

With news of... Trust Status Success... Colchester Probation Experience... IPPF...



The Probation roadshow rolls into Colchester

Members of the public got another chance to learn about our work, when Colchester played host to the latest Probation Experience.

The all-day event, held in May, drew interest from a broad range of local organisations, including mental health charities, colleges and the Military Training Corrective Centre, as well as local magistrates and Colchester MP Bob Russell.

And in a first for the Probation Experience, a specially commissioned radio advert, voiced by actors, was aired on local station Heart, to help draw in visitors.

More inside...

TRUST STATUS – planning for next April

All the work paid off. Along with some other Areas, we know we will become a Trust in April next year.

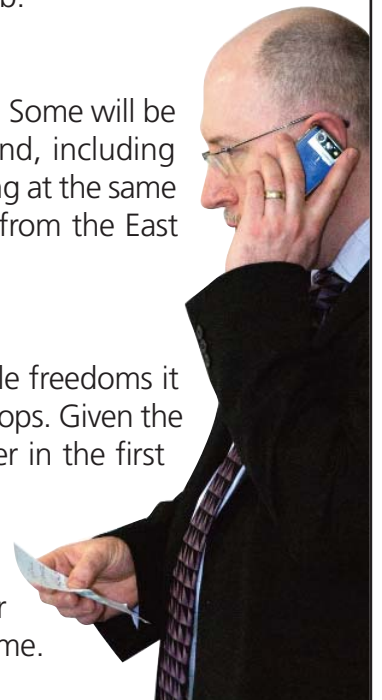
Apart from the knowledge that we were regarded as good enough, there is the immense satisfaction of having the task behind us, and being able to get on with the job.

Others still going for it

Other Areas still have their Trust application ahead of them. Some will be applying again, having not quite got there first time round, including Bedfordshire, and Suffolk/Norfolk (who are also merging at the same time). Herts and Cambridgeshire have still to apply from the East of England region.

Freedoms...

The advantages of Trust status, and the possible freedoms it brings, will become clearer as the process develops. Given the financial situation, they are likely to be fewer in the first instance. In the meantime, Mary and Bill have formed a Trust Transition Group, and work will be done to get us into good shape for taking on our new identity next year. More to come.



The Probation Experience touches down in Colchester..



Top-left: Jenni Hogg and Ben Childs, as OM and offender Lee Cullen, describe what happens in a typical induction interview.

Top-right: Hayley James and Adrian Saward guide a member of the audience through part of the ART programme.

Bottom-left: MAPP Deputy Chairman Peter Rate presides over a meeting about a serious DV case, with members of the public included at the table.

Bottom-right: The audience, including local MP Bob Russell (front left), learn about Community Payback.

The latest Probation Experience to showcase the work of Essex Probation drew a large crowd in May.

Members of the public looked on, and occasionally took a leading role, as fictitious offender Lee Cullen – ably performed by Ben Childs and Greg Kennedy – along with “Offender Managers” Jenni Hogg and Carol Parker, presented a series of real-life Probation encounters.

It was also the first time that a dedicated radio ad had been used to promote the show – with a 30-second advert broadcast over several days on local station Heart.

Like previous events in Harlow and Southend, feedback was very positive, with visitors saying how much they had learned and how they appreciated the good work being done with offenders to improve public safety.

Some suggested taking the Probation Experience on tour, to spread the message to schools and other organisations around the county.

With public interest growing after each event, the next show moves to Basildon on 24 October, followed by Chelmsford on 30 January 2010, and finally Grays on 24 April.

Thanks to all those from the Colchester Office who helped to make the day such a great success:

Karen Woodhouse, Clare Moorhead, Carole Boyd, Caroline Harrison, Anne Clarke, Laura Moore, James Cock, Diomira Sahabandu, Sue Taylor, Erin Charlton, Dave Ross, Alan Bennett, Debbie Rodway, Jackie Wood, Josh Woulfe, Guy Bertram, Gill Rowlands.

Thanks also to the acting cast:

Ben Childs, Greg Kennedy, Jenni Hogg, Carol Parker, Hayley James, Adrian Saward, Jan Owens, Chris Watson, Coral Fallon, Darren Kiggins, Jo Speed, Debbie Anderson, Jane Dewitt, Peter Rate, Rachel Hone, Liz Chapman, Liz Haxton, Michelle Watson, Cassie Hudson.

