



LANGASHIRE

Lancashire Probation Board

ANNUAL REPORT

2006-07

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Introduction

Aims of the National Probation Service

- Protect the Public
- Reduce Reoffending
- Proper Punishment of offenders
- Victim Awareness
- Rehabilitation of offenders

The key priorities for 2006/07:

- To Protect the Public by reducing the risk of harm by offenders managed in the community
- To Support the Courts in imposing suitable sentences for appropriate offences and implementing those sentences
- To Provide Firm and Fair Punishment by increasing compliance with community sentences and treating all offenders fairly
- To Help to Cut Crime through seamless offender management to reduce reoffending and by working with a range of partners
- To Contribute to Communities in Lancashire by increasing visible payback to the community and by supporting the victims of serious offences, and engaging local communities in the management and resettlement of offenders.

Part 1: Annual Report

A. OPERATIONAL REVIEW

Leadership

Protecting the Public from Harm

The service has continued to provide a strong commitment at senior management level to a range of multi-agency forums including the 3 Safeguarding Children Boards and the MAPPA Strategic Management Board. Through its MAPPA Coordinator, the service has agreed protocols with partner agencies to achieve the expeditious exchange of information in respect of high risk of harm offenders. As part of its commitment to the public protection agenda, the service has also during 2006 introduced a Performance and Quality Standards Unit. This unit has been responsible for audits of practice and improvements to risk assessment and risk management processes.

Offender Management

There are six prisons in the Lancashire area and the chief officer meets regularly with the area manager for the prison service and individual governors to discuss issues of common concern. The good relationships which already exist between prisons and the probation service have been enhanced over the past 12 months by joint work on the offender management model pathfinder. Recent research in the region indicates that 75% of prisoners from Lancashire spend their last few months prior to release within regional prisons. This is a deliberate policy to aid the resettlement of prisoners due to be released into Lancashire.

Implementing the Regional Reducing Reoffending Action Plan

The service has been instrumental in the redesign and joint commissioning of a new criminal justice treatment service for drug misusers, working in partnership with the Lancashire Drug and Alcohol Partnership. The service exceeded its targets for the number of offenders receiving and completing a Drug Rehabilitation Requirement in 2006/7 and is now aiming to achieve further reductions in offending and drug misuse levels by offenders subject to drug treatment. In recognising the equally significant issue of alcohol misuse and offending, the area has also worked effectively with partners to initiate an Alcohol Treatment pilot scheme which, subject to evaluation and funding, is likely to be extended to other localities during 2007/08.

Championing Diversity

Diversity issues also have a high priority. The chief officer chairs the regional diversity group and the HR ACO chairs the area's strategic diversity group, which also includes board members. The area has been involved in a number of initiatives, including commissioning and evaluating research to inform service delivery. Close links with the Race Equality Council are maintained and the area is seen by its strategic partners as contributing strongly to the public confidence agenda, particularly in respect of its efforts to reach out to minority ethnic communities. A

partner agency has commented that "diversity is built into everything the probation area does, it isn't an add on, they really champion it."

Effective Management

Following the Offender Management Inspection in 2006, the HM Chief Inspector of Probation stated that "clear leadership from senior managers and the board had promoted an attention to performance and also given Lancashire Probation Board a prominent and respected profile amongst its partners and stakeholders." Seventy per cent of staff interviewed as part of the offender management inspection undertaken in 2006/07 felt that their managers demonstrated a professional management approach and 71% that they modelled positive leadership behaviour. Middle managers commented that they felt supported by senior managers as well as being held to account. Briefings from the chief officer were welcomed as a way of keeping staff informed.

Policy and Strategy

Lancashire probation area has been working closely with the other four probation areas in the North West to establish a Regional Probation Board which will support collaborative initiatives and joint commissioning arrangements.

Lancashire's Business Plan for 2006/07 took full account of the national and regional priorities. Service level agreements between the Probation Board and the Regional Offender Manager for both offender management and interventions were in place for 2006/07. These were reviewed quarterly and a high level of achievement was noted by the Regional Offender Manager. We have developed an effective working relationship with the Regional Offender Manager during the year who has commented upon the very constructive relationship with Lancashire.

