



*Effective
Supervision
Inspection*

*of the
National Probation Service for
England and Wales*

Follow-up report on:
Warwickshire Probation Area

November 2006

The Home Office logo, consisting of a thick, black, curved line above the text 'Home Office' in a bold, sans-serif font.

Home Office

FOREWORD

Warwickshire Probation Area responded positively to disappointing inspection results in 2005. They have taken our recommendations seriously, with managers, Board and staff working together to promote improvement. On every measure this improvement has been realised, with welcome progress particularly in relation to Risk of Harm work. The challenge for the area will be to sustain that improvement over time and across the breadth of its case work.

Andrew Bridges
HM Chief Inspector of Probation

November 2006

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to express our thanks to the Warwickshire Probation Board, its managers and staff for the considerable assistance received in enabling the inspection to proceed smoothly. Without their help, the work could not have been completed successfully.

HM Assistant Chief Inspector: *Kate White*

HM Inspector: *Joy Neary*

Practice Assessor: *Nicola Molloy*

Information Manager: *Kevin Ball*

Inspection Admin Officer: *Junior Rhone*

Publications Team: *Zach Rathore, Saima Ejaz*

Area Assessors: *Peter Singh Bains, Sharon Chappell, Patricia Johnson, Neil Lawson, Deena Parmar*

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GLOSSARY

ACO	Assistant chief officer
CO	Chief officer
ESI	Effective Supervision Inspection
HMI Probation	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation
MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements
NPD	National Probation Directorate
NPS	National Probation Service
OASys/eOASys	Offender assessment system/electronic OASys
PSR	Pre-sentence report
RoH	Risk of Harm
SSR	Specific sentence report

REASONS FOR UNDERTAKING THE FOLLOW-UP

- ▣ The Warwickshire ESI report, published in August 2005, found that the area was well managed, with many strengths. However, there were a number of areas for improvement, the most significant of which concerned the assessment of Risk of Harm to others, and supervision planning and reviews.
- ▣ These concerns were addressed in two of the report's recommendations, which have formed the basis of the follow-up inspection.

The Probation Board should ensure that:

1. *the quality of Risk of Harm assessments is improved so that initial assessments are comprehensive and timely; reviews are undertaken on time and, where appropriate, changed circumstances relevant to Risk of Harm are identified and reflected in revised assessments*
2. *supervision planning and review are given a higher priority and the quality of these is improved.*

EXPLANATORY NOTE

It should be noted that the term 'supervision planning' has been replaced in the offender management model by 'sentence planning'. Whilst the wording of the original recommendation, above, remains unchanged, the updated terminology is used in the body of the report.

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS OF THE FOLLOW-UP

Key findings

- ▣ **Quality of Management:** The Board and senior managers were committed to improving the area's performance and this had resulted in it topping the National Probation Directorate performance table at the end of 2005/2006. An action plan to address the recommendations in the original report had been devised and implemented quickly, and regular audits of practice in Risk of Harm assessment and management had been undertaken. These demonstrated continuing improvements in practice, but there was no complacency about practice and performance issues, and the area remained keen to pursue measures of quality as well as national targets.
- ▣ **Quality of Assessment:** Performance had improved in respect of assessment of Risk of Harm to others. There was evidence that the use of the offender assessment system was now embedded in the area; the level of Risk of Harm had been accurately assessed in almost every case and the quality and timeliness of risk management plans had improved. However, the timeliness of initial Risk of Harm assessments needed further attention, as did recognition of the need for reassessment following any significant change in circumstances.

There had been considerable improvement in the timeliness and quality of Risk of Harm reviews to others, and continuing good performance in matching the assessed Risk of Harm with appropriate interventions.
- ▣ **Quality of Interventions:** Sentence planning had improved overall but less than half the plans met the required standards for timing and content. More cases now specified appropriate interventions to address offending behaviour and community reintegration, and good performance was maintained in ensuring offenders understood the requirements of their sentence. Greater focus was needed on the timeliness of initial plans, and on identifying diversity issues which could affect offender engagement and compliance with supervision.

Increased priority had been given to reviewing sentence plans and half the cases inspected met the national standards for timing and content of reviews. Whilst this was a considerable improvement on the original inspection, further attention needed to be given to sentence plan reviews and to recording offender progress.