It's all change at Cullen Mill

Plans to re-organise Cullen Mill finally got under way in May.

The major refurbishment work, which involved moving Chief Officers and Training staff back into the one main building, brings



Chief Officers settle into their new open-plan office on the top floor



Mill House: police had to be called about the additional graffiti provided over the last week: the scaffolding evidently proved too tempting for some of the locals.

all operations together under one roof and will lead to substantial cost savings to the organisation.

The revamp of the main Grade 2 listed building, Mill House, has seen the creation of a completely new office space on the ground floor, new meeting rooms, and a top-floor open-plan office for Directors, who have given up the most space.

Commenting after the work was completed in early June, Mary Archer praised Cullen Mill staff for their patience and good-humour throughout the period of disruption.

Have a look at the new-look interior when you pay us a visit!



£250 for your supervisees? Here's how...

An update by Debbie Came, EPA Treasurer

The Essex Trust Charitable Fund exists to improve educational, employment and resettlement opportunities for offenders resident in Essex.

Meeting demand

It has been another busy year for the Trust, with 123 grants made to the value of £21,000.

Already in 2009 applications are in the hundreds, but some offices are making more use of the fund than others. If you think you have a worthy case, please apply.

The process for applying to the Trust Fund can be found under:

general information/essex trust fund database/essex trust fund guidance

Limited resources

A monthly limit has been set by the Trust, with individual applications restricted to £250. Only one application per individual is allowed.

All applications are judged against the Fund's strict criteria, with all new requests being assessed against those already waiting.

Sometimes, to make money go further, applications are approved for a lower sum than originally requested.

Prioritising need

From now on applications will be reviewed once a month, at the end of the month. That way all applications coming in during the month can be prioritised as fairly as possible. Because demand is outstripping supply, priority will generally be given to fulfilling basic needs.

Some Do's and Don'ts

A few reminders before applying to the Fund... No guarantees should be given to applicants before formal approval has been granted.

Be realistic, when making an application. Where an offender is able, they should be making a contribution

towards the claim. That way, there will be more money available to share around

Give as much information as possible about why the application is being made, for what benefit, and what level of risk of harm the applicant represents. This makes the prioritisation process easier.

Grants cannot be made directly to the offender in cash, so always consider how the claim will be best organised.

And finally...

Please remember, the fund is for *Essex residents only*.

If any request involves accommodation, please approach your Housing Liaison Officer.

AMM NOTES

NIBs from the June
All-Managers meeting

Attendance: big improvements

127 people received 100% Attendance Certificates this year. Well done – keep going!

News from the Centre : not much!

A fair number of distractions at the Centre – MP issues; budgets; people being given new roles in the MoJ, the London Sonnex case – means that there isn't much news to report this time round.

Regional Changes

The structure of the DOM's office is changing: more on this soon

Regional Training Consortium arrangements

Funding for training is being changed nationally. Regional changes are being looked at. In the interim, Consortium staff are moving from Haverhill to Stirling House at Highpoint prison.

Best Value: Approved Premises

A group is looking at hostel provision to ensure Best Value. Mary is involved in the group and is keen to ensure that there is no set expected outcome before the discussion starts. There are lots of possibilities besides considering putting hostels out to tender.

APs: common referral system

Look at Probation Circular 07 (Policies and Procedures/ Circulars) for a common referral system. As you know, some Areas are more reluctant than others to take our HR offenders, which wastes time and is inefficient. This circular sets out procedures aimed at making referral a simpler and more effective process.

QUESTIONS?
SUGGESTIONS?
E-MAIL THEM IN

Willing workforce gets the job done: THANKS!

A grateful charity writes in with an article praising
Community Payback in Southend...

"To build a Heritage Maritime Centre at the Small Gains Marina on Canvey Island, has been a labour of slow progress. We have been supported by a local company who has supplied the materials, but manpower has been a real trial.

*"Then it happened! At last, we, as a Charitable Trust, were accepted by **Southend Probation** to receive their help in the shape of a team of young men doing Community Payback.*

"As a somewhat grumpy old person who had founded the Trust, I waited with some trepidation for their first visit. They arrived in a white transit van, which had a section in the back for tools and equipment. The supervisor shook my hand warmly, then asked for the list of jobs I needed them to undertake.

