

Steve Knight is first national Probation Champion

Grays-based OM Steve Knight has been named Probation Champion of the Year at the first National Probation Awards.

Honoured for his outstanding work with Prolific and Priority Offenders (PPOs), a role he has carried out for the last four years, Steve helps to turn around the lives of some of the most challenging offenders.

The winner was chosen by Phil Wheatley, Director General of NOMS, as the individual who has contributed the most to the work of the Probation Service in 2009.



Changing lives

Steve's work with one prolific offender, who had accrued 18 convictions in one year, was the reason he was chosen as Probation Champion of the Year.

He persisted with the offender and successfully referred him to The Bridge Project. The offender is now in full time employment

and close to successfully completing a Community Order for the first time ever.

Probation heroes

Mary Archer said: "We are delighted. There are many officers just like Steve working hard in every Probation Office in Essex, changing lives and providing real protection for the people of this county. These hidden heroes rarely get the recognition they deserve. Steve represents them all."

East of England DOM, Trevor Williams, said: "It is good for the whole of NOMS in the East of England that an Offender Manager in Essex has won this new award. Offender Management is at the heart of the job of reducing reoffending – making a real practical difference in the lives of offenders that moves them away from crime."

Thrilled

Speaking shortly after the awards ceremony in Leicester, a clearly delighted Steve said: "I'm thrilled that the honour has come to Essex. I have some great colleagues who deserve this as much as I do. It's good to be recognised for the work we do. Often the media focuses on the bad side. But we've seen from all of the work and effort that everybody here at the awards has put in, that there's nothing we can't achieve."

Innovative work

Mr Wheatley said: "Congratulations to Steve, firstly for becoming the first ever Probation Champion of the Year, and secondly for the excellent work he has done and continues to do with PPOs.

"He is a more than worthy representative of the innovative and effective work within NOMS that is helping to reduce reoffending and protect the public."

Harlow event raises awareness of domestic violence

Essex Probation joined other agencies, including Essex Police, Women's Aid and Victim Support, to promote Domestic Violence Awareness Week in Harlow recently.

The Probation Stand, which was on display at the town's Harvey Centre shopping mall, drew a lot of attention from members of the public keen to discover more about our work with the victims and perpetrators of domestic violence.

Positive feedback

Feedback was good, with people telling Women's Safety Officers Carol Hubbard, Michelle Fraser and Sarah Lock how professional and informative the Probation Stand was.

Although not a deliberate recruitment drive, there was also a lot of interest from people interested in working for Essex Probation.



Probation's Michelle Fraser (back-left), Sarah Lock (third-left) and Carol Hubbard (fourth-left) enjoy a demonstration of Taekwondo.

Networking opportunities

With so many other agencies in attendance, the event proved a good opportunity for networking, sharing advice and mutual support.

Probation staff thought it would be a good idea to introduce representatives from the local Taekwondo club to members of Women's Aid, and now they are hoping to establish a regular self-defence class at the outreach centre.

Advertisement Feature

COMING SOON TO AN OFFICE NEAR YOU...

OASys Roadshow

Unravelling the mysteries of OASys and helping you to deliver quality on time

Featuring a Green Star Cast and Matt Mackman & Tim Basham

NEWS IN BRIEF

Children in Need scores with Cullen Mill staff

Football fever of the miniature kind gripped Cullen Mill for a Children in Need fund-raiser in November. The event, organised by Partnerships Officer Gavin Wilkinson and Finance Officer Emma Froment, raised £50 for charity.



Eric Smith, Manager - Partnerships (pictured with his chocolate prize), fired off some deft moves to beat 15 others to the title of Table Football King.

Making a fashion statement for charity

This year's **Wear it Pink** day raised £66 for breast cancer research, when Cullen Mill staff put on a sartorial show of support for the national Breast Cancer Campaign.



Everything from cowboy hats and handbags to neck-ties and fluffy animal slippers was represented in pink.