Next steps

- ▣ This report has been submitted to the Secretary of State and copies provided to the Chief Executive of the National Offender Management Service, the National Offender Manager, the Director of the National Probation Service, the Probation Board and chief officer. It is also available on the website of HM Inspectorate of Probation at:

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/justice/probation/inspprob/index.html>

SCORING SUMMARY SHEET

Section B: Quality of assessment	Original Inspection	Follow-up Inspection
B1: Assessment of Risk of Harm	49%	64%
B3: Case management	50%	61%
Section C: Quality of interventions		
C2: Delivering appropriate supervision	30%	50%

INSPECTION ARRANGEMENTS

- The ESI programme started in June 2003. All 42 probation areas comprising the NPS for England and Wales were inspected over a three year cycle, with areas of similar characteristics (in terms of size and population density) visited in the same year to facilitate comparisons in performance. This enabled us to identify and promote effective work with offenders and disseminate information about good practice.
- Probation areas were assessed on how well they had met defined inspection criteria focusing on the:
 - overall management of the area
 - quality of the assessments carried out on offenders
 - quality of the interventions carried out with offenders
 - initial results of the interventions, both in relation to criminogenic factors such as employment, accommodation and substance misuse, and also whether there had been any reduction in the RoH and the risk of reoffending.
- The inspection took account of the regular NPS performance data. These are produced by the NPD who are responsible for their collection and quality assurance.
- The Warwickshire follow-up inspection was a limited exercise which further examined the area's assessment and review of offenders' RoH to others, and the related issue of sentence planning. It took place in October 2006, around a year after publication of the original inspection, and involved scrutiny of 30 of the area's cases, including three which had been assessed as posing a high RoH to others. The case sample included a variety of community sentences and post-release licences commencing in April 2006. However, it should be noted that community sentences consisting solely of an unpaid work requirement were excluded from the sample, as the national requirements in relation to their assessment and sentence planning had altered since the original inspection.
- The area had provided evidence in advance relating to its improvement action plan in respect of the recommendations in the original report. A meeting was held with the CO, the Board Chair, and the ACO who held specific responsibility for offender management, to review the progress made. There were no interviews with offender managers, offenders, or members of other agencies involved in supervision of the cases.

SCORING APPROACH

- The report uses a similar framework to the ESI report, assessing the area's performance against the smaller number of criteria that are directly relevant to the issues addressed in the follow-up. Scores in the original ESI also took into account interviews with offenders and with other people significantly involved in delivering the sentence. As these did not take place in the follow-up, the original scores have been adjusted, where appropriate, to enable direct comparison between the two sets of scores. Likewise, the original score has also been adjusted to take account of the absence of unpaid work cases in the follow-up. The management section has not been re-scored because of the more limited focus on this occasion, by comparison with the original inspection.

SECTION A QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT

A1 Leadership and planning

Description:

The Board and CO lead the area in the achievement of national targets and implementation of national policies through the production of local policies and procedures which are regularly monitored and reviewed. Areas are enabled to work efficiently and effectively by the NPD who develop national targets and policies in line with Ministerial priorities and provides guidance and resources. The senior management team is committed to the implementation of national and local targets and priorities, including What Works strategies, risk management and promoting diversity.

- The Board and senior managers had been disappointed in the outcome of the original inspection, and an action plan had been devised immediately to address the recommendations. This included regular audits of cases, using the inspection tools from the ESI, and clear and consistent messages to staff about the importance of good quality and timely risk assessments, risk management plans, and reviews. Lessons learned from investigations into serious further offences nationally were also disseminated to staff, and additional training provided for all staff on RoH assessment. The number of senior practitioners (who held specific responsibilities for practice quality) had also been increased as planned.
- There was a clear recognition by the Board and senior managers of the importance of improvements in performance and practice, and the Board received regular reports on progress against the recommendations in the ESI. This commitment to improvement was also demonstrated in performance against national targets, with the area ranked top in the NPD weighted scorecard of performance measures at the 2005/2006 year end. Despite this commendable outcome, there was no complacency about the area's practice, and the Board Chair and senior managers appreciated that the assessment and management of RoH in particular were fundamental to effective offender management.
- The case audits, and a regional benchmarking event, demonstrated continuing improvement both in relation to assessment of RoH to others and in sentence planning. Whilst the findings of this follow-up inspection have not replicated exactly the results of the area's own audits of practice, the overall trend was one of welcome improvement.

SECTION B QUALITY OF ASSESSMENT

B1	Assessment of Risk of Harm	Original inspection	49%
		Follow-up inspection	64%

Description:

Risk of Harm is satisfactorily assessed using an approved instrument (OASys where available), specialist assessment tools, where relevant, and draws on MAPPA, other agencies' and previous probation service assessments.

