



PROBATION BOARD
26th July 2007
10.00 a.m. to 12.50 p.m.

PRESENT: H. Redhead (Acting Chair)
R. Akroyd, R. Brown, N. Cadet,
M. Murphy, B. Maslen, F. McCready,
M. Thomas, H. Williams, K. Wyatt.

Also in attendance: J. Fox, D. Thomas, G. Jones (items 47 – 54), M. Wright (items 47 – 59) and J. Tarr.

47. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from G. Wordsworth, A. Khayum, B. Fatogun, A. Cullen and B. Kerslake. As longest standing member of the Board, H. Redhead was asked to act as Chair for today's meeting.

48. Declarations of interest

No interests were declared.

49. Items to be considered in the absence of the public

RESOLVED: none

50. Minutes of last meeting

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 21st June 2007 be approved.

51. Matters arising

i) Trusts Status for Boards (Minute33i)

R. Brown reported that the Offender Management Bill had on the previous day completed its passage through Parliament and that Royal Assent was expected that day. It was not yet clear

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what dates would be given for progression, but the first Trusts would be established in April 2008. R. Brown stated that once the full wording of the Act was released J. Fox and she would examine it for its implications.

ii) PBA Matters (Minute 33ii)

J. Fox informed the Board that the PBA election had been held on the 23rd July and Alan Wooderson, Chair of Devon and Cornwall Probation Area had been elected as Chair. Mr Wooderson will take office at the AGM on the 20th September.

RESOLVED: that J. Fox send a letter of congratulations to the new Chair on behalf of the Board.

52. South Yorkshire Floods

J. Fox gave a verbal report on how the flooding had affected the Service and its business. In relation to other partnerships and agencies it was noted that we had fared better than most and this he believed was partly due to forward planning and the business continuity plans that had been in place, although a good deal of luck was also involved.

He stated that M. Wadsworth was in the process of putting together a report on what lessons could be learnt from this event in order to evaluate and improve Business Continuity Plans for the future. However, it was to be noted that it was too early to say how the floods might have affected South Yorkshire's performance targets. K. Wyatt asked how our back up systems had fared in the event. J. Fox stated that they had escaped damage.

RESOLVED: That staff be congratulated for their efforts during the floods on behalf of the Board.

53. Accredited Programmes Audit

G. Jones reported on the Accredited Programmes Audit which had followed from Probation Circular 8/2007. He explained that Accredited Programmes within South Yorkshire had not been audited since 2004 and it was important to do so to give our programmes the "kite mark" of approval in quality. He reported that South Yorkshire's accredited programmes are currently within the highest performing band in the country at 84% and have achieved their performance targets for the last two years. G. Jones noted that this had not always been easy but was achieved nonetheless. He also stated that Peter Connor from the ROM's office had commented on how impressed he was with the

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marked improvement in delivery of programmes within our service plan.

M. Thomas asked what criteria had been used within the audit; G. Jones offered to make a full copy of the audit report available to those Board members that would like to see it.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Board note the excellent audit result.
2. That J. Fox write a letter on behalf of the Board to GPD recognising the achievements made.

54. Working Arrangements with Key Partners and Local Area Agreements

G. Jones presented a report on working relationships within the LAAs. He encouraged the Service to obtain more knowledge regarding LAAs so that relationships could be improved and maintained for the future. He stressed that it was important that staff involved were aware of how to influence LAAs and due to the complex nature of them, to have the right expertise and understanding. He gave an overview of his role in this and what the next steps were in order to improve the situation. He stressed that there was value in having a strong place within the LAAs to ensure local co-operation for our own agenda.

M. Thomas endorsed G. Jones' report and agreed that there was a need to be seen as a key player and asked whether it was difficult to do this. G. Jones replied that the cycle of decision making currently being used within LAAs did make this difficult.

RESOLVED: That the Board give continued support to forming effective working relationships with key partner organisations.

55. Performance Monitoring

D. Thomas explained to the Board the standard form for performance reporting. He explained how the targets were broken down and which were funding linked. He then went through the targets and explained new ones for this year, noting that there had never before been so many targets in green for the first quarter. NOMS have offered help with sickness absence and it is anticipated that there will be an improvement in this target. D. Thomas also pointed out that systems for data validation were now very robust to ensure data was recorded properly. He stated that Accredited Programmes were not yet in green as timetabling means that many programmes are not completed until February or March and so did not as yet give cause for concern. The

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UPW figures were below target which could be attributed in part to the recent flooding. The two blank targets had not been nationally defined as yet, but he expected indications of what those would be by the next meeting.

R. Akroyd questioned how control was exercised to ensure that targets are met. D. Thomas explained to the Board the process of how programmes are recommended to the Courts for certain offenders.

M. Murphy stated that he had not realised that our sentencing report targets were so reliant on the Courts' help. F. Mc Cready asked about the current high sickness figure. R. Brown stressed that increased action was currently being taken to bring this figure down and an investigation is being undertaken into its' causes.

M. Thomas said that it felt almost as if the Service was judged on the performance indicators inappropriately and that often there were not enough resources to meet the targets set.

RESOLVED: That the Board note the current position.

56. IPPF Presentation

D. Thomas gave a presentation on the Integrated Probation Performance Framework (IPPF), the proposed new format for future measurement of the Service. He went through his presentation and explained how there would be a move away from the league table format, which would be replaced by a four band grouping with performance measured across a range of metrics. He stressed that under the new system the maximum award would be given for hitting the target only, and that there would be no additional reward for exceeding the given target. He then went on to explain priority metrics, which targets had these and key milestones for this year. He stated that these targets would develop and evolve through consultation and agreement.

R. Brown said that this was a positive step forward from the weighted scorecard and would give more stability and a fairer system to work with. A brief discussion followed.

