in a small number of cases and a decrease where the offender had demonstrated progress. In two cases the behaviour of the offender had led to an increase in the MAPPA level.*
- (b) *Twenty offenders (21%) had been convicted of an offence since the start of the sentence. 67% of offenders who responded to the HMI Probation questionnaire said they were less likely to offend as a result of work with Bedfordshire Probation Area.*
- (c) *79% of cases where unpaid work was undertaken had been of demonstrable benefit to the community.*
- (d) *The resources allocated to 84% of the cases were consistent with the offender's RoH and in 86% of cases to the likelihood of reoffending. Resources were also found to be used efficiently in achieving planned objectives in 72% of cases.*

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) *The monitoring and engagement of offender managers with domestic abuse cases required improvement. In 24% of the cases the offender manager did not know whether the police Domestic Violence Unit had received any call-outs to addresses linked to the offender.*
- (b) *There was evidence that the offender had demonstrated increased victim awareness in only 24% of cases.*
- (c) *Although 63% of offenders complied with the requirements of the sentence, this could be improved.*
- (d) *In 55 cases there had been no demonstrable benefit to the community from the sentence, e.g. a reduction in seriousness of offending or reduced threat to victims.*
- (e) *Where OASys had been re-scored there had been no improvement in the score in 67% of cases. In the factor linked to offending that had been identified as the highest priority in each case, there was found to be progress in 41% of cases. Thinking and behaviour was the most common factor in 22 cases, followed by drug misuse (20 cases) and by alcohol misuse and accommodation (10 cases each).*
- (f) *Learning skills and outcomes had been applied in only 19% of cases.*
- (g) *There had been an evidenced improvement in attitudes in 23% of cases and in behaviour in 19% of cases.*
- (h) *The achievement of the sentencing objectives – punish, help, change, control – was not strong. Whilst 84% of cases in all tiers experienced punishment, only 57% of tiers 2, 3 and 4 received sufficient help, 30% of cases in tiers 3 and 4 achieved the change objective and 63% of tier 4 cases were sufficiently controlled.*

- (i) *Insufficient resources (e.g. programmed activities) were allocated in a way consistent with the offender's PPO status in four out of nine cases (44%).*

Conclusion: This criterion represents an urgent priority for improvement.

3.2 General Criterion: SUSTAINABILITY OF PROGRESS

Results are capable of being sustained between different phases of a sentence and beyond the end of supervision.

57%

Strengths:

- (a) *We found continuity in offender management in that, including the PSR author, 24 cases had had just one offender manager and a further 46 had had two. However in relation to the 27 offenders who had been supervised by three or more offender managers, there were ten offenders where this had had a detrimental effect on sustaining progress. We also found that in a significant number of cases too much reliance had been placed on the offender being asked to attend a reporting centre rather than to a named offender manager.*
- (b) *71% of offenders in the sample who had a criminogenic need that could be addressed by a community-based organisation had been made aware of where to find assistance. However, it was found that full attention to long-term community reintegration issues had only been given to 55% of cases.*

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) *Structured sentence planning had not been given a high priority throughout in 56% of cases.*
- (b) *There was sufficient action taken by offender managers to consolidate learning and reinforce new skills in 46% of cases.*

Conclusion: This criterion represents an urgent priority for improvement.

4. LEADERSHIP AND STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

4.1 General Criterion: LEADERSHIP AND PLANNING

There is active leadership in the implementation of national policies via local policies and procedures which are regularly monitored and reviewed, through proactive planning with other key agencies, and by promoting the diversity agenda.

