



SOUTH YORKSHIRE

Inside Magazine

NOMS National Offender Management Service
Working together to reduce re-offending

For staff in South Yorkshire Probation Area

July 2007

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'Going Green' with Record Performance

94%	High risk timeliness	561	Programme completions
97%	PPO timeliness	147	DTTO & DRR completions
93%	Breach timeliness	635	Jobs gained by offenders
70%	Compliance (no breach action)	96%	Race & ethnic monitoring timeliness
93%	Fast Delivery Report timeliness	78%	Of appointments kept in first 26 weeks
96%	Crown Court Report timeliness	13.3	Days staff sickness
1,497	Unpaid work completions	73%	SDRs to Magistrates Court in target time
1,477	Basic skills referrals	53%	Of SDRs on offenders in custody to court in target time

South Yorkshire Probation Area exceeded 17 out of 23 performance targets in 2006-07, including 12 of those on the Weighted Scorecard.



A word from the Chief



THE success shown by our 2006-07 end of year performance results is a testament to South Yorkshire Probation Area and proof of the hard work, commitment and focus on performance of all its staff *writes Chief Officer Roz Brown.*

Congratulations to all staff

I am absolutely delighted with how well we have done and really pleased to have this opportunity to thank you all for your part in the improvement. Some examples of the progress we made are:

- Enforcement improved from 78% to 93% against a 90% target;
- Employment gained by offenders from 31% to 141% of the target;
- Basic Skills referrals of offenders from 55% to 103% of the target;
- Accredited Programme completions by offenders from 87% to 102% of the target.

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A word from the chief... (continued)

Then there were targets we hit throughout the year:

- **Risk of Harm OASys in five days 89% - 94% against a 90% target;**
- **PPO OASys assessment in five days 94% - 97% against a 90% target;**
- **No breach action within six months 75% - 70% against a 70% target;**
- **Victim contact timeliness 96% throughout the year against a 85% target;**
- **DTTO / DRR first contact with the probation service and the treatment provider 100% throughout the year.**

All these targets represent progress made by individual offenders and a reduction in the risk they pose to the public of South Yorkshire.

I am very proud to be associated with such results - WELL DONE.

Ministry of Justice

9 May 2007 saw the transfer of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) from the Home Office to the newly created Ministry of Justice led by the first Secretary of State for Justice Lord Falconer (as this edition of *Inside* went to press, we learnt that Jack Straw had replaced Lord Falconer as Home Secretary).

I had the privilege of meeting Lord Falconer on 11 May and was very impressed by his knowledge of the probation service and his strong belief in the work we do and its value to local communities.

He told us he was proud to be the Minister responsible for probation because of the 'incredible committed' work we do.

He also said we must be freed to deliver the service that we deliver well and that the Ministry of Justice must take responsibility to lead, promote and explain the work of the probation service.

He also said: "There are no guarantees about re-

offending and public safety, we can only explain what we do and that we will do all we can to reduce the risk - we cannot eliminate it."

It is a shame that we have so quickly lost such a positive supporter of our

service with the cabinet reshuffle, but I believe Lord Falconer's comments explain the underlying rationale behind the creation of the new Ministry. Jack Straw becomes Justice Minister with the benefit of a previous tenure at the Home Office and I hope we will receive the same positive messages from him.

The Business Plan 2007-08

Enclosed with this edition of the magazine is the summary of the business plan which I hope you will find useful. Every manager has a copy of the full plan which is also available on the intranet, so if you want further information just ask.

This next year will mark a significant and important change for the probation service. Provided the Offender Management Bill becomes law - and we should know very soon - for the first time we will lose our monopoly and start to face competition. Our performance levels will become even more significant than they were previously - we must be a TOP PERFORMER - I have complete confidence we can do this.

Then we can look forward to the future with confidence.

TOGETHER WE CAN BE A TOP PERFORMER.



Roz Brown

Meet the New Chair - Gordon Wordsworth

Born and raised in Walkley, Sheffield, the only son of a steelworker I left school to become an apprentice bricklayer.

A haphazard progression then followed - own business, clerk of works and project management.

I guess my life has taken a triple track of career in construction, community involvement and home life - and sometimes a heady mixture of all three!

Concerned with disadvantage in society I found expression for my desire to influence change through the co-operative movement and becoming involved in 'social change' projects at both a practical and strategic level.

After living with / in a self-build private housing development which was one of the first solar powered / low energy schemes of its time, I designed and ran Heeley City Farms' 'Challenge Aneka' television project to 'rebuild' the farm.

Becoming a project manager for a community group to refurbish a large disused building on the Manor estate using mostly local unemployed youths inspired me to start and run Sheffield Rebuild.