"That first week I wasn't prepared, but gradually I got into the swing of things. They achieved so much, so quickly: they painted our Clubhouse; they painted the crews quarters on our World War II boat; they did small carpentry jobs; they put our flower beds into position; they put the flagpole into position; they even helped me put the gearbox on the star-board engine into position. In fact, within three weeks, they advanced the Centre in great leaps. Please may it continue.*

"It all seems terribly well run. The young men seem as genuinely happy to meet me as I am to meet them. There is a certain logic with them spending time with someone who is much older, someone who wants to talk and wants to listen. The management also come to see me to check on progress, which I find helpful."

***The boat was due to take part in the D-Day commemorations in London, on June 6.**



Moving the flag pole

Setting out our stall

EPA took to the streets recently, as part of the Clacton Crime Reduction Day.

Among the many visitors to our stall in the town centre were local MP Douglas Carswell and Nick Turner, Chairman of Tendring District Council.

Community Development Officer, Anne Clarke, said: "The event was a great way to meet local residents. People were really amazed at what we do – especially the amount of unpaid work we provide.

"Some even suggested new projects for us, including work at a local school and church, and environmental improvements at Holland Haven.

"We also had lots of interest about high visibility jackets and from people wanting to work for Essex Probation."



Pictured on the Clacton stall, from L to R: Anne Clarke, Debbie Rodway, Tracey Crunch, Tim McGregor, and John Minns.

“Trust the CJS”: new efforts to gain public confidence

MOJ plans to boost public confidence in the Criminal Justice System include four new initiatives, operated for the time being in 30 ‘pioneer’ areas across England and Wales.

Payback decisions

Designed to increase community involvement in criminal justice issues, they include new **Citizens Panels**, giving people a say in what **Community Payback** projects should be carried out locally. This follows surveys that showed only a few members of the public were making any direct suggestions about payback work.

Local prosecution

Community Prosecutors: a network of local prosecutors will work with communities, courts and the police to reflect local concerns, such as anti-social behaviour.

Local impact of crime

Also new – **Community Impact Statements**. These permit people to share their views on local crime with the police and say what impact it is having on them. Community Impact statements will then be used at key stages in prosecution cases, giving people a voice at the heart of the CJS.

More teamwork

Finally, new dedicated **Virtual Community Justice Teams** will be introduced, bringing together a variety of agencies and local community groups. These are aimed at providing a trained response to crime and anti-social behaviour, using a problem-solving approach, with the aim of addressing the root causes of offending behaviour.

• *Essex is not one of the pioneer areas.*

Sonnex, Baby P: yet more ‘watersheds’?

The grim news of cases gone horribly wrong prompts all agencies to have yet another look at their own practice to look for any possible gaps.

Are there lessons for us in Essex? Joint meetings with the CPS and the Courts; Probation Chief Officers meetings with the Minister for Justice; case analysis and reports – we are making all efforts to check on the key elements in these tragedies.

Sensible decision making; having regard to potential outcomes; making best use of the resources at our disposal; these and many other issues will come under scrutiny. Mary will check every learning point for London Probation on Sonnex, and give her comments to the Board. The results of all this will come to us as soon as possible.

“I will make one preliminary comment,” said Mary. “An offender ‘making progress’ does NOT mean that everyone around him is safe. Above all, we need to maintain our curiosity about people: it’s why we’re in this job, and using our brains rather than just our systems is vital in protecting the public.”

LMTs to LDUs

Hurry Slowly!

Local Management Teams are making way for Local Delivery Units – LDUs – gradually.

The reason for the change is to try to make sure that we are delivering priorities for local people. The way we do this in Harlow may be different to how it works in Colchester.

Know your 'patch'

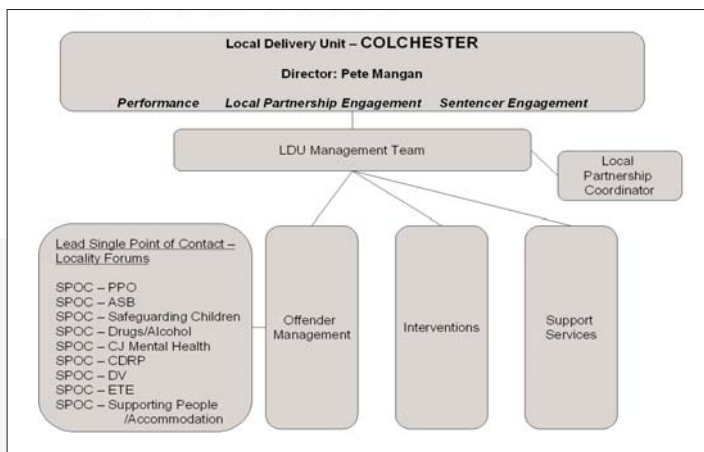
To make sure we are aware of what is important in our various towns, we are constructing LDUs that will be able to know their own area better, and to be more

responsive to what people need.

