

People
Excellence
National Probation Service
Working to protect South Yorkshire

standards
Our achievements 2002/2003
Excellence
Custo



Results
Performance
Standards
Leadership
NATIONAL PROBATION SERVICE

for England and Wales

South Yorkshire

The second year of the National Probation Service has seen the South Yorkshire probation area move from strength to strength. The targets we have to meet have remained tough and we are delighted to say that the service has met many of them. We also know that there are areas that will need improvement in 2003/04, especially increasing the numbers of offenders who complete our special offender programmes.

2002/03 was a year when management and staff representatives reviewed the changing demands of our workload. Workload management and ways of prioritising work were introduced to ensure that precious staff resources were not wasted and not diverted from where we have most impact on offending behaviour.

It was also the first year of our race equality scheme and the service's new diversity strategy. Considerable thought and some activity has taken place to make closer links with minority communities in South Yorkshire and making sure that our service represents the different communities that it serves. There is a lot of work to do and as 2003/04 progresses we will do this with our partners in the criminal justice system.

This annual review shows a service that has made considerable progress and achieved a great deal that we should celebrate. We are not, though, complacent and know there is so much more for us to do in ensuring that the probation service continues to provide both efficient and effective supervision of offenders to improve the quality of life for us all in South Yorkshire.



Beryl Seaman
Chair of the board



Heather Harker
Chief officer

'The probation service in South Yorkshire works with offenders to cut crime, protect the public and ensure public safety and the proper punishment of offenders.'

That two-line statement sums up what the National Probation Service in South Yorkshire is all about.

The key phrase is 'protect the public'. In everything we do, that is our ultimate aim.

South Yorkshire is one of the 42 areas that make up the National Probation Service in England and Wales.

The aims of the service nationally are:

The protection of the public

The reduction of re-offending

The proper punishment of offenders

Ensuring offender awareness of the effects of crime on the victims of crime and the public

The rehabilitation of offenders

We do many things in pursuit of these aims. We work with a range of organisations and communities, sharing skills and experience. We serve around 1.3 million people in an economically diverse region. Steel and engineering sit alongside service industries, tourism, sport and leisure.

The probation service has four divisions covering Sheffield, Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham. We have over 600 staff based in 25 locations and we spend around £18 million each year to carry out our work. Among those locations are the four magistrates' and two crown courts. We prepare over 8,000 reports every year to help the courts deliver their sentences.

In any year, we supervise around 10,000 offenders sentenced to complete their punishment in the community, along with 2,000 released from prison on licence.

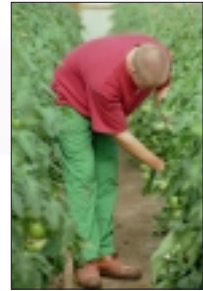
We're part of the National Probation Service – answerable to the Home Secretary – and we work with the police, the courts and the prison service to make sure that justice is delivered effectively and to the benefit of everybody. By doing that, we make a direct and positive contribution to protecting the public.

Special offender programmes

One of our top priorities is special programmes designed to direct offenders away from committing crime.

These programmes are based on evidence compiled by the Home Office of what actually works to achieve this. A specialist panel, which the Government appoints, then tests the programmes before giving permission for them to operate.

The service has targets to get a certain number of offenders through these special programmes during the year. During 2002/03, 34 per cent of offenders who began programmes completed them. The service is determined to raise this level during 2003/04 and has already put in place actions to make sure that this happens.



Drug treatment and testing orders

These orders continue to be a success story for the probation service in South Yorkshire.

They involve high levels of contact and supervision with offenders, who have to stick rigidly to the conditions of the order. During the year, the service needed to get 190 offenders onto the order.

We achieved 241, confirmation of the confidence the courts have in the order and the probation service's management of it.



Doncaster MP Rosie Winterton visited the service to learn more about our work with offenders whose offences are drug-related.

Case study

Comments from offenders

The evidence from offenders on the Think First programme is that it is achieving its aims.

Comments from female and male participants on the programme include the following:

'I think I have learnt to stop and think before doing some things. [To] think about the people involved and how it could affect them or hurt them.'

One participant learned 'how to look at your problems and to take a step back to see where I had been going wrong'.