A ground-breaking social enterprise it grew over ten years from an idea to a £6m turnover national model for engaging and training those needing extra help. Sadly in 2005 changes to the way Sheffield procured its services

meant loss of contracts and closure. But over 500 people were helped into employment during that time.

1994 (to 2004) I was appointed one of five new independent members to South Yorkshire Police Authority, quickly rising to sub-committee chair and then vice-chair of the authority. Other board level appointments have included Sheffield TEC (now the LSC), deputy chair of South Yorkshire Connexions and chair of Sheffield Homes central area board.

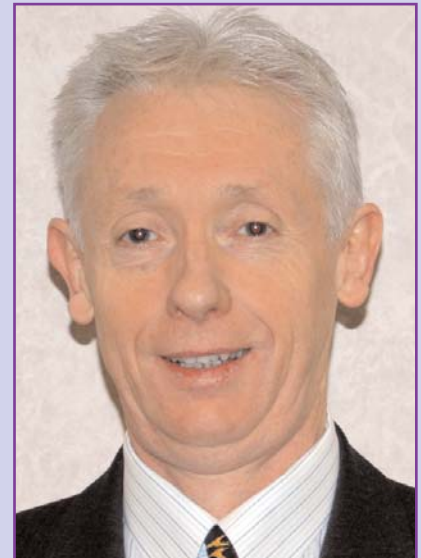
At a local level I have been actively involved in many community ventures including Regen School, and Manor Reborn.

Currently I operate both as a social enterprise consultant / troubleshooter and developer of prestigious new homes using low carbon and sustainable technologies.

I completed most of a BA with the Open University in pure maths and very recently have studied for a Masters at the Judge Institute of Management, Cambridge University. Along the way I have endured many seminars and training events in high performance management, HR, governance and health and safety.

I live with my wife who is a social worker and two teenage children in Hathersage and try to cycle regularly and quickly through my beloved Peak District.

I feel very fortunate to enjoy most things I do but



Gordon Wordsworth

THE South Yorkshire Probation Board took on a new look in April following the retirement of several long-serving members.

New Board Chair Gordon Wordsworth has replaced Shirley Harrison and he will provide leadership for the Board as they guide the development of the area into what may eventually be trust status as part of the NOMS commissioning framework.

In this article, he tells us a little about his background. We will have a full interview with Gordon, and details of the other new members, in a future issue.

non-work interests include opera, astronomy and cooking - and anything interesting.

I look forward eagerly to my challenging new role and hope I can quickly gain the confidence of all both inside and outside the organisation.

Gordon Wordsworth

BACK in March, I was pleased to be able to get out and brief staff in divisions on our plans for the year ahead writes Chief Officer Roz Brown.

During those briefings, you asked many questions and the most frequently asked ones are reproduced here.

Practice Issues

Will National Standards still be informing our practice?

Yes, we are currently awaiting a new set of National Standards which will incorporate both the existing National Standards and the draft Offender Management Standards.

We can expect some changes to existing standards but these are being kept to a minimum because of the known resource issues.

Will the information from your presentation about low risk offenders be passed on to the courts?

Yes, Shelley, Marion and the Court SPOs are currently working to ensure the courts are aware of the new strategy and what this means for contact with low risk offenders. Whilst the courts are not entirely happy with this approach they understand the need for it. It is essential that we free up sufficient time to be able to supervise high risk offenders properly. Without the active implementation of the low risk strategy we will not be able to do this.

Its difficult to recommend interventions that we have not got the resources for.

Yes, I am aware of this and the intention is to move towards a structured intervention for every



Chief Officer Roz Brown briefs staff at Victoria Road in Barnsley

one of the OASys identified needs. However this will take time and even then it is unlikely that there will ever be sufficient resource to meet the needs of all our offenders, which is why we must make sure that we prioritise the needs of those who are high risk.

Offender managers are not clear about what they should not do. Can you tell us?

The highest priority is those offenders who pose the greatest risk - firstly those that are dangerous and secondly those at high or medium risk of re-offending. It therefore follows that what we don't do is to actively work with low risk low need offenders.

Does not working with low risk offenders mean not referring low risk offenders to group programmes?

It means referring those offenders who represent the most risk who are suitable for the particular programme on offer.

Is changing behaviour acknowledged as being part of the offender management process?

Yes, it is the Offender Manager's role to motivate the offender to change and to reinforce

the learning acquired through structured interventions.

What do we do if we have a Tier 1 case that requires supervision?

We can signpost the offender to other organisations but we can not use our limited resources to actively supervise a low risk offender on a supervision requirement.

If OASys is so important and we now need to rescore - how do we free up time to do this?

OASys is very important for two reasons.