Each LDU will operate within a framework set down centrally, but will take responsibility for the operation of services locally.

SPOC job

Single Points of Contact will be appointed within an LDU – covering Drugs, Alcohol, DV, ETE, PPOs and more, with their names published to the relevant local forums. In this first transitional phase, they won't get the phone calls, and won't suddenly be expected to know



everything. Nor will SPOCs be expected to attend every partnership meeting. We will plan which we will attend, and then make sure we do so. Nothing worse than vaguely offering to attend meetings, then not turning up.

Planning for local

This won't be devolution – much of the work will still be

decided centrally. But once they are aware of the expectations and the messages we need to deliver, LDUs will be able to go for it, using both initiative and innovation, working with their own Director, to make their mark locally.

■ *Nominations for local SPOCs will need to be received soon.*

Visible signs of punishment

Last December, high-visibility jackets became a compulsory element of all Community Payback projects in England and Wales.

The decision by the Secretary of State for Justice, Jack Straw, to make Community Payback more 'visible', builds on Louise Casey's recommendations published in "*Engaging communities in fighting crime*".

Yes to High-Vis

Court cases since then, with offenders claiming they weren't in breach for refusal to wear High Vis, have not changed the central issue: that jackets will be worn.

More CP than ever

Human Rights arguments have been made in vain so far. Doubtless court cases will continue, but Probation will just get on with the job of providing an increased amount of work, much of it coming via the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) to improve public safety in their local areas. A greater awareness of Community Payback, and

the rest of the work, is without doubt extremely important in the current climate.

Public awareness

"We will be doing our best to make sure that the public also knows more about other interventions which are less easy to publicise, and less visible, but which can have a substantial impact on offending," said Lynne McKay, Communications Manager.

**Over 333,000
Community
Payback
hours were
ordered by the
Essex Courts
last year.**

**That's nearly
£2 million-worth
of labour*
delivered by
Essex Probation**

*at Minimum Pay rates



Offender Management **Inspection!**

Outcomes! It's great that we put in all the activity with offenders. The key issue, logically, is has it all worked?
What's the outcome?

This will be the key theme in this national inspection.

A pretty crucial inspection is taking place in November this year. Some staff will remember the last Offender Management Inspection (OMI). This is a return bout.

Impactful results

Its results will have an effect on our IPPF rating for the next three years.

Method

■ Possibly in September, we will have to provide evidence in advance – we don't yet know exactly what.

■ Questionnaires will be sent out to offenders, sentencers, and victims.

■ Case assessments, with OMs being interviewed, will take place, in three sub-samples: Licences; Community Orders and Custody Cases (Phase 2s and 3s)

■ Meetings will happen, with offenders and victims, with middle and senior managers, board members, strategic partners and case administrators.

Looking at what?

Four main threads will be followed:

1. Achieving and sustaining outcomes for offenders which are planned.

(In other words, are we meeting the purpose of either punish, help, control or change? Are results achieved between different phases of supervision, and beyond the end of supervision?)

2. Assessment and Sentence Planning.

(Are our assessments, contributing to sentencing and release, appropriate? Are they timely, and do they reflect the purposes of help, punish, change and control?)

3. Implementation of interventions

(Does the OM facilitate all aspects of the sentence plan, and actively encourage the offender to participate fully in the requirements of the sentence?)

4. Strategic Management

(Do managers work appropriately with the employing body to ensure that strong strategic direction is both forward looking and responsive to change? Do they take full account of the views of service users and community priorities?)

How do you think we'll do?
Any queries about the OMI, ask Line Managers.

Probation cutting crime: provision for women offenders

As part of a drive to improve services for women offenders, the sixteen-strong Essex Probation's Women Offenders Working Group has set about creating the kind of provision which will reduce the likelihood of women committing crime.

