



NATIONAL
PROBATION
SERVICE
Lancashire

Probation in Lancashire

Information for Courts

Enforcement, rehabilitation and public protection

Launch issue 1 – Summer 2003

THIS NEWSLETTER will be distributed periodically for all interested in Probation work in Lancashire - especially sentencers and courts' staff in the Magistrates' Courts and Crown Courts, legal professionals and all working within the Criminal Justice system. It will report factual information about Probation's work serving the courts, supervising offenders and enforcing court orders, highlighting:

- Probation's duties in public protection, crime reduction, rehabilitating offenders and upholding victims' interests
- Inter-agency approaches in the delivery of justice

Enforcing Court Orders: 92% - that's above target

Public confidence in Probation depends on the extent to which probation staff are enforcing the terms and conditions of statutory orders and licences. This goes to the heart of proper punishment and the rule of law by upholding the authority of the Courts and Parole Board in their sentencing and early release decisions.

In Lancashire, our performance on enforcement in accordance with Probation National Standards is measured against a national benchmark target. It means ensuring we take 'breach action' - to return the offender to court or custody - in at least 90% of applicable cases of an offender's failure to comply with an order, programme or licence.

We are setting new records in improving enforcement and breach and we shall continue this improvement campaign in which we have focused staff attention during the past year. We have taken consistently upward strides from a performance rating that was barely par with the national average. We had begun to lift our enforcement results in late 2002 and this positive trend by February 2003 saw us achieve 92% - exceeding the 90% target for the first time. Our performance on other budget-linked targets is strong, for example:

- consistently above target on our victim contact service
- speed in commencing and offering first appointments on court orders and licences.
- above target on proportion of pre-sentence reports having a clear recommendation written on offenders from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Courts and public rightly expect us to deliver to our targets. We know that in achieving them - and in looking to exceed them - we shall deliver the real prize to Lancashire's communities: public protection, less re-offending and fewer victims.

Assessing offenders to protect the public

Assessment of each offender is the starting point for all work with offenders. Offender Assessment System (OASys) is the new consistent national system used by probation and by prisons for assessing offender risks of how likely to re-offend/cause harm, factors behind offending and offender needs, supervision plan and measuring change. OASys is used to assess every offender in Lancashire on whom a pre-sentence report is prepared and every offender starting a Community Order.

FACTUALLY

In Lancashire during 12 months to 31st March 2003:

- 569 offenders started probation rehabilitation programmes
- more than 143,400 hours were worked by offenders serving Community Punishment Orders. Work projects are chosen to benefit local communities`



Steering offenders

out of the cycle of crime

Twenty offenders serving Community Punishment Orders worked 1,400 hours on a bike repair project to benefit disadvantaged people in Pendle. This scheme continues to enable offenders to gain work skills and a qualification that can steer them into learning or jobs and avoid re-offending. A total of 80 unclaimed bikes collected by Lancashire Police Pennine Division were restored for low income families, youth organisations and local charities. Community Service Supervisor Michael Sargeant is pictured (front left) supervising the work. Photo: (John Mills Photography)

Important change to Community Punishment

An enhanced form of Community Punishment is being launched nationally and will be delivered in Lancashire from October 2003. Enhanced Community Punishment (ECP) is for all offenders who receive a Community Punishment Order.

The change is in how Probation will deliver the Order - the actual legal Community Punishment Order keeps its name and place in the range of community sentences.

What is enhanced is the potential for rehabilitation by applying evidence-based 'what works best' methods in reducing re-offending. This follows pilots in 12 locations that have tested out and established consistent delivery. The 3 elements are punishment, reparation and strong focus on rehabilitation by

- improving attitudes and behaviour
- guided skills learning.
- improving employability
- quality standards in work placements so that offenders' work ensures opportunity to learn and develop, replacing anti-social outlook by providing a positive example. In Lancashire the aim is for 633 offenders to start ECP from October 2003 - March 31st 2004. It is not targeted at any particular kind of offender.

Drug Treatment and Testing Order

How it worked for me...

Prince's Trust workers who renovated a community children's nursery are photographed in the local newspaper - a team of smiling faces of young people in whom the community takes pride. Among them is Lisa, 23 and 'just starting life now' as she says - freed from drugs and praised by a judge for lifting herself out the grip of heroin addiction and ending seven years chaotic drug-hazed existence in a cycle of crime and in and out of prison. A drug-dealing boyfriend introduced her to speed - escalating to heroin and shoplifting to pay for it. Lisa is the first to say that her chance of a new life came through both the Court's decision not to jail her again and Probation's firmness with her to comply with her Drug Treatment and Testing Order. "It was incredibly hard at first on my Order. I wanted de-tox but there was a waiting list. The cravings made me so ill physically that I could barely get outdoors some days to get to my appointments. I wasn't motivated, missed appointments, couldn't see that people were helping me. I was on the point of being breached. I was like a kid having a tantrum but Dawn, my probation officer helped me see that I really wanted to get off the stuff. She's helped me to keep going. "Probation Services Officer Dawn Walsh saw a crucial