First it allows us to identify the needs of the offenders in South Yorkshire and to ensure we move towards being able to meet those needs and secondly it allows us to rescore and demonstrate our successes.

We need to ensure this is given a high priority and that we free up the time to do it. The low risk strategy is one way we are trying to do this.

Improvements in processes may need local information / influence - is there a structure for doing this?

Yes, but we need to get better at it. This year we are intending to map and improve our processes on an incremental basis and, as they are mapped so we will record them on the intranet so they are available for all staff. Clearly those staff who use the process on a day to day basis must be involved.

Would offender questionnaires provide evidence for outcomes?

Yes certainly. We need to do this in a more

structured manner and ensure the results are collated and saved.

Having to do OASys in five days for high risk offenders sometimes means it is not as high quality as we would like - what do we do about that?

I understand this. It is important though that we have the best plan we can straight away because we are dealing with dangerous people. You can always review it and improve the plan as more information becomes available.

Will PSOs receive required training for new role?

Yes, this has already been arranged. We are currently discussing the new role with the unions.

Why have you said all POs must now work with sex offenders? Will there be more training for POs re sex offender work?

Working with dangerous offenders such as sex offenders is what POs are trained and employed to do. To allow some POs to opt out puts more burden on their colleagues and is not, in my opinion, fair or a balanced approach.

Training will be made available for staff as required. The need for training will be identified through the normal supervision and appraisal process as well as through the risk training needs assessment currently being undertaken by SPOs.

Organisational Issues

If we go to trust status will it affect our contracts of employment?

No, the terms and conditions of employment will transfer from the South Yorkshire Probation Board to the new Trust.

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Will our performance against targets be taken into account when we go out to competition?

Absolutely yes. The Government strategy is to improve the performance of areas through competition. If we can demonstrate by our performance results that we are doing a good job and delivering as required we are much less likely to face competition, and much more likely to win if we do.

Where do PSOs fall into this structure bearing in mind the low risk strategy?

In the offender management divisions, PSOs will be the offender managers for tiers 1 and 2.

Any resource that is freed up by the low risk strategy will be used to support POs working as offender managers with tier 3 and 4.

PSOs will also be employed in the interventions divisions as they always have been.

Who are the ACOs in the management structure, what are their names?

There is a senior management structure available on the intranet which gives the names of the

ACOs and some information about the responsibilities of the different roles.

Where has the Director of Operations role gone?

The Director of Operations role has been removed from the establishment. As Chief Officer I have taken responsibility for the direct line management of all senior managers.

Will the low risk strategy have an impact on PO establishment for the future?

Yes, the low risk strategy will be used when planning our workforce needs for the future.

How do we manage the gap between the resources we need and the resources we can afford?

We need to be clear about priorities and then ensure we manage our work within this context. That is why the business plan clearly sets out our priorities and why we have a low risk strategy that fits within those priorities.

Staff morale is low - what is senior management doing about this?

Senior management is very concerned about staff morale and recognise our responsibilities in this regard.

We have started considerable work to help manage workloads and hope this will very soon make a difference.

We are also aware that recent national press reports and the constant changes have been difficult for staff. We want to ensure that staff are as well informed as possible and we are currently developing an internal communications strategy to help with this. The Chief Officer visits were part of that strategy.

We also intend to start a multi-grade Employee Care Group which will include the unions as members and will be charged with looking at the issues for staff and recommending actions to improve matters.

The Offender Management Bill says core probation services will be protected for three years. What does that mean?

At present this is not clear. We need to wait until the Bill has received final assent. When that happens I will send out a briefing for all staff.

Health & Well-Being Survey

LACK of clarity in our jobs and the demands of those jobs are the largest concerns affecting people's well-being at work, according to the results of our first 'Health & Well-being Survey' writes Jack Tarr.

The survey was conducted earlier this year and 252 staff completed and returned the questionnaire. That's over 35% of our workforce, a good response rate.

Job Role

Seven of the eight divisions highlight this as a major problem area, with staff reporting lack of clarity regarding:

- **Goals and objectives;**
- **How their work fits in to the overall 'scheme of things';**
- **Duties and responsibilities;**
- **What is expected of them by managers and the service generally;**
- **Working methods and practices.**

Demands of the Job

This is the second highest area of concern, and principal issues raised are:

- **Conflicting demands being made on staff time;**
- **The intensity of work.**

These are manifested by:

- **Staff feeling they have to work too fast;**
- **Tasks being neglected because there is too much work to do;**

- **Staff believing they are subject to unrealistic pressures and deadlines;**
- **An inability to take appropriate rest breaks and a culture of working long hours.**

Bullying

23 of the 252 respondents reported that they are, in varying degrees, subject to bullying at work. This is 9.1% of respondents and 3.25% of the total workforce. Of the 23:

- **Two are managers;**
- **13 are probation officers;**
- **Five are probation service officers;**
- **Three are APT&C staff.**

Staff Survey Comparison

The 2006 staff survey, which had a similar response rate, suggested people had a clearer understanding and more positivity about their role in the service:

- **90% said they understand the role of the National Probation Service;**
- **92% said they understand what their role contributes to the aims of the National Probation Service;**
- **94% of respondents said that they feel the Probation Service provides a good quality service in their team and in their area (87%);**
- **80% agreed that motivation at work is generally high;**
- **94% understand the expected standards of performance;**

- **72% agreed that, overall, the organisation is a good place to work.**

However, the staff survey did show some concerns highlighted again in the 'Well-being at Work Survey':

- **30% said that 'excessive workload' was dealt with effectively;**
- **37% said that 'stress' was dealt with effectively;**
- **57% feel unduly pressured at work.**
- **63% feel their current workload is manageable.**
- **51% said that they worry about work outside working hours.**
- **96% said that their workload had increased over the last 12 months.**

How will these results be used?

A new **Employee Care Group**, chaired by the Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development (Amanda Cullen) has been formed to address these issues.

The aim of the group is to develop collaborative and proactive approaches to employee care in general, and the organisation's response to the **Health & Well-being Survey** and **Staff Survey** in particular.

Workload is a national issue that is subject to active discussion and action at a local level between managers and the trade unions. A workload action plan is being developed to address the real concerns raised in recent surveys.

We will have more on these issues in future editions of *Inside*.

VICTIMS at the forefront of multi-agency working

The Criminal Justice Board (SYCJB) recently hosted an event bringing staff from across South Yorkshire's criminal justice agencies to identify where we are with delivering the Victim Code of Practice, and plan ways forward to imbed best practices into everyday working activities.

The event, held at the Millennium Galleries in Sheffield, was chaired by Roz Brown, lead for the SYCJB's Victim & Witness sub group. Keynote speakers included Darren Grubb from the Victim & Witness Unit at OCJR, Lyn Davies, Criminal Justice Unit Manager from South Yorkshire Police and also Christine Empson, Area Director of Victim Support for South Yorkshire.

The day focused on celebrating the hard work and successes of staff so far identifying how, together, the agencies could make the system work even better for victims; and hearing from people working within the system about how the Code has helped improve the lives of victims from arrest through to sentencing.

Delivering Simple, Speedy, Summary Justice (CJSSS)

ON 21 July 2006 the Government published 'Delivering Simple, Speedy, Summary Justice' which sets out plans to improve the speed and effectiveness of the Magistrates' Courts system.

The ambition for CJSSS in the Magistrates' Courts is to improve the criminal justice system for the public by:

- A reduction in the number of hearings in most cases, from the current average of five to an expectation of one (for guilty plea cases) and two (for contested cases); and,
- The majority of simple cases taking on average between one day to six weeks from charge to disposal, as opposed to the current system which averages 21 plus weeks.

The key principles have been developed to make the process simpler, faster and much more focused on getting an efficient, quick service which means:

- Improved preparation from arrest to first hearing;
- Ensuring a plea is entered at first hearing, with a guilty plea being sentenced at that hearing wherever possible, or in the event of a not guilty plea, in the majority of cases the trial should commence within six weeks; and,
- A commitment to ensure cases are progressed out of court between first hearing and trial - to ensure that trials are ready to go ahead on time.

The benefits of CJSSS will include:

- By reducing the number of hearings and ensuring trials are effective victims and witnesses will receive an enhanced experience;
- The courts will improve timeliness and free up time from pre-trial reviews, increasing capacity to list cases more quickly;
- Police officers will be able to concentrate on the cases that really matter, because of the improved guilty plea rate they will be needed less often in court;
- The CPS will free up time from attending pre-trial reviews and adjourned hearings;
- The increased guilty plea rate will enable the probation service to increase the number of stand down reports they provide; and,
- Through provision of advanced information the defence will be in a far better position to advise their clients and ensure a plea is entered.

The roll-out of CJSSS in the Magistrates' Courts in South Yorkshire is yet to be set in stone. At this time it is envisaged that Sheffield will 'go live' at the end of July, followed by Rotherham at the end of September, Doncaster the end of October and Barnsley the end of November.

Justice Awards

NOMINATIONS are now open for the Justice Awards - the national awards scheme recognising excellence in the Criminal Justice System.

Taking part in the Justice Awards has changed lives, and the scheme has shed light on many unsung heroes who often work in

the most challenging circumstances.

For further details on the awards, or to nominate a colleague please visit:

<http://justiceawards.cjsonline.gov.uk/>



Nominations for the Justice Awards are now open until 3 August.