Credit to fashionistas Jayne Potter, Hannah Hunt, Helen McCann, Gill Rowlands, Joanne Spires, Paul English, Robin Brennan, Katie Arnold, Linda Kerby, Emma Froment, Louise Rimmer, Peter Woollard and Ian Ball for making such an exhibition of themselves.



NEWS FOCUS is going electronic. Look out for future PDF versions in your Inbox

Putting final pieces of Trust Jigsaw in place

TRUST UPDATE

A number of issues have still to be finalised in the run-up to Trust Status, mainly relating to administration, contracting and change of name. The most significant change for us, going into 2010, is the beginning of contracts negotiation with the DOM's Office for the next Business Year.

The first meeting will take place on 6 January, with a final meeting in February. We will have to bid for and negotiate all aspects of funding, and will no longer be able to assume allocations based on a national formula.

Trust slide show coming soon

A new plasma-screen show is coming to all local Reception areas soon. The 19-slide Powerpoint Presentation has been designed to mention Trust status to service users while reminding them of the work that is done with them to cut crime.

Essex Probation is changing...

...to become a Probation Trust.

What does it mean for you?



“Community Payback makes a huge contribution to our village”

Councillor offers to show other communities what Probation’s Unpaid Work can do

Brian Beale knows his patch. Every nook and cranny. He has been a Parish Councillor for Southminster for 23 years, and has chaired the council for the last 16. He also represents his village as a District Councillor in Maldon. Walk through the town with him, and you’ll see he’s greeted left and right by people who know he’s put in a lot of time and effort on their behalf.

Valued work

What they might not be aware of is the remarkable partnership Brian has developed with Essex Probation’s Community Payback. Get him talking about what they’ve achieved together, and the list is a long one.

“The locals love the work that’s done for them,” says Brian. “We are able to make

the value of the work they do.”

He looks back over years of working alongside Probation. Southminster Council has one of the largest responsibilities in the Dengies, he says. Small as it is, it still manages to achieve real quality for the residents, with help.

“We’re planning a BMX track on the King George V playing field, where a lot of work has been done through Probation’s Community Payback – copse clearing, fencing installed, big containers painted.

Probation delivers

“Our Village Show gets a boost from all the work done by offenders to set it up, putting up fencing, tables, straw bales, and then taking it down again. Our football pavilion has been transformed with new carpentry and painting.



Cllr Beale in the football pavilion transformed by Community Payback

they’re boarding the exterior. The workers have also contributed to putting up nine-foot high palisade fencing. The car park barriers have been painted, they’ve made a good job of slabbing an allotment for easy access... I could go on and on.”

Brian’s experience as both an engineer and a local councillor have contributed to ideas for improving the amenities in the village. But it’s not just local facilities. Individual residents can benefit.

All about community

“Recently, we helped a severely disabled lad, who moved with his family to the town. Local people raised money to help him set up his

new home. As a result of the building work, there was a huge mound of earth left in the front garden. Probation’s workers moved in and cleared all seven tons of it. Where there is hardship, we go. It’s all about community, and Community Payback makes a big contribution.”

Cutting crime

Pete Mangan, Probation Director who leads on Community Payback, said “We’re delighted that our work makes such a difference. We supervise this kind of work across Essex, and last year achieved nearly £2 millions-worth of work for the county. This is just one of the methods we use to cut crime in Essex.”



Cllr Beale shows off work done on the local playing field

improvements to this place which we otherwise just couldn’t afford. It’s great for Southminster, and good for offenders whose work is appreciated, and they can see

There is no-one to look after the churchyard, but Probation provides the means of doing it.

“The Scout hut is being painted inside and out, and

Long-serving Director, Peter Jones, retires



Clockwise, from above:

Mary thanks Peter during his farewell gathering at Cullen Mill... watched by friends and colleagues... and with Tim Basham (centre) and Matt Mackman, the Performance Team



Peter Jones joined Essex Probation in 1984, moving around the Service in various roles and locations.

For many years he worked at Windyridge Hostel and as a Practice Development Assessor, but mainly within offender management.