To extract a women offender from the destructive web in which she's become embroiled needs a series of approaches. Home circumstances often mean that these can be difficult to access for many women.

Work has begun to create One-Stop Shops which provides the necessary Probation services, with others at the same time: input from counsellors, Women's Aid, other support services, and the provision of workshops that offer whatever learning is required. Emotional well-being and relationships are key areas of need.

Some centres are better set up for women than Probation Offices. Group members are already approaching organisations in the community to promote a big county effort to set up One-Stop Shops. Domestic Violence Forums are a useful conduit: they consist of many of the agencies we need to have on board (for example Womens Aid, District Councils, Relate, Police, Victim Support, Domestic Abuse Strategy Group, Housing Associations, Parenting Groups). Discussion of the possibilities of using other appropriate premises, and accessing the new Ministry of Justice funding for preventing reoffending by women, is currently taking place.

The number of women in prison has doubled over the last ten years.

- Half are there for drug offences
- A third have no previous convictions
- 3 in 4 are in prison for less than a year
- A quarter are Black or Minority Ethnic
- 50% have reported abuse in their lives

• Don't forget to use the Directory of Women's Services: on the system at General Information/Diversity

Regular Head Office inspections...



help keep up standards

Now for the Big One.

IPPF measurements this year: not much change

The final version of IPPF has now been adopted, with only minor modifications to last year's model.

The latest version now includes:

- Reinstating the Proportion of **Appointments Arranged** (vs Attended)
- Influencing demand: (from the courts) the success of The Bridge Project will have a bearing on this.
- Interventions targets will now be evaluated on both **target performance** and **proportion of successful completions**
- **OASys Tier 4 and PPO** have been combined
- **OASys terminations** have been moved to the **Offender Management** domain
- **Licence Recall requests** have been moved to the **Public Protection** domain
- **The Offender Management Inspection results will affect our IPPF results for three years!**

Also included in the changes is a new **Re-offending Rate** and a small number of other additions under **Management Information**, which could be used later in the year to moderate our performance.

Overall, though, the changes are minimal, which means we are in an excellent position to meet performance targets in 2009-10, **provided our current weaknesses in OASys performance show some improvement.**

IPPF		Q4		PROTECT THE PUBLIC & REDUCE CRIME		Essex	
Public Protection				Offender Management			
NS Public Protection	91%	NS Offender Management	84%	NS Interventions	82%	Operational Capability, Resource Use & Strategy	8.1
Tier 2 & 3 OASys Timeliness	77%	Court Report Timeliness (incl. RCP)	87%	Set Offender Programme Performance	100%	Ethnic Monitoring	97%
Tier 4 OASys Timeliness	78%	RCP PPRs for Magistrates Courts	59%	Domestic Violence Programme Performance	130%	Budget Outturn	98%
PPD OASys Timeliness	81%	Licence Recall Requests	58%	Accommodated OASys (incl. SOTF & DV)	144%	Audit Commission Points	4
OMP Phase 2 or 3 OASys Access	94%	End To End Enforcement	61%	Accommodated OASys (Relevant Criteria)	87%	OM Management Points	n/a
Tier 2 & 3 OASys Final Reviews	78%	Enforcement	92%	ATRI Performance	155%	Key	
Tier 4 OASys Final Reviews	78%	Cases Reaching Em Without Requiring Break Notes	77%	CPPI Performance	100%	Exceptional Performance	🟢
PPD OASys Final Reviews	82%	Orders or Licences Successfully Completed	73%	CPPI Status	194%	Good Performance	🟡
Final Assessment Report Timeliness	91%	Victim Contact	99%	Unpaid Work Performance	135%	Requiring Development	🔴
Risk Management Plan Timeliness	73%	Accommodation at Termination	75%	UPV Stand-downs	2.8%	Serious Concern	🔴
Approved Premises Audit	n/a	OM Assessment and Sentence Planning	n/a	Engagement at Termination	92%	General Improving Trend	⬆️
H&M Probation Risk of Harm assessment	n/a	Re-offending Rate		Sustained Employment	90%	Generally Constant	🟡
		Reduce Re-offending	8.8%	Educational Penalties	117%	General Downward Trend	⬇️
				PPD Drug Testing Condition	100%		
				OM Implementation of Interventions	n/a		

What If Analysis

Click any indicator name to see specific performance and more info

The Re-offending Rate does not currently effect domain or overall grades. However a moderation rule will be applied in the Q1 IPPF

Back to National View Back to Regional View

Sentencer engagement is off to a good start



Peter Jones and sentencers at the Chelmsford Bench meeting

Sentencers will be able to learn more about our work, in a series of regular meetings to be held with magistrates in each Local Delivery Unit.