RESOLVED: That the Board note the report.

57. Annual Report on Complaints

R. Brown said that the purpose of the report was for the Board, in line with Circular 128/2001, to review the complaints that had been received by the Service in South Yorkshire in 2006/07 and assess

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whether appropriate responses had been made. She said that the previous year's complaints had much been in line with the other years. However she was concerned that current data was not broken down into race, age or gender and she intended to include that information in her report next year.

F. McCready asked whether disability information should be included. R. Brown replied that this information could only be obtained if it had been recorded on CRAMS but she would ask managers to include it in future. R. Akroyd asked whether the data should also be broken down to include the nature of the complaint, saying that complaints in his past experience were often about communication and not the service itself.

RESOLVED: That the Board note the report.

58. Draft MAPPA Annual Report 2006/07

J. Tarr introduced the first draft of the South Yorkshire MAPPA Annual Report 2006-07 to Members. Following his report he asked for general comments from the Board regarding the process involved and the draft itself. A discussion then followed on the design and J. Tarr agreed to pass comments about design changes back to the Annual Report subgroup.

RESOLVED: That the Board note the report and that suggested comments be fed back to the subgroup via J. Tarr.

59. Serious Further Offences

M. Wright presented her report which provided a six monthly review of Serious Further Offences (SFO) between October 2006 and March 2007. She explained that this was the second review she had undertaken and it was part of a national process of risk review, which is then disseminated through the Service to ensure messages of learning are communicated back to staff.

She described the process of an SFO review and the involvement of the Public Protection Unit. There were some improvements to be made, in particular when offenders commit crimes in other Areas, and in gathering information from victims and the CPS. Closer working with MAPPA and Children Safe Guarding Boards had been highlighted, which had resulted in improved communications. Progress was also being made to ensure that everyone was aware of what makes a good SFO review. Kath Morris, Regional Manager, is currently liaising with M. Wright to achieve this.

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M. Wright also stated that Sam Chu, Forensic Psychologist for the Service, is to do a piece of work on SFOs on her return from maternity leave. The funding for this has been derived from the Butler Trust Award that she had won earlier in the year.

The Board considered statistical information, and M. Wright answered Members' questions.

RESOLVED: That the Board note the review.

60. Expenditure Monitoring

B. Kerslake's report on the budget for the first quarter of the financial year 2007-08 was discussed. It proposed quarterly reporting to the Board for the first nine months of the year and then an increase to monthly reports in the final quarter. R. Brown commented that it was a challenging time financially and although everything was well at the moment, action may have to be taken later on in the year that would not be desirable to all.

RESOLVED: That the report and its contents be noted and B. Kerslake's proposal be agreed.

61. Minutes of the Audit Committee held on the 19th June 2007

K. Wyatt presented the minutes and explained to the Board the significance of the National Fraud Initiative.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be noted.

62. Annual General Meeting Matters

It was agreed that in view of G. Wordsworth's absence, consideration of the Draft Governance Plan, Allocation of Responsibilities to Board Members and the Schedule of Board Business should be deferred.

B. Maslen commented that since A. Victory's retirement, the administration of meetings had deteriorated, since it was no longer done by one person. She asked for improvements to be made to ensure that Board members receive correct papers prior to the appropriate meetings.

RESOLVED: This item be deferred until G. Wordsworth's return.

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63. Reports back from Members and Working Groups

JNCC

R. Brown reported that both the Transport Strategy and the UPW staff issue had been resolved at the recent meeting of the JNCC. The unions had agreed that the Workload Action Plan was making a difference and as a result workload was reducing for staff. On the 27th July UNISON were expected to announce formally whether they had accepted the PSO job description.

J. Fox reported that UNISON had sought to register a dispute with the Board the day after the JNCC. R. Brown stated that they had not followed the agreed procedure and it was therefore premature for such a dispute to be registered. She said that an informal meeting date had been agreed to consider the matter. She also reported that a date had been fixed for the next meeting of the LNCC.

RESOLVED: That the Board note the next JNCC meeting will be held on the 11th October 2007 at 2.00pm in the Board room. The pre-meet will commence at 1.00pm.

64. Chief Officers' Report

i) Exchange of Correspondence between PBA and NOMS

J. Fox reported that matters had developed since the letters distributed and he tabled a letter from Jack Straw received on the 17th July.

RESOLVED: That the Board note the position.

ii) Review of Remuneration of Chairs and Members of Probation Boards

RESOLVED: That the letter from Christine Lawrie be noted.

iii) Transport Strategy and Board Member Expenses

RESOLVED: That the position be noted.

iv) Probation Circulars

R. Brown expressed concern about the number of circulars currently being issued.

RESOLVED: That the circulars be noted.

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65. Any Other Business

- i) J. Fox asked the Board for a volunteer for the welcome meeting to DIP staff on the 13th September. F. McCready agreed to participate.
- ii) J. Tarr informed Members that as part of the Probation Centenary celebrations, they would receive an invitation to attend the Geese Theatre Workshop on the 7th September at 2.00pm at Sheffield Hallam University. There would also be a reception on the evening of 10th September, sponsored by the Service. The Board congratulated Janice Brown for her hard work in obtaining the funding for the Geese Theatre and believed that there would be practical benefits to this project.
- iii) J. Tarr stated that the Service would hold half day diversity events this year between September and December, and further information would follow.
- iv) J. Tarr distributed copies of the staff newsletter and the Interventions newsletter. R. Brown praised the Interventions newsletter and the hard work by Interventions staff that went into producing it.

66. Next Meeting:

Thursday 27th September 2007 at 10.00 am in the Board Room, 45 Division Street, Sheffield.

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