The post he occupied longest was as a senior manager. With a variety of responsibilities, of late, he played a central part in developing our performance culture. When first given this job by Mary Archer, he says he was unsure of the decision, but he soon

developed a substantial knowledge and expertise, and this benefitted us all. His presentations at AMM were known for their interest and ability to engage people. We wish him well in his retirement, and he has promised to keep in touch. **MA**

We welcome new Director Sara Moutard

“ Well, I’ve been here for a whole month now and I’m starting to find a few things: my feet a bit more; the fact that the A414 into Harlow should be avoided at all costs at the moment, and (most importantly) the fact that Essex Probation is a really good organisation to work for, with many committed and really hard-working people.

For those of you who know me already – thanks for putting up with me so far; for those of you who don’t know me, I’m Sara Moutard, the new Director based at Cullen Mill – replacing Peter Jones who retired just before Christmas.

Although I only started recently, I was appointed in September and so had a couple of months to attend SMTs, EPBs and AMMs, to discover CRAMs and to get

trained on OASys. I also had a chance to get to know a few of the many acronyms that are used in the Probation Service!

Before joining Essex Probation, I was Head of Corporate Policy at Braintree District Council – focussing on corporate performance management, partnership working, marketing & communications and strategic business planning. Before that, I was Community Services Manager which included responsibility for setting up and leading on the CDRP, so I had met a few of you before in a different life. (I also had responsibility for public toilets – not something I used to shout about!).

I’m really excited about my new role here and the challenges it brings, and hope that my past experience will help us in the



transition to Trust status. My thanks to everyone for making me feel so welcome, and I’m really looking forward to getting to know more of you and working with you in the future. ”

Offender Management Inspection

by Jayne Potter, PA

– “a positive experience”

Twelve HM Inspectors
Eleven different partners
Ten x ten cases sampled
Nine victim interviews
Eight IAG & Skills Groups
Seven area assessors
Six policemen & women
Five Unpaid Work sites
Four Programme viewings
Three Ofsted Inspectors
Two Hostel visits
One appointment at The Bridge...

...These are just some of the facts surrounding our second Offender Management Inspection, following several weeks of intense planning.

There were contributions in many forms: Volunteering to be interviewed by the inspectors; organising visits to Unpaid Work and learning sites; persuading offenders and victims to be interviewed; meeting and greeting Inspectors and interviewees; arranging for files to be transferred; covering for colleagues in their absence, and, if you were Pauline Auguste, Doug Charlton, Carol Parker, Martin Lucas, Alison Shreeve, Jo Wright and Rich Curtin, taking the time out of an already-busy schedule to become one of our Area Assessors.

Thanks also must go to Paul Coombes, who was trained but unfortunately too poorly to attend during inspection week, allowing Jo Wright to step in as his last minute replacement.

Thanks to everyone, for your hard work during the lead-up to Inspection week.

An Inspector calls

Helen Boocock, lead HM Inspector had this to say about our assessors:

“Thank you again for your very hard work last week – I told you it would be tiring. I know from the HMIP team that you all quickly got into the methodology and worked away at it diligently. You

were selected as people who know what good practice looks like and I’m sure that you will be regarded as an asset in your Area in the coming months.”

And here is what some of our own Area Assessors had to say about their Inspection experience:

“I found it a hugely positive experience. It allowed me to reflect on others’ practices as well as what and how I need to make changes to my own. I would certainly recommend the experience to others, and actually I already have. The training was well delivered; the trainers were patient; the experiences of interviewing your peers and providing constructive feedback was an interesting learning experience. I enjoyed the experience thoroughly, and it has certainly made me think about the recording of information. I am glad I volunteered” – **Rich Curtin**

“I found the inspection very useful for my own learning and I’d recommend the experience to colleagues. Using the Inspectorate’s criteria and spending time looking through cases helped me to identify areas which could be developed in my own practice. It was a rare opportunity to spend time reflecting on what we do and why we do it” – **Martin Lucas**

“The training on the first day filled me with trepidation! The second day I began to think, ‘I can do this!’ Off we all went with our laptops – feeling very professional! Then my laptop could not access the forms – collapse of all feelings of being professional!

