

**SOUTH YORKSHIRE PROBATION PARTNERSHIP FORUM****NOTES OF FORUM MEETING HELD**
10TH JUNE 2009**1. DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGY**

Kathy Anderson, SYP's Head of Diversity & Inclusion, attended the meeting to speak about the developments that had taken place within the Service over the last year. It was SYP's aim to be recognised as one of the leaders in this area of work by 2011. The handout distributed at the meeting summarising the various developments is attached. This includes the Service website address which can be used to access most of the documents referenced in the presentation. Kathy emphasised that she would welcome contact from and with any organisation that wished to become involved in any of the developments outlined.

2. PROBATION TRUST PROGRAMME

SYP had submitted its application for Trust status by the May deadline. Confirmation had been received the previous day (9th June) that the application had passed the first stage of the process. The second and hopefully final stage was a presentation to and interview by a panel chaired by Lord Carter. This was taking place on 30th June. The outcome would be known some time in July. There are further opportunities to re-apply. Conversion to Trust status will take place on 1st April 2010. Details are still awaited of the benefits and flexibilities that Trust status will bring.

3. PROBATION FINANCIAL POSITION

Reference was made to the difficult financial position being faced by all Probation Services. SYP has achieved a balanced budget for the financial year 2009/10 but doing so has meant a reduction in the staffing establishment. The economic situation and the pressures on public finances mean that resources available to support all public services are going to be very tight over the following years. SYP will therefore continue to face difficult decisions about the use of its available and reducing level of resources.

4. BEST VALUE UPDATE

The national approach being taken is to link Best Value into the Specification, Benchmarking and Costing Programme, thus attempting to identify a standard service specification for particular (and eventually all) aspects of Probation activity. By identifying the best processes that support the specification it is intended to identify a cost that will therefore provide some sort of benchmark for both company performance across Areas and provide an indication of overall capacity against the level of national resources available. Specifications have been promised for Victim Contact work and for Community Payback, although in the latter case it remains unclear whether this is the direct work placement supervision element only or the whole operation. The intention is that individual Areas will be required to review the delivery of their services against the national specifications and costs. This seems likely to happen during the autumn. The original intention seemed to be that the worst performing Areas would face an improvement programme which may have involved (sooner or later) market testing to see whether an alternative provider could offer an improved service. There has latterly been a suggestion that 25% of service provision will have to be market tested. Clarification of the situation will no doubt arrive in due course. A significant level of Community Placement supervision is already delivered in partnership with the voluntary and community sector in South Yorkshire.

5. NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 4th November 2009, 2.00pm in the Board Room at SYPA's Head Office on Division Street. The Director of Offender Management for the Y&H Region has been invited to address the Forum.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

It was noted that a commissioning opportunity for the delivery of support to young persons not in education employment or training would be publicised by Rotherham Council in the late summer. Reference was also made to new arrangements for the provision of alcohol services in Sheffield.