Relations with the courts are given a high priority and a formal strategy was put into place, outlining liaison arrangements between the area and sentencers. This built on earlier positive measures and included regular meetings with sentencers and court staff, at a variety of levels, including evening stakeholder meetings in each district to promote the work of the Probation Service. 100% of sentencers and court staff who responded to a questionnaire by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation were satisfied with the liaison arrangements.

As part of its link with Local Authority strategies the area had incorporated a target on prolific offenders into the Local Area Agreement. This was a contribution to the Safer and Stronger Communities element and was seen as a way of informing local communities about this aspect of its work.

Another important strategic initiative was the introduction of district manager posts in January 2006. These were developed to ensure a greater focus on performance and the role was seen as crucial in achieving full implementation of the offender management model. The introduction of this role was fully realised during the year and was seen as helpful by middle managers as it is located closer to the delivery of services.

A workload prioritisation policy was updated in February 2006 and communicated to all staff. It made clear which tasks had high priority and which had less priority.

Protecting the Public from Harm

Considerable work has been undertaken in consultation with staff and stakeholders to develop and implement procedures designed to strengthen risk of harm work. Evidence drawn from quality assurance activity points to demonstrable improvements in risk of harm practice. Further development work has taken place in respect of enhancing arrangements for reviewing cases where an offender, whilst subject to supervision, has been charged with a further serious offence. A multi-disciplinary team has been established to facilitate the introduction of a database into the probation service which is currently only used by the police to register serious violent and sexual offenders.

Offender Management

Implementation of the national Offender Management (OM) model has allowed a clear distinction to be made between interventions and offender management. Offender managers take responsibility for co-ordinating all offender contact and training has been provided for staff. A Practice and Policy development group was established to steer further changes in the development of this model and the group has representatives from every relevant role and grade in the organisation. It has a number of work streams which ensure consistent service delivery of the offender management model throughout Lancashire.

Resettlement Pathways

Progress has been made on all the resettlement pathways. Some of the key developments are outlined below.

Employment, Training and Education

We have achieved the targets for skills for life referrals and are continuing to work closely with Offenders' Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) regarding existing provision and to access new opportunities for offender learning and employability. We have developed a new programme entitled 'Job Quest' to this end. We have also introduced the First Move Initial Skills Checker.

An offender employment strategy for Lancashire was developed in 2006/7. Using European Social Fund (ESF) funds we have employed an Employer Engagement Officer who is working with employers in breaking down the barriers to employment and is developing a training and support toolkit for employers. We are working closely with Job Centre Plus, with CXL and with employment agencies to ensure we maximise opportunities for offenders. Our work within the ESF-funded project ensures we are able to target resources appropriately and effectively.

We have developed our Information and Guidance provision to provide a more mature and flexible service for offenders to ensure that all groups have equal opportunities and access.

Accommodation

The Probation Service plays a full and active role with the three Supporting People Commissioning Bodies. It is hoped that now all the current projects have been

assessed there will be some headroom for future developments. The county accommodation officer has developed a database and organised training for all staff from Shelter and with the opening of the Prospects project we now have three approved premises within the county.

Physical and Mental Health

Multi-agency mental health awareness training was provided in 2006/7. Over thirty of our staff participated, and the feedback was very positive. It is hoped this training initiative can be repeated, particularly as it brought about a good deal of cross-agency contact.

In terms of offender access to mental health services, the Probation Service continues to work with the county Mentally Disordered Offenders (MDO) Co-ordinating Group to establish single points of contact in all districts. Liaison with the regional MDO team has led to two pilot projects around GP registration of offenders; and we are hoping to set up other pilots concerning the 'early onset' screening of offenders. The MDO practice procedures have been updated and Impact assessed. The latter led to a revision of the guidance concerning offenders with learning difficulties.

We have continued to add to our resource database providing information for offender managers regarding names/locations of local agencies and organisations who offer advice, support and assistance for offenders with mental health problems.

Finance

The service has accessed training for staff through the Legal Services Commission and has also provided staff with literature that can be used with offenders.

It has also worked with the Impact Project in self-employment training for sex offenders and one important aspect of the training programme has been financial management. We have also continued to add to our resource database providing information to offender managers regarding where to access advice and information around debt management, how to avoid debt and where to access insurance for offenders.