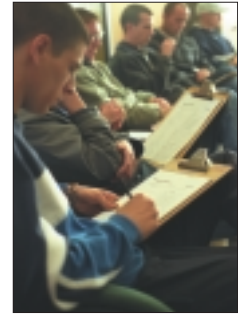
And another commented that they were 'surprised by how much we've learned....I wouldn't have analysed things the same without the programme'.

Other comments included: 'staff have been very helpful and supportive', and another learned 'how to solve problems and to avoid re-offending in different ways'.

Basic skills

One of our tasks is making sure offenders have the sort of basic skills most of us take for granted. Many offenders, for example, struggle with even the simplest English or cannot deal with numbers. The Government wants to see more offenders reaching basic standards in such skills, becoming more employable and less likely to commit further crimes.

South Yorkshire's targets for 2002/03 were to get 190 offenders onto courses to achieve basic educational and vocational skills and of those, to make sure 32 achieved basic awards. In the event, we achieved 296 offenders on courses and 47 have so far achieved basic skills awards.



Victim work

The probation service provides a service to victims of serious sexual or other violent offences. This involves – if the victim wishes it – keeping them informed about the progress of the offender through prison. It also involves giving the victim the chance to give their views about any conditions applying to the offender on release from prison.

We made contact with victims within eight weeks of an offender's sentence in 75 per cent of cases. However, the service does depend on our receiving information from the police. Where this was provided on time, we made contact within the target time in 100 per cent of cases. We are continuing to work closely with the police to make sure that we receive information promptly in all cases.

Case study

Sandall Beat Wood, off Armthorpe Road, Doncaster

This was an area of woodland renowned for fly-tipping, drug use, prostitution and various assaults. The probation service was approached by Friends of Sandall Beat Wood to help open up the area to discourage the anti-social behaviour. Offenders on community punishment orders cleared the undergrowth and the litter and lifted trees under the direction of parks and countryside. Six weeks of hard work resulted in people now feeling safe to walk through the area because there is visibility straight through the woodland.

Community punishment

One of our most high profile areas of activity is community punishment.

Once again, this proved to be a successful year, with offenders working nearly 143,000 hours on projects that benefited communities and organisations throughout South Yorkshire.



Our annual Excellence in Community Punishment awards highlighted the quality of work carried out by offenders under the supervision of probation staff and the benefits to community safety achieved.

Staff

It's a cliché that in any organisation, staff are the most important asset. Nevertheless, it's true and in the National Probation Service, South Yorkshire we take staff welfare, training and development very seriously.

During the year, we worked to a comprehensive training and development plan, we continued to improve our supervision and appraisal procedures and we agreed appropriate workloads that our staff should take on.



We continue to have good representation of ethnic minority communities in our workforce and during the year we produced our race equality scheme in line with the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000. However, we aren't complacent and will continue to work to make sure that we truly represent the communities of South Yorkshire at all levels of the service.

Public protection

The probation service is a leading organisation, along with the police, in local public protection arrangements, set up by law (Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000), to manage dangerous offenders in the community.

The two services have worked hard to put in place effective arrangements and, working with other organisations, these are working well. The system in place identifies and accurately assesses dangerous offenders and manages them to reduce any risk to the minimum.

Enforcing court orders

The service puts great emphasis on bringing offenders back to court within the target time of ten days when they break the terms of their sentences. Improvements continue and the service is well on its way overall to hitting the 90 per cent target on all orders, varying from 77 per cent to 92 per cent on different orders.

Conclusion

2002/03 continued to be a year of change and development for a new service. We have achieved a great deal but we know there is more to do. We continue to build a probation service able to play a central part in delivering justice to the people of South Yorkshire.

Case study

Karl is 19 years old. He recently served a two-year sentence for indecent assaults on children. On release from prison he was subject to sex offender registration and returned to live with his family. The local community was aware of his offences and very concerned about him living in their community, where he had access to local children. As a result, threats of violence and revenge were made. The local police have a duty to protect the children and Karl from harm. Following a multi agency public protection panel, Karl was removed from the community and an application was made to the court for a sex offender order to prohibit him from having any unsupervised access to children. Karl remains offence free and is currently attending the probation service sex offender treatment programme.

If you would like to know more about us or have any comments,
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To find out more about the probation service in South Yorkshire, please visit
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