Well Met

Strengths:

- (a) *The Area Business Plan 2006/2007 conformed to the format required by the NPD. There was a clear framework for planning that reflected both national targets and key developmental areas. Explicit links were made to regional initiatives and to the SLA with the regional offender manager. Team plans were linked to the business plan. The area had used the European Excellence Model framework effectively to inform the planning process, to identify priorities for improvement and to maximise staff ownership of the planning arrangements. The CO had placed a high priority on ensuring that performance information was readily available at all levels in the organisation and it was clear that the Board in particular was well informed about the progress the area had made.*
- (b) *An effective project management approach (using the results, approach, deployment, assessment and review methodology) to all new policy development and implementation had been adopted. Board members had responsibility for individual areas of policy and had taken time, in partnership with senior managers, to promote policy to staff. Significantly, 74% of staff interviewed felt that they were well informed about area policies and procedures.*
- (c) *A protocol had been agreed with the local magistrates' courts setting out the arrangements covering a range of key activities including the provision of different types of court reports. Work was in hand to agree a similar protocol for the Crown Court. The primary liaison arrangements with sentencers were based on Sentencer Community Fora that met regularly throughout the year and had built on the previously established liaison committees. 86% of sentencers who responded to our questionnaire agreed that Bedfordshire managers modelled positive and professional leadership behaviour and 100% thought liaison arrangements were effective.*
- (d) *There was evidence in the business plan of a link to the Regional Reducing Reoffending Action Plan. There was also evidence of collaboration with other probation areas in the region to develop and improve practice, for example regional benchmarking of OASys.*
- (e) *Strategic partners took the view that the area was well placed to influence local strategic planning despite the relatively small number of strategic managers employed. Particularly noteworthy was the use of offender data collected from OASys that had been used to inform the Supporting People priorities in the area. There was also evidence that the CO had engaged effectively with the LCJB in an effort to improve the operation of the criminal justice system in the area.*
- (f) *There was a strong working relationship at a senior management level between the police and probation area. The ACO was the chair of the MAPPA Strategic Management Board and a joint police-probation funded MAPPA administrator*

post had been established. There was also evidence of close working between the two organisations in the PPO schemes. There were also constructive relationships with HMP Bedford in relation to MAPPA and PPO cases. The MAPPA coordinator had also assisted the YOS in chairing meetings regarding children and young people who posed a RoH.

- (g) There was a comprehensive Race Equality Scheme document dated March 2006, which included a review of progress for the period 2002-2005 and set objectives in a Race Equality Plan for 2005-2008. The plan was wide-ranging and included initiatives such as the intention to use the approved premises in Bedford as a regional resource for women offenders.
- (h) There was impressive evidence of the way in which service user perspectives had been taken into account in planning processes. The staff survey had resulted in a detailed action plan, information gathered from offenders about disability had been used to review service provision and the views of approved premises residents had been taken into account in planning the delivery of services.
- (i) The Board and senior managers felt that action by NPD/NOMS had been useful in creating an effective framework in relation to health and safety policy. The Chair also considered that the NPD had been helpful in ensuring the smooth appointment of a new CO.
- (j) 78% of staff interviewed felt that managers demonstrated a professional management approach and 74% took the view that they modelled positive leadership behaviour.
- (k) There was evidence that the area had taken the findings and recommendations of the ESI report very seriously and had produced a comprehensive action plan designed to improve practice. This had been regularly reviewed.

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) The relatively high use of custody in the Luton courts continued to be a matter for concern. The area had also struggled to ensure that sentencers made use of the preferred type of court report (in particular FDRs) when making sentencing decisions. Steps had been taken, however, to address these problems including direct contact by the CO with sentencers and the strengthening of the probation presence in court.
- (b) The PPO schemes in the area provided a number of challenges in that in the rural areas the CDRPs had identified offenders who had committed relatively minor offences and were not seen as a priority by the probation area. As a result, the area was not able to engage effectively with all local communities.
- (c) There were a plethora of inter-agency groups that required the input of strategic and middle managers. The area struggled to ensure that it had the resources to contribute effectively to all the groups on a consistent basis.
- (d) Evidence from case file reading indicated that MAPPA Level 1 cases were not consistently identified and recorded as such. Remedial action was needed to ensure that recording practice and monitoring procedures could properly account for the total extent of all the Level 1 cases.
- (e) The area felt that the national NPD property contract was inflexible and did not provide what was required to meet the needs of service delivery in the Bedfordshire area. The overall quality of office accommodation was poor. Late

changes in budget allocations also impacted adversely on the ability of the area to manage its priorities effectively.

