

# York and North Yorkshire Probation Trust

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique reference number:</b>	57978
<b>Name of lead inspector:</b>	John Grimmer
<b>Last day of inspection:</b>	27 April 2012
<b>Type of provider:</b>	Probation Trust
<b>Address:</b>	108 Lowther Street, York YO31 7WD
<b>Telephone number:</b>	01904 526000

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) works in partnership with Her Majesty's Inspectorates of Prison and Probation and inspects the management and provision of learning and skills for offenders across the whole range of custodial establishments and probation areas. Inspections may include those serving whole or part of their sentence in the community.

Inspectors judge the quality of the provision against the *Common Inspection Framework* for further education and skills 2009 (*Common Inspection Framework* 2009) and contribute to the inspection frameworks of Her Majesty's Inspectorates of Prisons and Probation.

## **Information about the probation area**

The York and North Yorkshire Probation Service gained Trust Status in April 2010. York and North Yorkshire Probation Trust (YNYPT) have offices in York, Northallerton, Harrogate, Scarborough, Selby and Skipton. The Trust employs 234 staff who provide probation services across York and North Yorkshire. North Yorkshire is the largest county in the country by area and has a total population of about 770,000. The city of York accounts for about one third of the Trusts area case load.

The Trust was able to access educational provision for offenders via local further education colleges until autumn 2010. These arrangements were supported by a mixture of funding from the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and European Social Fund (ESF) projects.

In August 2010 funding to support offender learning in the community was ceased by the SFA and ESF. This resulted in the main provider, York College, formally withdrawing support for offender referrals. From August 2010 until September 2011 the Trust accessed limited mainstream learning and skills provision that were not necessarily attuned to the needs of offenders being supervised in the community.

In September 2011 a three year employability project named 'step change', funded through the European Social Fund, was secured. The project is part of a regional arrangement where West Yorkshire Probation Trust is the prime contractor for the project. They sub-contract to Future Prospects to deliver an education, training and employment service to offenders in York and North Yorkshire.

YNYPT has one approved premises located in York. About 135,000 hours of Community Payback is completed in the probation area each year. Two custodial establishments are within the area, HMP YOI Askham Grange and HMP YOI Northallerton.

<b>Lead providers and their subcontractors</b>	<b>Number of learners on discrete provision</b>	<b>Types of provision</b>
<b>Future Prospect (lead provider)</b>	54	Four weeks employability course followed by ongoing support to find employment
<b>York and North Yorkshire Probation Trust</b>	15	British Safety Council health and safety at work award for offenders on community payback. About 150 certificates were awarded in the last 12 months.
<b>Nordic Pioneer (pilot)</b>	9	Community payback offenders working towards an NVQ in health and safety and cleaning duties.
<b>Scarborough women's community project</b>	25	Skills for life, mentoring level 1, adult learning enterprise course (self employment) and various community payback projects.

<b>Wildlife Habitat Protection Trust</b>	Recruiting 8	Practical environmental work for offenders on Community payback. Accreditation for the courses is through York University.
<b>York Bike Rescue Project</b>	7	Recycling of bicycles project with a not for profit social enterprise company for offenders on unpaid work.

The following text is Ofsted's contribution to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation's offender management inspection.

### Summary report

<b>Overall effectiveness of provision</b>	<b>Grade: satisfactory</b>
---	----------------------------

<b>Capacity to improve</b>	<b>Grade: satisfactory</b>
----------------------------	----------------------------

	<b>Grade descriptor</b>
Quality of provision	Inadequate
Assessment and sentence planning	
Implementation of interventions	
Achieving and sustaining outcomes	satisfactory
Leadership and management	satisfactory
Equality and diversity including arrangements to support vulnerability	satisfactory

### Overall effectiveness, including capacity to improve

Offender managers had limited options for referrals other than for the step change employability programme. This programme was suitable for offenders who were unemployed with complex issues and needed help to prepare them to return to the labour market. Other offenders received little help with education, training and employment as offender managers were unclear about the availability of mainstream provision, including the provision of suitable information, advice and guidance for offenders.

The step change programme provided good planned interventions to tackle barriers to work. Insufficient quality monitoring of the step change courses had been carried out and there was no agreed process to monitor the overall quality of the provision. Offenders on community payback developed good work skills; however, they were insufficiently recorded and accredited.

A clear strategic direction was in place for developing offenders' employability skills through the ESF funded step change programme. Partnership working was good; however, education and skills training opportunities for most offenders were insufficient.

The number of offenders finding employment was good. Equality and diversity was well managed and was satisfactory overall.