Family and Social Support

The service has supported three projects in this area of work:

- Blackburn Diocesan and Family Support Project (Grass Roots)
- Preston based community support mentoring scheme
- The Thomas Project in Blackburn.

Negotiations have also taken place with Grassroots to establish a county-wide forum for agencies involved with children and partners of offenders, particularly those serving a prison sentence and it is hoped that this will come to fruition next year.

Links have been made with 'Surestart' in Lancashire with a view to providing information for offender managers about the availability of activities and schemes aimed at supporting families in their area.

People Management

Modernisation Agreement

Our Human Resources Strategy 2006-2007 was closely linked to the annual business plan and set out objectives in relation to managing people. 2006-2007 saw the introduction of a new pay and grading structure for all employees, including implementation of a job evaluation scheme to determine new pay bands in accordance with the Modernisation Agreement, along with new annual leave provisions and unsocial hours working payments. The Modernisation Agreement, similar to agreements in other public sector organisations, aims to streamline terms and conditions of employment for all staff within the service. This was a huge exercise for the service and served to strengthen joint working with our recognised trade unions, NAPO and Unison. Work will continue on this project in 2007/2008.

Training and Development

The service continues to go through a major programme of change to implement new ways of working to meet business needs. It is recognised that this has a significant impact on our staff. The training plan ensured ongoing and continuous training and development opportunities for staff at all levels, with training in offender management, NVQ's and programme delivery. Furthermore, the service embarked on delivering diversity training for all staff in separate modules covering the six key strands of diversity: age; disability, gender, race, religion and belief and sexual orientation, starting with disability to support the introduction of our Disability Equality Scheme which was introduced in December 2006. This will be an ongoing rolling programme to raise diversity awareness in our organisation.

Attendance Monitoring

One of the priority objectives of the service is to reduce sickness absence which unfortunately still remains high at 13.5 days per person per annum. Whilst recognising the impact of continuous change on our staff, the service recognises the importance of reducing sickness absence to improve business efficiency and achieve targets. The service introduced a new Attendance Recording and Monitoring System (ARMS) to monitor and record staff attendance highlighting areas of concern in order for appropriate action to be taken. In addition, new occupational health services were introduced in October 2006 to support employee welfare. A new Stress Management Policy has been introduced and agreed with the trade unions.

Health and Safety

The service is committed to the Health, Safety and Welfare of all its employees. The Health and Safety Committee is well established with joint ownership between management and unions. In addition, we have set up a number of district health and safety groups to ensure that local issues are resolved at a local level. We continue to carry out risk assessments in accordance with our health and safety policy manual and legislative requirements. In addition, we have carried out an internal audit of our unpaid work function to ensure that risks are minimised and where possible eliminated.

Partnerships and Resources

Partnerships

The LPA Business Plan for 2006/7 identified the need for the development of a strategy to formalise our engagement with the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS). The strategy was informed by a series of consultation events held in the summer with local VCS organizations and adopted by the Board in the autumn. The strategy combines how we intend to improve our links with the local VCS, with the procedures we intend to deploy for the commissioning of services.

A Commissioning and Contestability Project Board has been established, consisting of Board members and operational staff. The Board ensures the consistency and integrity of partnership and commissioning arrangements and reviews the performance of all commissioned partnerships.

The publication of the Home Office document "Public Value Partnerships" and PC33/06 have required the development of a local and regional Sub-contracting plan as well as the opportunity to commission new services through Pathfinder funding. In Lancashire we have commissioned an accommodation placement service, which offers housing to difficult to place offenders and provides an additional level of support and surveillance for child sex offenders. We continue to be involved in joint commissioning arrangements with a number of local partners including Supporting People and the Lancashire Drug Action Team.

We have also been successful this year in bidding for European Social Fund monies in a consortium led by Lancaster and Morecambe College to support offender learning and skills in Lancashire. The main beneficiaries of the project are Unpaid Work offenders and those leaving custody and the project has been designed to deliver learning and guidance to improve offender skills and achieve a greater number of offenders gaining sustainable employment.