4.2 General Criterion: PERFORMANCE AGAINST NATIONAL AND REGIONAL TARGETS

Key performance targets are consistently met, with careful attention to diversity issues throughout.

Well Met

NPS Performance Data	Target	2005/2006	
		Area	England and Wales
Enforcement – breach taken where required within ten working days: all orders/licences	90%	95%*	91%
Offender compliance including orders allowed to continue	85%	80%	81%
Appointments arranged in accordance with national standards	90%	85%*	84%
Appointments attended in accordance with national standards	65%	65%*	64%
Accredited programme completions: % performance in relation to target	100%	105%*	106%
Unpaid work completions: % performance in relation to target	100%	111%*	97%
DTTO/DRR starts: % performance in relation to target	100%	70%	84%
DTTO/DRR completions: % performance in relation to target	100%	105%*	92%
Basic skills: % performance in relation to starts	100%	97%*	129%
Basic skills: % performance in relation to awards	100%	123%*	165%
Sickness absence: average days absence	9 days	14.5	12.2
Proportion of magistrates' court PSRs prepared to court's timescale	90%	99%*	98%
Accurate and timely ethnicity data	95%	98%*	94%
Home Secretary's Race Equality Employment Target for 2009	Target: (for East of England region) 4.9%	8.0%* (region)	
Proportion of victims of serious sexual/violent offences (where offender sentenced to custody of 12+ months) offered contact within eight weeks	85%	90%*	93%
RoH assessments and plans for high RoH cases completed within five working days of start/release	90%	88%*	76%
RoH assessments and plans for PPO cases completed within five working days of start/release	90%	91%*	76%
* Asterisk indicates area has met target or is 'near miss'.			

Joint 'end-to-end' targets on enforcement for Local Criminal Justice Board	Target	Rolling quarter January-March 2006	
		Area	England and Wales
Average time to resolve community penalty breach proceedings from relevant unacceptable failure	No more than 35 working days	57 days	43 days
Proportion of all breach proceedings resolved within 25 working days of relevant unacceptable failure to comply	50%	26%	48%

Strengths:

- (a) *The Board and senior managers had become increasingly performance focused. Resources had been allocated with the intention of achieving the targets set and there was evidence of an improving trend in relation to most targets. Bedfordshire's performance in relation to the NPD national weighted scorecard illustrated the effectiveness of such an approach. In August 2005 the area was ranked 39th out of 45 areas, however by August 2006 it had risen to 10th out of 45.*
- (b) *An impressive performance management system was in place. Monthly performance information was issued and these reports were available to all staff via the intranet. The CO was active in bringing to the attention of middle managers those areas where performance was good or required additional attention. If a target was consistently not met the relevant manager was required to draw together an improvement plan for submission to senior managers. An example of this was a plan to improve performance in relation to court report timeliness.*
- (c) *The area had recently begun to segment performance data by race and gender with the intention of monitoring these to identify areas for improvement.*
- (d) *There were a number of examples of cooperative working to meet targets. Regional work had taken place on OASys quality and the senior managers had worked on an LCJB project to improve end-to-end enforcement of community sentences.*
- (e) *Clear plans were in place where targets were not met or performance needed to improve. For example the timeliness of risk management plans had been given considerable attention as had an improvement plan directed at MAPP processes in the area. The area had changed the provider of basic skills assessments and interventions in response to concerns about the quality of the service provided.*

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) *The area had struggled to meet the target in relation to staff sickness absence but there was evidence that managers were addressing this problem and that there had been a gradual improvement in staff absence rates. The position was similar in respect of DRR starts where the target had not been met.*
- (b) *Performance in relation to the shared enforcement target needed to improve.*

4.3**General Criterion: RESOURCE DEPLOYMENT**

There is a strategic approach to deploying resources to deliver effective performance and support diversity initiatives and there are positive indications in relation to value for money.