### **What does York and North Yorkshire Probation Trust need to do to improve further?**

- Provide information, advice and guidance services for all offenders and ensure that offenders' skills for life needs are appropriately assessed and addressed where appropriate.
- Develop suitable education and training opportunities to allow offenders to gain nationally recognised qualifications.
- Introduce quality monitoring processes for the step change programme and for other education, training and employment interventions.

### **Offenders' perspective - learning and employability as confirmed by inspectors.**

Inspectors saw and spoke to 20 offenders during the inspection. Offenders thought that staff were very supportive, respectful and helpful. They valued their friendly but professional help that improved their confidence and motivated them to make good progress. They enjoyed the courses and valued the support provided to help them to address their offending behaviour and their barriers to work. Offenders on community payback found the work generally to be interesting and liked the fact that their efforts were valued by the general public. Many offenders on community payback utilised part of their sentence for education and training purposes that also improved their prospects of future employment. Offenders at the approved premises took part in the first steps programme and found it helpful in developing their employment skills and confidence.

## Main inspection report

### The quality of provision

**Grade:**

Assessment and sentence planning

**inadequate**

Good one to one support was provided on the step change programme. Advisors provided one to one employment support for up six weeks following the end of the four week programme. Advisors contacted offenders regularly by email to advise them of employment and volunteering opportunities. Group sizes were small and offenders benefited from support from two staff at each session. All staff were well qualified to provide advice and guidance. Offenders had access to further universal information advice and guidance at the fourth session. Advisors carried out a thorough initial assessment of offenders' needs related to barriers to employment at the start of step change, including a basic screening of literacy and numeracy. Offenders had good access and encouragement to take part in volunteering activities.

The initial assessment of offenders' literacy and numeracy needs were not routinely carried out at the start of their orders, unless offenders accessed the step change programme. The provision of literacy and numeracy was insufficient to meet the needs of all but a small group of offenders following the withdrawal of the majority of discreet services by local colleges. Initial assessment activity had decreased since the loss of discrete provision. Offenders identified as requiring help on the step change programme were referred to specialist providers for initial and diagnostic assessment of literacy and numeracy need. However, they constituted a small proportion of all offenders. Arrangements to provide dyslexia assessment and support were insufficient.

Arrangements were insufficient to ensure that all offenders had access to suitable information advice and guidance unless offenders were referred onto the step change programme.

#### Implementation of interventions

The step change programme was flexible to meet individual needs and advisors tailored the programme accordingly. Provision was available at all probation offices across the county. One to one provision was arranged for those offenders unable to work in group situations or for those lacking confidence. Provision had been arranged outside of probation premises to increase accessibility. The learning resources were especially designed to meet the needs of a range of offenders' literacy skills and to minimize the amount of writing required.

Good partnership working had increased the range of community payback projects available to offenders and was improving the benefits to local communities. The range of community payback opportunities provided 72 different projects. YNYPT regularly sat on partnership meetings such as Safer York which provided community payback activities. Projects were arranged to benefit local communities, including schools, churches, village halls, local councils, charities and environmental work. Other

successful partnerships included work with councils, social enterprises and registered charities. Community payback was given a high profile and projects were actively promoted to local communities by signage, the use of community payback flags and videos on the probation website. YNYPT had received royal recognition from graffiti clearing projects praising their benefit to local communities. Community payback had very low stand downs and high numbers of offenders were referred to the step change course to use some of their hours under the 20% rule. Partnerships with a social enterprise, a training provider and a charity had enabled the development of a small number of qualifications to accredit skills in cleaning, cycle maintenance and conservation. Partnerships with Nordic Pioneer had resulted NVQs in cleaning for eight offenders to date and further developments included potential employment opportunities for offenders in partnership with a local council. However, the provision of mainstream education and training was insufficient to meet the needs of the wider offender population.

The good work skills developed by offenders on community payback projects were insufficiently recorded to provide evidence of employability to prospective employers. However, offenders attending single placements were able to be provided with a reference by placement providers. A small number of community payback projects had provided employment opportunities to offenders and plans were in place to provide qualifications through a number of projects.

## **Achieving and sustaining outcomes**

**Grade:**  
**satisfactory**

Offenders on the step change programme developed a good range of employability skills which increased their confidence in applying for jobs and preparing application forms and curriculum vitae. Offenders were encouraged to, and participated in volunteering activities to improve their employment prospects, gain experience and a work reference. This helped to improve their employment prospects particularly considering that most offenders were long term unemployed. Step change staff had good links and knowledge of organisations providing volunteering opportunities. Improved confidence and communication skills had contributed to offenders making significant life changing decisions and positive steps to changing offending behaviours.