Resources Review

Revenue

The expenditure of the Lancashire Probation Board is planned and controlled through the annual budget process and is determined by the level of funding received from the Home Office through the National Offender Management Service (NOMS). Expenditure on the day to day running costs of the service is determined through the revenue budget and recorded in the Operating Cost Statement.

The Board's Net Operating Costs for the year were £21.041 million (2005/06 £20.175 million) an increase of 4.3% (2005/06 4.3%).

Staff costs have increased by £0.965 million (6.6%) during the year to £15.605 million (2005/06 decrease of 0.75% to £14.640 million). The increase is due to several factors;

- the effects of actuarial pension cost adjustments (increase of £0.779 million)
- the increase in salaries arising from the job evaluation exercise implemented during the year (increase of approximately £1.1million i.e.7%) offset by

- the decrease in staff numbers from 561 on 1st April 2006 to 542 on 31st March 2007 bringing the number of staff employed at 31st March 2007 broadly into line with the budgeted establishment

Other Administration costs have decreased by £0.299 million during the year (2005/06 increase of £1.158 million). The reduction relates to the fact that in the latter part of 2005/06 the Board undertook a major programme of improvements to the estate including redecoration, health and safety related works issues such as security and replacement of furniture together with upgrades to IT equipment. Although a programme of estates improvements was completed in 2006/07, the majority of costs were funded by NOMS Estates. This included refurbishments to the Burnley, Talbot Road (Blackpool) and Accrington offices. The Board self funded a programme of internal and external redecoration in a further 7 offices.

Operating Income has reduced by £0.396 million in the year (£0.268 million increase in 2005/06) with the completion of several externally funded initiatives involving partner agencies such as the Drug Action Teams in the county as well as several pathfinder projects funded by NOMS.

Capital Expenditure

During the year the Board has utilised the Vehicle and Capital Equipment allocation received from NOMS to purchase fixed assets worth £126,000, including finance system software, photocopiers and storage facilities.

Efficiency Savings

Work has continued during the year to review areas of non-pay expenditure in an effort to reduce costs and improve the quality of services provided (areas include travel, printing and stationery). A procurement group has now been established to focus on delivering efficiencies and value for money across the various elements of non-pay expenditure. Their work will be assisted by the implementation of a computerised purchase order processing system, purchased at the end of 2006/07.

The area has also participated in the national activity costing exercise for 2006/07 as well as contributing to the North West best value reviews of Unpaid Work and Accredited Programme Delivery. The objectives of these exercises has been to provide information to scrutinise costs, illuminate best practice and identify efficiencies so that individual Boards can act on the findings to improve their service delivery and value for money.

Processes

A high priority is attached to staff supervision and appraisal and this was an issue which was examined by Her Majesty's Inspectorate when they completed an offender management inspection in Lancashire in 2006. They found that 79% of staff interviewed reported satisfaction with the quality of supervision they received, with over a quarter describing it as excellent. 90% reported that their formal supervision took place 6 weekly or more frequently and many commented on the accessibility of their managers for informal consultation. In respect of staff appraisals, 84% of those interviewed indicated that they had been appraised in the last 12 months, almost all of which were linked to the business plan.

The service also introduced a formal project management approach to guide policy development and implementation. For example, the offender management model implementation was undertaken using project plan processes and progress was reported using the national framework.

Processes were also in place to spread the learning from serious further offence reviews, with these and findings from inspection reports and independent enquiries being considered at quarterly meetings of relevant lead managers in order to promote best practice in the management of risk of harm.

A number of areas of work were also examined with a 'light touch' best value approach in 2006/07 with processes being looked at critically to see whether they could be made more efficient or delivered more cost effectively. Work was also undertaken with a local prison to speed up the process by which offender managers gained access to offenders in custody in order to prepare timely reports for courts. Among the initiatives taken were the location of an offender manager at the prison with a specific remit to write reports for courts and the promotion of video conferencing.

B. RESULTS

Achievements in 2006-2007

Lancashire Probation area achieved all of its main operational targets in 2006/07. Some targets, particularly the enforcement of orders, skills for life referrals, and contact with victims, were significantly exceeded.

The area also met its targets in relation to the employment of minority ethnic staff and the monitoring of service delivery in respect of race and ethnicity. The area has maintained its commitment to diversity which was commented upon by the Probation Inspectorate as a particular strength.