Well Met**Strengths:**

- (a) *The area had planned carefully for the introduction of offender management. The management structure had been re-profiled in order to meet the demands of an organisation that had to both deliver offender services and commission external providers. This entailed the creation of one director post and one head of business development, supported by two assistant directors. A very detailed workload tool designed by an ACO had been used to assign staff to roles within OMUs and*

interventions. The area had continued to use a simplified resource allocation model to inform the deployment of staff resources as offender management developed.

- (b) *In the summer of 2006 a significant budget shortfall meant that front-line services could have been at risk. Difficult decisions had been taken, for example seeking alternative opportunities for graduating TPOs, and by careful management the budget was balanced and cuts to services avoided.*
- (c) *Resources were deployed with RoH as a clear priority. A public protection team had been created, partly in response to the ESI findings, to manage offenders deemed to present a high RoH. Caseloads held by offender managers in the public protection team were lower than those held by staff in the general OMUs.*
- (d) *Resources had been dedicated to a number of diversity initiatives. This included allocating part of the newly appointed training manager's time to support diversity initiatives. The Board had also approved a policy on the commissioning of services and this included an explicit commitment to providing appropriate services to black and minority ethnic offenders.*
- (e) *The area had commissioned an external consultant better to identify court staffing levels and this had been acted on. In particular, additional staff had been deployed in magistrates' courts in order to improve the quality of service and meet the targets for FDRs.*
- (f) *The resource allocation model was consistent with national priorities and local needs. All staff had been interviewed by managers about their role within the offender management model in order to ensure that they clearly knew what was expected of them and that they understood the criteria on which the allocation of staffing resources had been based.*
- (g) *There was evidence that the area had sought to maximise the resources available. For example, there had been a successful bid for a Prison Service plus project in conjunction with the APEX Trust that had brought resources into a key area of practice: the education, training and employment of offenders.*

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) *The number of unpaid work placements was insufficient to meet demand. This led to offenders being instructed to work by the issuing of a 'non-guaranteed work placement' and then stood down when work proved not to be available. The area was instructed to stop this practice.*
- (b) *Sentencers remained concerned about the level of probation staffing in courts.*

Strengths:

- (a) *Resources had been allocated at a strategic level to help ensure that the offender management model could be operated. A new appointed head of human resources had responsibility for all human resource policies and the resource allocation model was used to determine staffing levels in the area. The Board and senior managers were clear about the needs of the service, but felt handicapped by the fact that uncertainty over budget provision made planning difficult. In addition, the costs of implementing a national job re-evaluation exercise were higher than predicted and there was a low turnover of staff.*
- (b) *As a result of NPD planning decisions, Bedfordshire, in common with a number of other probation areas, had a surfeit of TPOs in 2006/2007 and did not have the budget or the projected staff turnover to offer this group of staff permanent contracts. The area had avoided making these staff redundant by seconding them to another probation area that had a shortage of staff.*
- (c) *A detailed, costed staff training plan designed to address the training and developmental needs of staff across all grades within the offender management model had been produced. This was clearly linked to the area business plan priorities. For example, RoH training had been identified as a key priority as were issues derived from the ESI action plan.*
- (d) *Attention was paid to the continuing developmental needs of TPOs, e.g. during practice placements arrangements were made for them to co-work complex cases to gain the experience necessary to work as qualified POs.*
- (e) *Staff role boundaries were well defined within the offender management arrangements in Bedfordshire. 91% of staff interviewed were clear about their role in these arrangements.*
- (f) *There was evidence of a constructive working dynamic with recognised trade unions and they were consulted about a number of policies, for example discussions about flexible working arrangements. The CO had placed his relationship with trade unions on a more structured basis than had existed in the recent past. This included the area funding a part-time union post and making clear to staff the rules for time off for union activity.*
- (g) *The arrangements for staff supervision were good. 86% of staff interviewed reported that on average they received supervision monthly or more frequently over the last 12 months, with over three-quarters of staff describing the quality of the supervision as sufficient or excellent.*
- (h) *Following less than satisfactory completion rates the area had adopted a simplified appraisal process that clearly linked appraisal to the business plan. Systems had also been put in place to monitor the completion of appraisals and we found that 84% of staff had had an appraisal within the last 12 months. The appraisal was linked to the area business plan in 89% of the cases.*
- (i) *The area did operate with full regard to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 in relation to all its responsibilities including as an employer. The area had performed strongly in making a contribution to the Home Secretary's Race Equality Employment target. However, only 25% of staff had completed a REM questionnaire in the past 12 months.*