Monday 30th January dawned. Southend on a wet Monday morning!

First day – headache and angst. Then, lo and behold, it began to fall into place. By Tuesday I began to enjoy the process.

Joking apart, the training was very good and I will be using many of the techniques to assess Oasys in supervision. The detail was very focused and the scoring became very easy as one got into the process.

In Southend the Inspectors were an excellent bunch and very supportive. It was also good to have a colleague Area Assessor to bounce things off. On Tuesday and Wednesday we had QA sessions with our mentors and I was very pleased with the feedback.

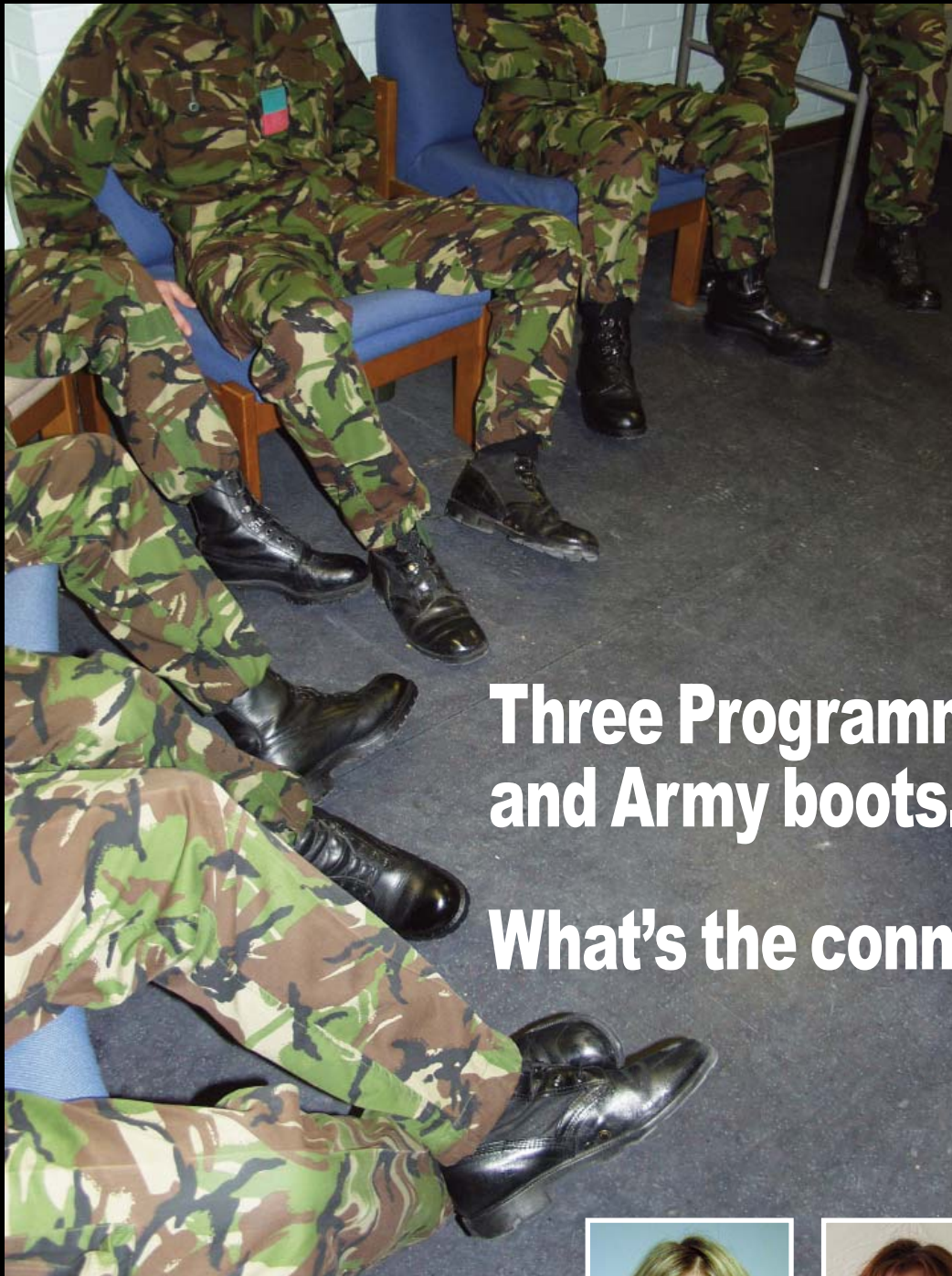
All in all it was a positive experience and I would recommend anyone with a real interest in assessing good practice to put themselves forward. It felt like a renewal of your assessment skills” – **Carol Parker**