One of the key elements was the embedding of Offender Management arrangements in the area with the key timescales for implementation being achieved.

The service also achieved a number of awards including one given to The Lancashire Local Crime: Community Sentence Scheme which received a National Award for "Breaking New Ground". In addition, the co-ordinator received an award for the contribution to LCCS nationally and locally.

Probation service staff were also nominated for local Justice Awards in the areas of 'Outstanding commitment to diversity', long service and contribution to working with offenders. Our staff were part of the 'Blackpool Intensive Order team' which received one of these justice awards.

The 'Helping Hands award' was received by Unpaid Work staff and offenders for 2006/07 from Padiham Football club to show their appreciation for the work that they

had done. In the past, sponsors who have donated money received the award but the club thought on this occasion that the probations service's contribution was worthy of the accolade.

Customer Results

Reference:	Description of Target/ Measure:
PT 2	Victim contact: victim or victim's family to be contacted within National Standard of 8 weeks from sentence in 85% of cases involving serious sexual or other violent offences where offender is sentenced to 12 months or more. Target: 85% Achieved : 91% (Figures available for Apr 06 – Jan 07)
PT 8	Number of Skills for Life referrals achieved against target Target: 1425 Achieved: 2698
PT 9	Number of unemployed offenders gaining employment against target Target: 445 Achieved: 628
PM 6	Number of offenders placed in employment that is retained for four weeks against target Target: 356 Achieved: 509

People Results

Reference:	Description of Target/ Measure:
PT 12	Contribution to achieving regionally set employment targets for minority ethnic staff (i) Minority Ethnic Representation in the area workforce Achieved: 5.2% (ii) Retention / resignation by grade and ethnic group (contribution to national target) Retention/Resignation White Staff: 8.33% Retention/Resignation Ethnic Minority Staff: 15.4%
PT 13	(i) Proportion of race and ethnic monitoring data on staff which is returned on time and using the correct (Census 2001) classifications Target: 95% Achieved: 98% (ii) Proportion of race and ethnic monitoring data on offenders which is returned on time and using the correct (Census 2001) classifications Target: 95% Achieved: 98.8%
PT 15	Reduce sickness absence to an average of 9 days per staff member per year Target: 9 days Not Achieved: 13.4 days

Society Results

Reference Description of Target/ Measure:

Number of Complaints: 38 complaints were received - 32 informal, 6 formal. Of the 32 informal, 3 went on to the formal and of these 1 went on to appeal to the Probation Board but this was not upheld. Of the informal complaints 1 was partly upheld and two of the formal complaints were partly upheld. Apologies were given. None appealed to the Ombudsman.

Measures of efforts taken to communicate with the local community to take full account of diversity

Area website www.probation-lancashire.org.uk is fully compliant with nationally recognised assistive technology accessibility endorsement. It provides online access for the public to:

- staff recruitment
- inquiries/suggestions on placements of offenders on Community Payback
- to request information
- Race, gender and disability equality information
- awareness of Board meetings to promote public attendance

Service information leaflets for offenders and victims are available in many different languages to reflect the needs of minority communities across Lancashire.

LT To implement an accredited domestic violence programme in 2006. In 06/07 we had 275 DV programme orders and 83 DV completions

Key Performance Results

Reference: Description of Target/ Measure:

PT 1 Risk assessments, risk management plans and OASys sentence plans are completed on high risk offenders completed within 5 working days of the commencement of the order or release into the community

Target: 90%

Achieved: 93%

PT 3 Risk assessments and OASys sentence plans are completed on Prolific and Other Priority Offenders (PPOs) completed within 5 working days of the commencement of the order or release into the community.