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) *Out of a total of 53 staff interviewed 17 (32%) took the view that their training and developmental needs had not been met. This was a significant minority. There was a particular issue with PSO grades. The role of a number of PSOs had altered as a result of the introduction of the offender management model. In many instances the PSOs were taking on more specialised roles than previously and this had produced a need for additional training and support. This had not always been provided.*
- (b) *Staff sickness rates were still above the target set by the NPD. Action had been taken to address this. The figures were discussed monthly at the SMT and detailed information was made available to team managers regarding their units and the number of days lost highlighted to managers. Sickness absence procedures were in place and almost all staff interviewed were clear about them.*

4.5 General Criterion: REVIEW AND EVALUATION
Outcomes of interventions are assessed and reviewed using available data.

Satisfactorily Met

Strengths:

- (a) *The views of a variety of service users and stakeholders were routinely collated and evaluated to improve service delivery. This included offenders and sentencers as well as staff. There was evidence of how these had been used to develop practice through regular policy reviews. For example, the results of the staff survey informed the implementation of revised appraisal arrangements. A review of services provided to courts had included the views of key stakeholders and had been taken into account in developing the services.*
- (b) *There was extensive information available to managers on a wide range of service delivery outcomes which was used by managers to improve performance. This included detailed data on enforcement and completion which were also shared with sentencers.*
- (c) *Aggregated data from OASys had been used to commission regional alcohol services. The Prolific Offender Project scheme had also been evaluated with an analysis of the successful criteria. Learning from this was taken in to the PPO schemes.*
- (d) *A director had a clearly defined responsibility for ensuring that the learning points from serious further offence reviews were shared with the Board and disseminated to the wider staff group.*

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) *The area did not routinely collate and evaluate concordance data relating to report proposal and sentence.*
- (b) *There was little evidence that monitoring and evaluation information was regularly discussed by relevant staff and practice modified in response. Neither was there evidence of the use of local, national and international research findings to inform policy and practice.*

4.6

General Criterion: COMMISSIONING OF SERVICES

There is efficient provision of effective services to support offender management outcomes and to ensure equal access to provision for offenders.

Partly Met

Strengths:

- (a) *The area had strengthened arrangements in relation to the commissioning of services. A contracted services manager had the day-to-day responsibility for efficient contract management and reported to the assistant director for interventions. There was evidence that contracts were monitored. For example, a SLA with the APEX Trust had been amended in response to concerns about the quality of the service provided.*
- (b) *The unpaid work placement manager was working in partnership with CDRPs in order to find placements that met community need.*
- (c) *In order to meet the diverse needs of the offenders with whom it worked the area had reviewed its interpreting service and had contracted with another provider that offered a more flexible and user friendly service.*
- (d) *Overall the quality of accessible services provided efficiently to support offender management was sufficient in 74% of cases.*
- (e) *Assessors generally rated the services used with offenders as sufficient in the majority of cases.*
- (f) *Managers were engaged in contributing to the drug action team and Supporting People commissioning processes in Luton and Bedfordshire.*