So, don’t be shy in putting your name forward next time for what appears to have been a very positive experience for our assessors.

The provisional findings will be forwarded in early January, with the full report following at the end of the month.

Watch this space...





Three Programme Tutors and Army boots... What's the connection?



Natalie Merenda



Andrea Clarke



Ben Childs

**And there's a
Treatment
Manager in
there too...**



Hayley James

A success story with a difference...

Coming up in the next issue

£61,000 FUNDING BOOST FOR US

The Director of Offender Management has agreed some additional funding for Essex Probation from under-spends across the Region. This is a one-off sum, which needs to be spent before the end of this financial year.

This is good news, with the money being used to advance a number of initiatives that will put us in a good starting place for next year. These initiatives will include:

Integrated Offender Management (IOM)

A Project Leader will be appointed for a temporary period, on behalf of Essex Probation, Essex Police and Essex Prisons, to assess local needs, so that we can effectively engage with local areas and agencies to deliver IOM.

Support for staff – NVQ qualifications

Staff currently embarked on the NVQ qualification need to complete them before the end of March 2010, in order to be eligible under the new training and qualification framework being introduced for Probation Officers, otherwise work to-date will be lost. Additional workload relief and NVQ

assessment will be provided to make sure this can happen.

Process Mapping

Some additional support is needed to update the way we currently make an economic case for the services we provide, so that we can meet the requirements of Best Value reviews of Unpaid Work and Victims and also begin the process of identifying cost savings for 2011-12.

Preparation work to deliver business change

We have approximately 30 business cases to implement before 1 April, 2010. Additional support will be provided to Managers to ensure that our processes can be successfully re-engineered as early as possible.

Market assessment

A piece of work will be commissioned to assess Essex Probation's strengths and weaknesses compared to other service providers and identify potential areas to expand our business for the future.



EXTRA! EXTRA!

Essex Trust for Rehabilitation and Assistance (EXTRA) Trustees have transferred £22,000 to the Probation Trust Fund.

This will extend the life of the Fund and ensure its objectives continue to benefit our target group: offenders living in Essex who need support to improve their educational, employment and re-settlement opportunities, helping with their re-integration into society.

Essex Board member Peter Wilcock (pictured fourth-left) with EXTRA Trustees

Probation's Natalie becomes 'X-Factor' talent judge

Basildon Programme Tutor Natalie Fisher became a judge for the night, when she joined more than 70 youngsters at Basildon's Towngate Theatre for a local talent show final.

The annual event, organised by the East Basildon Delivery Group, is designed to harness young people's talent and promote community harmony.

Natalie agreed to take part in the Xtra Talent Competition after being invited by one of its organisers, Lisa Smith, wife of Basildon OM David Smith.

Handing out prizes

Cheers went up as Natalie was introduced as 'Natalie Fisher from Essex Probation'. She

joined other competition judges 'in touch with youth culture' representing Network Rail, NHS South West Essex and the Housing Association, and handed out prizes to each of the three category winners.



KIDS HAVE GOT THEIR OWN X-FACTOR



Local newspaper coverage of the event: Natalie (circled red) poses with the finalists