Probation managers will discuss a range of issues affecting both courts and

Probation. Both sides wanted to re-instate face-to-face meetings, which existed some time ago.

Now it's happened, and feedback already shows how well it has been received.

In addition to regular direct meetings, sentencers will also receive mailings of the Sentencer Focus newsletter. A new protocol has been agreed with the Courts Service which should improve communications all round.



Staff Suggestions

"Thanks to all staff who have taken the time to send suggestions in. Keep your views and suggestions coming. All are discussed with the Strategic Management Team."

Mary Archer, Chief Officer

Careena Nicola, an Offender Manager in Southend, provided a rich seam of ideas for this edition of News Focus, with no fewer than 9 different suggestions...

1: New role for multi-agency work

Why not have a specific PPO OM/AOM? This role would enable one or two officers to establish concrete working relationships for multi-agency team work. We would have one point of contact for each office, enabling effective monitoring of appointments with police, etc.

Thank you for sending in your idea, which has now been discussed at SMT.

This idea has been considered in the past and we decided that we did not need any specialist workers so that we can safeguard the continuity of contact with offender managers. As you will be aware EPA have committed to minimum changes for offenders, and specialist teams do not facilitate this.

2: OASYS super users

Have OASYS super users based in offices. Trained members of OM teams could have admin rights to the system, so minor problems can be rectified in-team, i.e. change sentence plan types/roll-back sentence plans/unlock assessments, etc.

The ISSOs in each location are the ones with the specialist knowledge and should be able to deal with any issues that arise and get the help you and your colleagues need.

3: Induction groups

Why not run induction groups once per week, for all offenders sentenced within the previous week? Offenders would complete their own paper work and would negate the need for individual officers to spend up to one hour with each new case. Court staff would instruct automatically for the following induction day after sentence for a two hour induction group, including basic skills assessment. The basic skills tutor can help with those who struggle to complete from alone and this would also enable the tutor to identify those in need of assessment/ongoing support. Managers to allocate cases-this would ensure cases go to most appropriate OM.

The idea of induction groups has been looked at, but for reasons similar to the specialist role we have determined that we will not have them. This has recently been supported by NOMS, based on research which shows that the relationship with the OM should be established as soon as possible if we are to be as effective as possible.

4: New ways to manage UPW

Why not have stand alone UPW managed by an OM in the UPW team?

Arrangements for the stand alone UPW orders are being reviewed as a result of some national work on specification, benchmarking and costing work. Once we have determined how this might proceed, we will be letting staff know.

5: Work with the under-25s

Have a specific OM to deal with under-25's orders/licence. The officer can build links with agencies and be a point of contact for YOI.

The idea of under the under-25s being dealt with by specialists is not something we will be moving towards, for the reasons above regarding specialist roles. In other areas, where there have been specialist roles, it is clear that the complexities are harder to manage and have resulted in some poor services being provided – some of which have been Serious Further Offences.

6: Accommodating savings

Accommodation costs EPA a lot and is not value for money. Frequently, EPA pays over £80.00 and we get placed in budget rooms. If accommodation is required, we should stay in local small B&Bs. This would support independent businesses and we would get better value for money.

The proposal for cheaper accommodation is always something we should look at. Helen McCann will have a look at this and see what we can do to utilise your idea.

7: Office Champions

Have Office Champions specifically trained for OASYS, CRAMMS/Delius, Enforcement, etc. Training for each topic can be conducted in-house for new staff and therefore reduce training costs.

The idea of office champions is a good one and should already be happening in offices. Alongside this, we are in the process of appointing Staff Development Officers who will also be able to assist staff in learning new skills and increasing knowledge.

8: Public Protection Teams

Create public protection teams, made up of OMs and AOMs, to deal with critical few PP cases. It is hard to manage risk with caseloads in excess of 60.

Once again, we do not believe that the evidence supports the use of specialist teams.

8: Positive feedback

When files go for inspection, balance more positive feedback with any constructive criticism.