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) *There was insufficient evidence of a consistent approach in utilising the user perspective in commissioning, maintaining and decommissioning services. The area did intend to develop this aspect of practice as its responsibility to commission services grew in the future. There was also insufficient evidence that the current range of services represented good value for money.*
- (b) *The area was in the early stages of developing a strategy to ensure that there was a comprehensive range of offender provision based on research into local, regional and national criminogenic needs and RoH.*
- (c) *Whilst there were good relationships with the staff of HMP Bedford, and many prisoners from the area completed their sentences at the establishment, frequent movements of prisoners within the prison system meant that efficient and effective offender management was often very difficult. In 26% of licence cases there were concerns about the working arrangements between prisons and offender managers.*
- (d) *Offender managers identified gaps in service provision which impacted on the effective management of 26% of cases. Provision for education and training services was a concern for offender managers. In ten out of 26 relevant cases offenders managers had concerns about the service provided. There was insufficient evidence that the quality of such interventions was monitored consistently at a strategic level.*
- (e) *Overall, there was insufficient evidence that services were developed to support work with minority groups.*

APPENDIX 1
Contextual information

Caseload at end of September 2005

Total caseload	2,543
% White	70.5%
% Minority ethnic*	29.5%
% Male	88.9%
% Female	11.1%
Number of cases subject to MAPPA:	
Level 1	424
Level 2	67
Level 3	9
Number of PPO cases	44
* Excluding cases for which ethnicity information is not available.	

The local definition of a PPO case – on which the above figure is based – is an individual who is assessed by the management body of one of the PPO schemes in Bedfordshire as someone whose offending adversely affects the local community to a significant degree and could be described as prolific.

Total revenue budget in 2005/2006: £8.180m

Total revenue budget in 2006/2007: £8.202m

Approved Premises: Bedford – capacity 22
 Napier Road, Luton – capacity 20

APPENDIX 2

Inspection model, methodology and publication arrangements

Model

- The OMI programme started in May 2006. All NOMS areas in England and Wales are being inspected over a three year cycle, region by region. We hope to identify and promote effective work with offenders and disseminate information about good practice.
- Probation areas are being assessed on how well they have met defined inspection criteria focusing on:
 - assessment and sentence planning carried out on offenders
 - implementation of interventions delivered to offenders
 - achievement and monitoring of outcomes
 - leadership and strategic management.Particular attention will be given to RoH issues – it is performance against these measures which will determine whether a reinspection is carried out.
- The inspection takes account of the regular NPS performance data. These are produced by the NPD who are responsible for their collection and quality assurance.
- Each inspection takes place over one week. The area is asked to identify a random sample of 100 offenders (more in the largest areas) who have been under supervision for approximately six months. We then ensure that there is a minimum number of the following types of cases: high/very high RoH; PPOs; approved premises residents; statutory victim contact; black and minority ethnic offenders. The cases are drawn from both community orders and licences.

Methodology

- During the inspection we examine the file and carry out an in-depth interview with the offender manager. We also hold focus groups with offenders, victims, keyworkers and case administrators. We send questionnaires to offenders and victims whose cases arise in the sample and to a selection of those involved in sentencing.
- We interview senior and middle managers, Board members of the probation area, strategic partners and managers in a custodial setting. For the prison meeting we are joined by a colleague inspector from HMI Prisons.
- Inspection of about a third of the cases in the sample is carried out by area assessors, experienced staff of the probation area being inspected. We think this provides a positive experience both for the area and the staff directly involved and that it increases ownership of the findings.

Publication arrangements

- Summary verbal feedback is given to the area at the end of the inspection week. A draft report is sent to the area for comment four to six weeks later. Publication follows approximately 12 weeks after inspection.