- ▣ RoH assessments at the start of supervision were timely and of sufficient quality in 53% of cases. When we considered the content alone, it was appropriate to the needs of the case in 73% of the sample. Both these figures showed improvement compared with the original inspection but it was evident that there were still issues of timeliness with some assessments.
- ▣ In 98% of the sample, the RoH level had been accurately assessed. This was a particularly impressive achievement given that the corresponding figure had been 26% previously. There was also considerable improvement in the quality and timeliness of reviews of RoH; 67% were judged to be satisfactory on this occasion, compared with only 13% in the earlier inspection.
- ▣ In the four cases where there had been a significant incident requiring a reassessment of RoH to others, this had been undertaken to a sufficient degree in only one instance. This was similar to our earlier findings, so remained a matter of concern.
- ▣ The timeliness and quality of risk management plans had also improved. Two out of the three cases assessed as posing a high RoH to others contained a satisfactory risk management plan, compared with less than a third in the original inspection.
- ▣ There had been continuing improvement in the links between the assessed RoH and the interventions planned to reduce this. 83% of cases showed a close fit between the assessment and the sentence plan in this respect, an increase of 11%.

B3	Case management	Original inspection	50%
		Follow-up inspection	61%

Description:

The case is managed effectively and interventions coordinated to enable criminogenic factors to be addressed and any Risk of Harm managed. The initial sentence plan takes account of the PSR, SSR or sentence plan in licence cases, and describes an overall plan of work for each offender, in line with the assessments of Risk of Harm and need and the likelihood of reoffending.

- ▣ Only 43% of initial sentence plans met the requirements of national standards in respect of content and timeliness. Considering the content of the plans alone, the figure rose to 63%. Whilst in both instances these were an improvement on the findings from the original inspection, it did indicate a need to pay further attention to initial sentence planning.

- Appropriate interventions to address offending behaviour and community reintegration were identified in 77% of cases, an increase from 59% in our earlier findings.
- Liaison arrangements between the offender manager and other workers involved in the sentence were clearly defined in only 44% of cases. Whilst there was evidence from the contact record that appropriate links with other workers were being made in many instances, offender managers also needed to ensure that the sentence plan clearly identified who else was involved in the case, and how and when contact was going to be made with them.
- Where there were diversity issues which could have had an impact on the offender's ability to comply with supervision, these were identified appropriately in the plan in 57% of relevant cases. This was an improvement from the original findings but an increased focus on this aspect of offender engagement was still needed.
- The area had maintained its good performance in ensuring offenders understood the requirements of their community sentence or post-release licence; 83% of cases demonstrated this. However, only half the cases contained evidence that the offender had been involved in the development of their sentence plan. Whilst this was a slight increase from the earlier inspection, there was still considerable room for improvement.
- Where cases were managed in conjunction with MAPPA or child safeguarding procedures, the initial sentence plan integrated other risk management plans in three out of the four relevant instances. This was a commendable improvement on our earlier findings.

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE

Liam was released from custody on licence, subject to a requirement to live at one of the area's approved premises. The Risk of Harm assessment was thorough and arrangements for his supervision were comprehensive, including specific actions to safeguard children. Liam was fully involved in developing his sentence plan, which was completed as part of a three-way meeting at the approved premises between himself, his offender manager, and approved premises staff.

SECTION C QUALITY OF INTERVENTIONS

C2	Delivering appropriate supervision	Original inspection	30%
		Follow-up inspection	50%

Description:

Interventions are delivered to achieve the objectives identified in the initial sentence plan and recorded according to the requirements of national standards. Supervision is prioritised according to an ongoing assessment of risk and need and takes account of previous reviews and work already undertaken by the area and other agencies. Case managers oversee and coordinate the work of other staff and partner organisations and all staff play an active part in motivating and supporting offenders throughout their supervision.

- ▣ Increased priority had been given to reviewing sentence plans and identifying the offender's progress; reviews met the standards for content and timeliness in half the cases in the sample. Whilst this was a considerable improvement on the score in the original inspection (11%), it was disappointing that the evidence we saw in the contact record of offender progress was not being captured in the OASys sentence plan review. Further attention needed to be given to sentence plan reviews to ensure that progress was recorded appropriately there.
- ▣ There were two high RoH cases in the sample, where MAPPA action plans or child safeguarding plans needed to be taken into account in the sentence plan review. In one case this was judged to have been done excellently, but in the other it was not undertaken sufficiently well.

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE

Simon was undertaking a community order imposed for driving offences, which contained a requirement for him to complete the Drink Impaired Drivers programme. His offender manager worked hard to motivate him to complete his programme successfully; this included sending him text messages to encourage him and to praise his progress.

THE 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 National Probation Service and Youth Offending Teams, 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 HM Inspectorate of Prisons, to report on the effectiveness of offender management under the auspices of the National Offender Management Service as it develops
- Contribute to improved performance in the National Probation Service, the National Offender Management Service and Youth Offending Teams
- 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 Youth Offending Teams
- Promote actively race equality and wider diversity issues in the National Probation Service, the National Offender Management Service and Youth Offending Teams
- 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:

*HM Chief Inspector of Probation
2nd Floor, Ashley House
2 Monck Street
London SW1P 2BQ*