Community payback staff had a strong focus on health and safety and risk assessment. Staff carried out daily meetings prior to work parties starting work to identify risk and the appropriateness of placements for offenders related to offending behaviour, risk and skills. Supervisors carried out daily health and safety briefings with offenders at each project to further reinforce risks and hazards. Staff supervising community payback were qualified to deliver the British Safety Council level 1 health and safety at work course and most of their offenders completed the one day course, passed the exam and gained the certificate.

The numbers of offenders gaining nationally recognised qualifications to help to improve their skills and improve their job prospects were low. Education or training opportunities

for the majority of offenders were insufficiently being accessed and staff were not sufficiently signposting offenders to suitable courses.

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade:  
satisfactory**

Successful strategic partnership work between YNYPT and two other local probation trusts had secured a three year employability initiative to help around 200 offenders per year. The contract was to work with those with the most difficult barriers to improve their skills and job prospects. The contract started in September 2011 and had recruited 177, with 27 of them successfully gaining a job so far. The good partnership work with the other probation trusts had resulted in improved opportunities for York and North Yorkshire offenders. However, to date YNYPT had not carried out any form of quality monitoring of the contract and there was no agreed process in place to monitor the quality of the provision.

YNYPT offenders had limited access to education and training courses to improve their skills and enhance their job prospects. Since the funding for discreet courses had stopped managers had been unable to source sufficient mainstream community based education or training opportunities for offenders. The step change programme did have a target for offenders to gain education and training qualifications, however, this target was not being met.

Equality and diversity, and arrangements to support vulnerable offenders were satisfactory. A clear and up-to-date equality and diversity policy was in place that was meeting its stated aims and requirements. Staff attended regular update training to ensure they were aware of policy and legislative requirements. Offenders were treated fairly and respectfully by YNYPT staff and by provider and partner organisations. A women's centre had been set up in Scarborough and was providing good support for women to improve their skills, education and to address their offending behaviour in a safe and suitable environment. Courses targeted at helping the most vulnerable offenders were successfully operating in Ripon and was accommodating their needs. For those offenders living in approved premises the step change course was delivered on their site to ensure suitable access for them. Although initial assessment, education and training was being provided for offenders with the most difficult needs there was insufficient access for offenders who were considered to be outside of this group.

Safeguarding arrangements were satisfactory. Policies and guidance for staff and offenders were clear and being followed. Staff attended regular update training to ensure they were aware of policy and legislative requirements.

YNYPT had made effective attempts to reduce expenditure and increase income generation on community payback. Effective and established partnerships had resulted in partners contributing to project costs. Donations also provided help towards the purchases of materials, tools and protective clothing. Managers managed allocation to projects carefully to ensure that supervisors did not undertake excessive mileage. Projects and single placements were chosen in offenders' localities to further reduce costs.

#### Information about the inspection

1. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) assisted by an additional inspector carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of provider most recent position statement and action plans, the previous inspection report, education training and employment data on offenders and their accredited achievement.
2. Inspectors use a range of methods to gather the views of offenders including group and individual interviews. They interviewed education training and employment lead managers and offender managers from local delivery units, senior probation officers, advice and guidance staff and partner and provider staff. They also visited learning sessions, assessments and offenders in work placements.



<b>Record of Main Findings (RMF)</b>			
<b>Provider Name:</b>	York and North Yorkshire Probation Trust	<b>Inspection No</b>	57978
<b>Learning types: 14 – 16:</b> Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; <b>16-18 Learner responsive:</b> FE full-time and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including E2E); <b>19+ responsive:</b> FE full- and part-time courses; <b>Employer responsive:</b> Train to Gain, apprenticeships <b>Blank Column:</b> insert Judicial Services or Nextstep as appropriate			

Grades <b>using the 4 point scale</b> 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	<b>Overall</b>					
<b>Approximate number of enrolled learners</b>	110					
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>					
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	3					
<b>A. Outcomes for learners</b>	<b>3</b>					
A1. How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	3					
A1.a) How well do learners attain their learning goals?	3					
A1.b) How well do learners progress?	3					
A2. How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2					
A3. How safe do learners feel?	3					
A4. <i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	Na					
A5. <i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	2					
<b>B. Quality of provision</b>	<b>4</b>					
B1. How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	4					
B2. How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	4					
B3. How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	3					
B4. How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	4					
<b>C. Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>					
C1. How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	3					
C2. <i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	Na					
C3. How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	3					
C4. How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	3					
C5. How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	3					
C6. How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	4					
C7. How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	2					

\*where applicable to the type of provision

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this report in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404040, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester, M2 7LA

T: 08456 404040  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)  
© Crown copyright 2012