turning point several months into the Order: "Lisa's attitude changed. She responded to the idea of structured activity with the Prince's Trust. She did all the leg work - highly commendable. When Lisa found the will to reject local drug dealers' approaches she suffered vicious victimisation. The Judge's praise in review hearings encouraged Lisa - exactly needed at that stage." A local supermarket lifted its ban upon Lisa and confirmed her rehabilitation when she helped out packing customers' shopping in a charity event. Lisa plans to enrol on a college course soon as part of 'New Deal' and recently was rehoused in the Preston area. She has now joined a gym which is helping her to restore her health as well as keeping her occupied until starting her college course. She says: When I was addicted, I was living day to day. I'm now living for my future and I am determined to stay drug free." During 12 months to 31st March 2003, a total 183 offenders began this Order which combines punishment and rehabilitation with treatment to stop drug misuse. Nationally, probation targets for commencing offenders on DTTO are increased 50% in 2003-2004 compared with last year. Lancashire aims to see 275 offenders commence by 31st March 2004.

Control and Change targets 18-20 age group

Probation will introduce the new intensive community penalty Intensive Control and Change Programme (ICCP) targeting young adults 18 - 20 from 1st October 2003, Lancashire is one of 11 areas nationally to pilot ICCP, launched in London in April 2003.

It is specifically for offenders persistently in trouble (non-violent and non-sexual) who are likely to be reconvicted. It keeps offenders off the street:

- by 12 hour curfew evening/night

- daytime intensive supervision confronting offending behaviour, promoting rehabilitation, tackling drink or drug use, looking for training/ work plus 7 hours a week unpaid community work. It offers a tough effective alternative to short-term custody geared to break the cycle of re-offending by means of:

Control: rigour and surveillance, daily curfew and tagging, intelligence-led police surveillance and fast track return to court on non-compliance.

Change: 18 hours a week intensive supervision tackling offending behaviour + focus on education, employment and training, mentor guidance plus 7 hours a week unpaid work as reparation to the community. The total 25 hours a week supervision reduces to 12 hours a week after the first 3 months. Evidence shows highest level of offending is among 18 - 21 year-olds of whom 72% are reconvicted. ICCP targets the 18 - 20s who make up 42% of first-time offenders (20% of all reconvictions). 63% are unemployed at arrest and 34% have basic literacy and numeracy problems.

Government Minister Hilary Benn emphasised its purpose: "Short-term custodial sentences with no support or supervision after release cannot fully address underlying problems and provide limited opportunity for rehabilitation. This new penalty will not only punish but also directly tackle offending behaviour to reduce crime. "During 2002, 274 Lancashire offenders were sentenced to custody less than 12 months. Lancashire Probation has target capacity for 45 offenders (October 2003 - March 2004). Sentencing is through a Community Punishment and Rehabilitation Order.

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Specific Sentence Reports

Specific Sentence Reports were introduced in 1999 to assist the Courts by enabling sentencers to make a community sentence that had no additional requirements without adjourning for a full Pre-sentence Report. The Home Office set a target for 25% of reports to be Specific Sentence Reports (SSRs). However, the development of programmes as a core element of Community Rehabilitation Orders has meant that it has been feasible to achieve variably 10% - 15% of reports as SSRs. From 1st April 2003, a local Lancashire agreement with the Courts enables SSRs to be used for Community Rehabilitation Orders that include requirements. For the most effective use of Specific Sentence Reports, guidelines have been agreed to assist sentencers: when asking for a report to indicate:

- the Court's preliminary view of seriousness of offence
- the aim of the sentence on particular issues

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Magistrates share in survey

"Rethinking Crime and Punishment Project" is part of the Esmee Fairbairn Charitable Trust's programme to investigate the use of imprisonment and alternative forms of punishment. It aims to understand how prisons and alternatives are perceived by stakeholders and to use this information to help prisons and alternatives improve the relationships with their stakeholders. Dr Kevin Money of Henley Management College (working with NPS Lancashire and helped by some Magistrates in focus groups) designed a confidential survey offered to all of Lancashire's magistrates in February 2003. Our thanks to all involved and we will report results - due soon.

Focus on local links

Probation in Lancashire reshaped its internal organisational structure into local multi-functional teams from 1st April 2003. This maximises staff skills in delivering Probation services to the Courts, for offenders and victims, and in prisons and in partnerships across the county. Our revised operational management structure is based in 4 district 'service units': ● Burnley, Nelson and Rawtenstall ● Blackburn Accrington and our 2 hostels ● Preston, Chorley, Leyland and Skelmersdale ● Blackpool, Fleetwood, Lancaster and Morecambe. Our restructure puts more focus on local links within districts - assisting both strategic planning and local service delivery. A map of management structure and where to find us is on the Probation website www.probation-lancashire.org.uk.