APPENDIX 3

Scoring Approach

This describes the methodology for assigning the scores to each of the general criteria, to sections 1 to 3 and to the *RoH Thread*. A fuller detailed description is on HMI Probation's website at:

<http://www.inspectorates.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmiprobation>

For each of the *general criteria in sections 1 to 3* – i.e. those sections based on the scrutiny of the case sample – that is:

Section 1: Assessment and sentence planning

- 1.1 Preparing for sentence
- 1.2 Assessment of risk of harm
- 1.3 Assessment of likelihood of reoffending
- 1.4 Assessment of offender engagement
- 1.5 Sentence planning

Section 2: Implementation of interventions

- 2.1 Delivering the sentence plan
- 2.2 Protecting the public by minimising risk of harm
- 2.3 Victims
- 2.4 Ensuring containment and promoting compliance (Punish)
- 2.5 Constructive interventions (Help and Change)
- 2.6 Restrictive interventions (Control)
- 2.7 Diversity issues

Section 3: Achievement and monitoring of outcomes

- 3.1 Achievement of initial outcomes
- 3.2 Sustainability of progress

The score is based on an average, across each of the questions in the Offender Management Tool for that criterion, of the proportion of relevant cases in the sample where the work assessed by that question was judged sufficient ('above the line'). (In the calculation, the results for the individual questions and for the summary question are weighted 80/20. Further details are given in the description on the website.)

The score for each of sections 1 to 3 is then calculated as the average of the scores for the component general criteria.

The score for the RoH Thread is calculated as an average, over all the questions in the Offender Management Tool in sections 1 and 2 relating to RoH, of the proportion of relevant cases where work was judged 'above the line'.

For each of the general criteria in section 4, that is:

Section 4: Leadership and strategic management

- 4.1 Leadership and planning
- 4.2 Performance against national and regional targets
- 4.3 Resource deployment
- 4.4 Workforce planning and development
- 4.5 Review and evaluation
- 4.6 Commissioning of services

A score of either **well met**, **satisfactorily met**, **partly met** or **not met** is assigned on the basis of the performance across the specific criteria which make up that criterion. (Details are given in the description on the website.)

APPENDIX 4

Role of HMI Probation

HMI Probation is an independent Inspectorate, originally established in 1936 and given statutory authority in the Criminal Justice Act 1991. The Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 renamed HMI Probation 'Her Majesty's Inspectorate of the National Probation Service for England and Wales. HMI Probation is funded by the Home Office and reports directly to the Home Secretary.

Home Office Objectives

HMI Probation contributes primarily to the achievement of Home Office Objective II:

- more offenders are caught, punished and stop offending, and victims are better supported
- and to the requirement to ensure that custodial and community sentences are more effective at stopping offending. We also contribute to the achievement of Objective III through scrutiny of work to address drugs and other substance misuse, and to other relevant criminal justice system and children's services objectives.

Role

- Report to the Home Secretary on the work and performance of the NPS and YOTs, particularly on the effectiveness of work with individual offenders, children and young people aimed at reducing reoffending and protecting the public.
- In this connection, and in association with HMI Prisons, to report on the effectiveness of offender management under the auspices of the NOMS as it develops.
- Contribute to improved performance in the NPS, the NOMS and YOTs.
- Contribute to sound policy and effective service delivery by providing advice and disseminating good practice, based on inspection findings, to Ministers, Home Office staff, the Youth Justice Board, probation boards/areas and YOTs.
- Promote actively race equality and wider diversity issues in the NPS, the NOMS and YOTs.
- Contribute to the overall effectiveness of the criminal justice system, particularly through joint work with other criminal justice and Government inspectorates.

Code of Practice

HMI Probation aims to achieve its purpose by:

- undertaking its work with integrity in a professional, impartial and courteous manner
- consulting stakeholders in planning and running inspections and regarding reports
- forming independent inspection judgements based on evidence
- the timely reporting and publishing of inspection findings and recommendations for improvement
- promoting race equality and wider diversity issues in all aspects of its work, including within its own employment practices and organisational processes
- developing joint approaches with other Inspectorate and Audit bodies to ensure a coordinated approach to the criminal justice system

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

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