Target: 90%

Achieved: 93%

PT 4 90% of PSRs to be completed within the required time

Target: 90%

Achieved: 88%

PM 1	40% of PSRs for Magistrates Courts to be fast delivery Target: 40% Achieved: 40%
PT 5	Number of successful completions of Unpaid Work against target Target: 1372 Achieved: 1423
PT 6	Initiate breach proceedings in accordance with National Standards within 10 working days in 90% of cases Target: 90% Achieved: 94%
PT 7	The proportion of arranged appointments which the offender attends in the first 26 weeks Target: 85% Achieved: 88%
PM 2	The proportion of cases that reach the 6 month stage without requiring breach action Target: 70% Achieved: 73%
PM 3	The average number of acceptable failures to attend appointments in orders and licences during the first 26 weeks Achieved: 2.8
PM4	The proportion of orders and licences that terminate successfully Target: 65% Achieved: 71%
PT 10	Number of successful DTTO/DRR completions against target Target: 165 Achieved: 224
PM 7	Number of DTTO/DRR commencements against target Target: 475 Achieved: 517
PM 8	90% of first contacts on DTTOs/DRRs arranged with a) the probation service for within one working day and b) the treatment provider within 2 working days Target: 90% Achieved: 90%
PT 11	Number of accredited programme completions against target, including contribution to regional targets on sex offender treatment programme completions and domestic violence programme completions Target: 586 (including 35 SO completions and 40 DV completions) Achieved: 633 (including 42 SO completions and 83 DV completions)
PM 9	Percentage of offenders starting an accredited programme out of the total number of programme requirements Achieved: 43%

- PM 10** Percentage of offenders completing an accredited programme out of the total who attend the first session
Achieved: 64%

C. WORKLOAD AND ACTIVITY STATISTICS

- Commencements by type of order/ licence

	2006/07	2005/06	2004/05	2003/4	2002/03
CJA Community Order	4305	2988			
CJA Suspended Sentence Order	1209	310			
CPO	252	740	1488	1447	1581
CPRO	60	281	552	455	360
CRO	135	815	2238	2355	2445
DTTO	13	137	353	247	173
ALL COMMUNITY ORDERS	5974	5271	4631	4504	4559
Pre - Release Licence	1156	1236	1160	1230	1395
Post - Release Licence	1068	1157	1210	1349	1427
ALL CASELOAD	8198	7664	7001	7083	7381

- Caseload at 31.03.07 compared to 31.03.06 by type of order/ licence

	2006/07	2005/06	2004/05	2003/4	2002/03
CJA Community Order	3385	2258			
CJA Suspended Sentence Order	1088	272			
CPO	236	544	1154	1125	1095
CPRO	128	444	850	677	571
CRO	293	891	2151	2213	2268
DTTO	12	90	250	170	132
ALL COMMUNITY ORDERS	5142	4499	4405	4185	4066
Pre - Release Licence	1856	1727	1612	1560	1568
Post - Release Licence	831		742	720	683
ALL CASELOAD	7829	6226	6759	6465	6317

- Reports produced by Unpaid Work Hours Ordered

	2006/07	2005/06	2004/05	2003/4	2002/03
CPO	29601	83805	166695	164524	176220
CPRO	5075	24060	45074	37553	29755
UPW Requirement (CJA)	282672	148323			
TOTAL	317348	256188	211769	202077	205975

- Reports produced by Unpaid Work Hours Worked

	2006/07	2005/06	2004/05	2003/4
TOTAL	195887	147474	125578	129878

- Victims: The total number contacted within 8 weeks of sentence

	2006/07	2005/06	2004/05	2003/4	2002/03
Total no of Victims	406	452	495	541	

No contacted within 8 weeks	370	417	456	502	
%	91%	92%	92%	93%	

Board Address and Membership

Lancashire Probation Board, Area HQ Office, 99-101, Garstang Road, Preston, PR1 1LD

Board membership 2006-07:

Chief Officer

Bob Mathers

Chairman:

Dr Tony Fowles (retired 31 March 2007)

Members appointed by the Home Secretary:

Mrs V Burke (retired 31 March 2007)

Mrs S Hughes (retired 31 March 2007)

Mr A Khandelwal (retired 31 March 2007)

Mrs M Lea (retired 31 March 2007)

Mr A Nixon (retired 31 March 2007)

Mr V Patel

Mr D Booker

Mr A Harrison

Mrs E Housden (retired 31 March 2007)

Mr M Kothari

Mr L Sewell.

Member appointed by the Lord Chancellor

His Honour Judge J Foster QC (resigned 7 June 2006), His Honour Judge A Gilbert QC (appointed 7 June 2006)