The idea of having more positive feedback after files go off inspection is one that we would support, and this will be fed to Garry Moon to look at how we can improve on this.

9: Relieving frontline pressure

Run a 1/2 week induction for new staff before they're put on front line duties. This would reduce pressure on existing staff and would also give new staff more confidence in their confirmation period. It would also improve our service to offenders and the community, including improved risk assessments and OASYS quality.

New staff coming into EPA are now given a half-week induction, so they are better trained before being asked to deliver a service to offenders. We are also arranging for all new staff within the past three months to attend the Probation Experience days, to ensure that they have an overview of all our work.

Thank you, Careena, for submitting so many ideas.

Poaching ideas

How about sending Managers on a week-long secondment to other well-performing Probation Areas, to observe and hopefully poach ideas that could improve our own service?

Jason Brunton, M-OM, Harlow

We are considering how we manage knowledge and learning within EPA and this includes how we learn from other areas. Your idea will be added to that development process.

Calling offenders

I find that a lot of offenders don't answer their phones when the number shows as either Private or Call Withheld, usually because they think the caller will be somebody chasing them for money or some other sort of problem.

I can't see any good reason why our telephone number is shown as Withheld, and was wondering if it was possible to change this? What I am having to do currently when my offenders don't answer is either dial 1470 before the number, or send the offender a text to tell them that I'm trying to phone them, as a result of which they usually answer their phone. This, clearly, is time-consuming.

I think that making our number visible will assist with compliance. Obviously, we will always have offenders who won't answer calls from Probation, but these people would also not be answering Withheld Number calls either, so that won't be affected.

Fiona Bearman, OM, Basildon

Unnecessary duplication

I attended a meeting today and was sent the papers via email ahead of the meeting (a large number of sheets) which I printed off. However, at the meeting the same packs had also been printed off. This resulted in wasted paper, as I ended up with 2 packs. My suggestion is that if papers are sent out, staff are reminded to print them off and take them with them rather

than the papers being duplicated, resulting in a waste of paper and print.

Sam Mott, HR Manager - Operations, Cullen Mill

We think it is a good idea that if papers are sent out to people there should not be copies done for the meeting as well.

Refining OASys

When the new court processes take effect from May '09, there will likely be an increase in the volume of FDRs that OM3s are expected to write. It would be of benefit if OASys could be adjusted to take this into consideration and treat FDR reports in the same way as PSRs, as OM4s can write the PSR and "pull through" the report to the relevant OASys sections.

At present OM3s have to write FDRs and are then required to write a full OASys – which at 12-13 sections (excluding risk of harm assessment) is labour intensive and "double handling". Surely, it would be a further labour-saving measure to pull FDR assessments through, as is the case with PSRs?

Laura Moore, OM, Colchester

National work is being undertaken to look at how FDRs/SDRs are developed, and your idea will be fed into this work.

Safety first

My suggestion is that where there has been a personal evacuation plan written for a member of staff or hostel resident with a disability, a copy of this plan is stored in the grab-bag for the office so it is readily available at the point of emergency.

Michael Kay, Deputy Hostel Manager

We believe this is an excellent idea and needs to be available at all locations, so that if a person visits different sites the plan can be available to everyone. It should also be available in the grab-bags. Sue Atkinson will look into this and the H&S manager will produce a process for us to follow.

Amending CRAMS

There is often a delay in an offender starting his/her ATR. An additional status option of "referred not started" would make it a lot easier to track progress of the requirement on CRAMS without trawling through a contact log. This option would be activated when referral is made to a counselling agency, and changed to "commenced" when a first appointment is given.

Gillian Gurney, SSO, Chelmsford

We currently have an ATR tracker system which is sent to Manager-Service Support each month and should be made available to staff. If you are not receiving this, please ask your MSS how to ensure that you and your colleagues do.

Directory for OMUs

Problems can be encountered when trying to book Sentence Planning Meetings. Sometimes the phone keeps ringing when you are put through to an extension number, or you get through to a mailbox message. I have even been put through to the front gate!

It would be very useful to have an up-to-date directory (name, title, email and direct dial no.) of all the team in each OMU in each Prison. This would make contact easier and

smoother and could be updated every six months. This system has been used for all the Victim Teams in England and Wales for about 4 years.

Jacque Archer, SSO, Basildon

This arrangement has been deployed to offices already and the information is available on EPIC. However, this reminder will now appear in the next News Focus and so will act as a reminder to all of us.

Safety first

The HR team has been busy beavering away at all the 413 appraisals due in. The process is time consuming and repetitive.

Whilst the information we gather is essential for ensuring high professional standards, we feel that a cover sheet attached to each individual appraisal would be beneficial.

I would suggest the cover sheet should display all essential information: attendance, number of objectives set and achieved, overall competency level and action plans set. This would make HR's recording quicker and streamline the process, whilst also allowing managers an "at a glance" way of monitoring staff levels.

With the new performance-linked pay, this will make next year's processing much more efficient. We'd love to see this introduced for next year!

Hannah Hunt, HR Assistant, Cullen Mill

Thank you for your suggestion. SMT discussed this and thought it was a very good idea. Sue Atkinson will take this forward – no doubt with your help.

UPW orders

I have had the following idea: Have OMs manage stand alone UPW orders, rather than within a general caseload.

Ted Gunn, OM, Southend

We are looking at how we will manage stand alone UPW orders for the future, following some national work on specification, benchmarking and costing. Once we have completed this, we will be communicating this to staff.

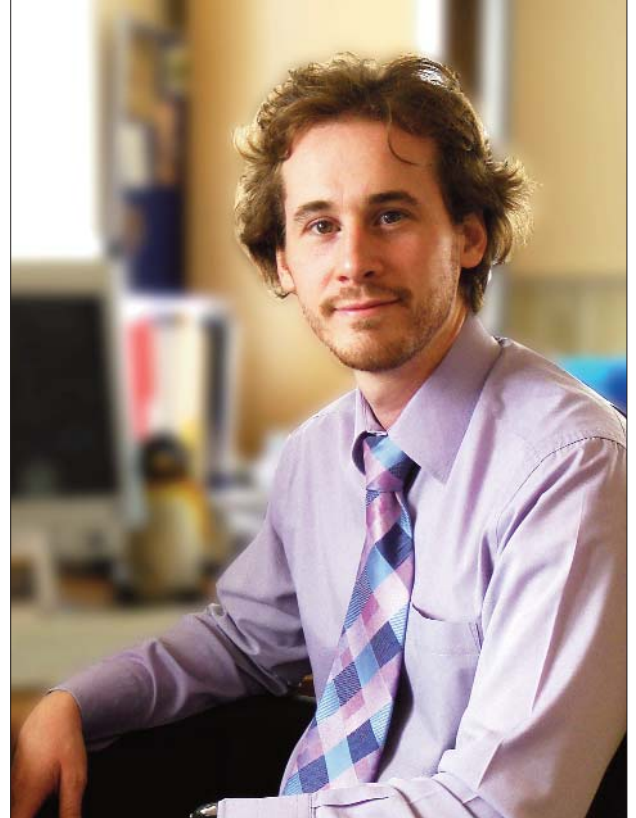
Goodbye Garry

Challenges of a different kind lie ahead for Garry Moon, when he leaves Essex Probation at the end of June.

New horizons

Garry, who has been Performance Manager since October 2004, is set to join a City-based international risk management company.

One of his first assignments this summer will be to spend time in Cape Town, South Africa, working on a petro-chemical project.



Past achievements

Asked about his achievements over the past five years, Garry said: "When I joined the Service, our performance was rated 28 out of 42 Probation areas; now we're one of the best in the country.

"There are lots of things I'm proud of, but most of all I'm proud that I helped make improving performance relevant and meaningful to people – not just organisationally, but on an individual level too."

One performance statistic of his own worthy of special mention is the number of days sickness absence Garry took in the last five years: an emphatic zero!



ETE officer in line for prestigious award

Grays-based ETE officer, Trevor Gray, has made it to the regional finals of the Learn Direct Achievement Awards, after being nominated for his work with

offenders. Trevor was nominated by Blackwater Training, a franchise provider of Learn Direct, which works alongside EPA to provide work skills training.

Speaking ahead of the awards ceremony at Newmarket Racecourse in July, Trevor said: "I feel really chuffed to be recognised for this award. It's so rewarding to know we are able to give offenders the knowledge and skills to make significant improvements in their lives.

"We have worked hard to develop new courses and build effective relationships with learning providers. Blackwater Training has been there with us from the start."

