

NEWSFOCUS

Cutting Crime – Protecting the Public – Working in Partnership



In this issue:



POD launches in Braintree: no UW project out of reach



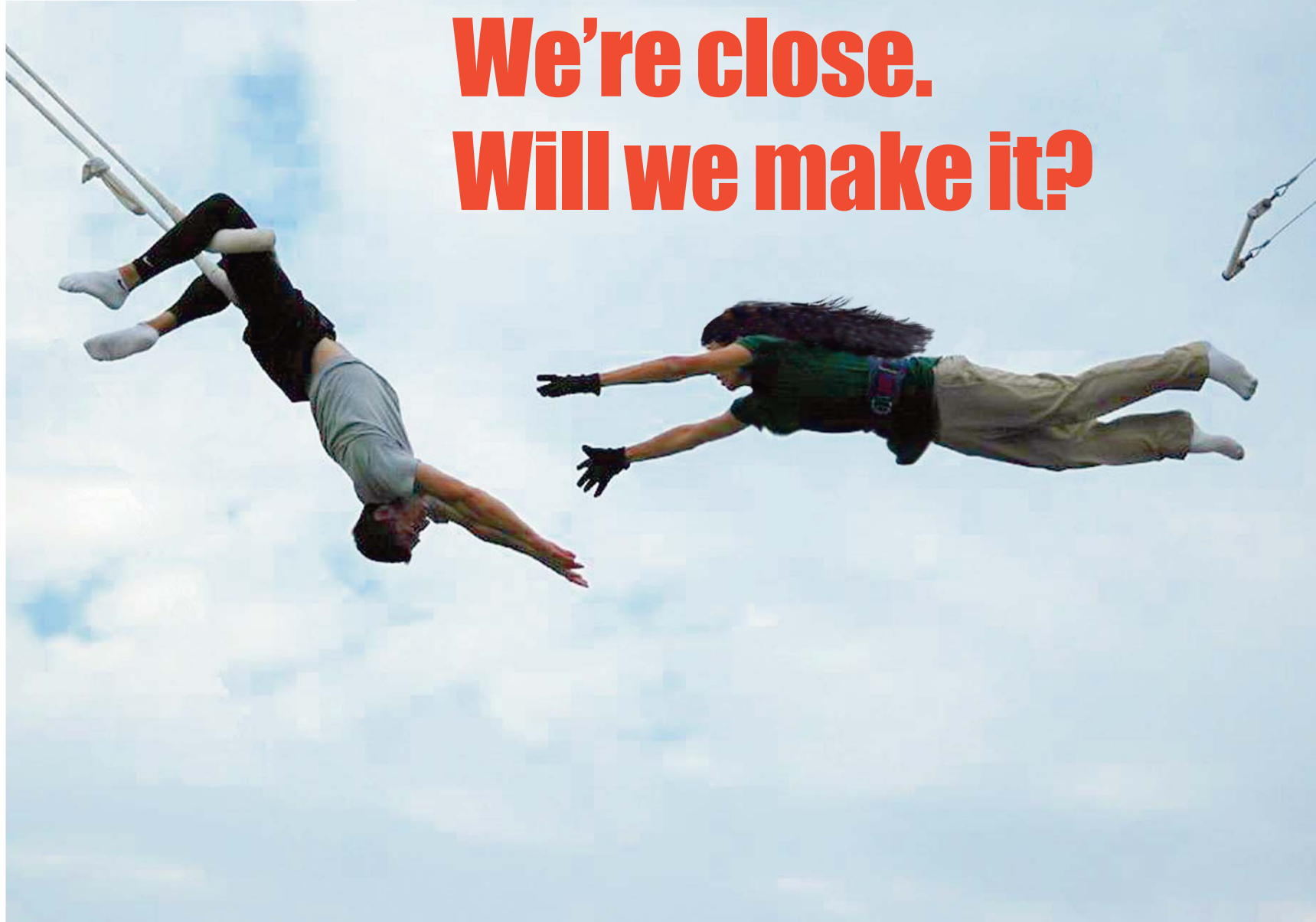
Diversity Week: Look out for events in your LDU

Plus Lots More

Essex Probation



Performance: We're close. Will we make it?



Performance: We're close. Will we make it?

by Matt Mackman, Manager Performance Improvement & Information

As we enter the final few months of the performance year, I've begun to look back at some of the reports and presentations I produced this time last year and compare them to our current situation. Circumstances today are very different. So too the language used, but the message is very similar.

Why we failed to meet targets

Twelve months ago the prospect of us achieving Trust status was under serious threat, due to our Amber status on what was then the IPPF (now the PTRS). The implications were worrying: we were not meeting our targets; we were not doing all of the work required of us, nor were we doing it in a timely manner. If we were, we were often not recording it.

Raising our game

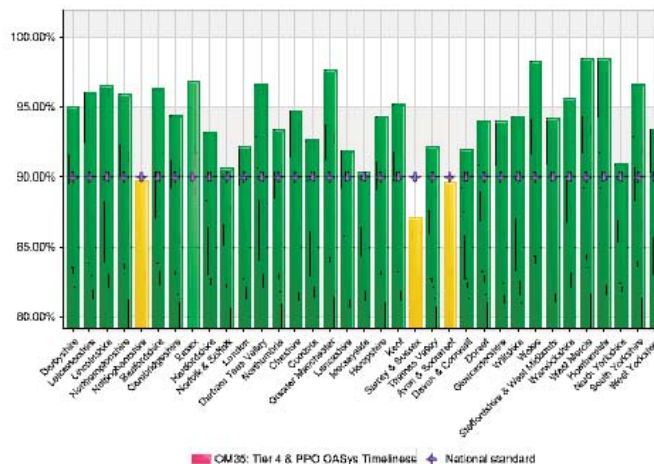
The following are a few phrases I have taken from past reports:

- "I'm asking you to dig deep and do all you can to meet your targets, as you could be the difference between us achieving Green or Amber"
- "We have once again fallen short"
- "Expect the worst"

We spoke about the battle we were having with some measures and it was compared to a "call to arms" in order to improve performance.

Exceptional improvements

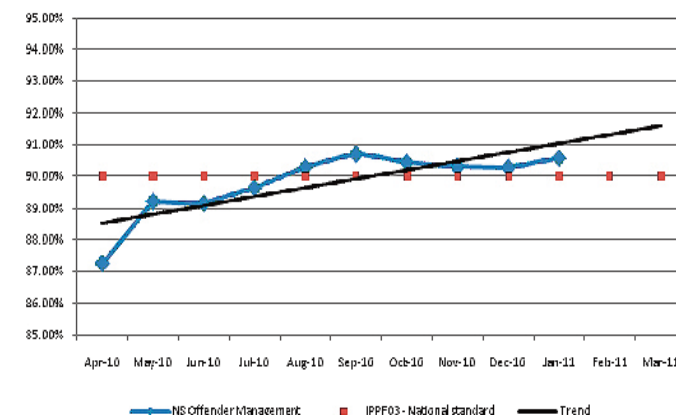
A year on, and as an organisation we have come a fantastically long way in a short period of time. We have cemented our Green status on the PTRS and even achieved an overall rating of 'Exceptional' for the Offender Management domain as well as for five individual measures. This is a great team-effort for which you should all be congratulated.



So, if we are doing so well, why am I still asking for a last final push? Well, the bar has certainly been raised, expectations are higher and we now have the opportunity to achieve great things. However, things could quite easily go the other way.

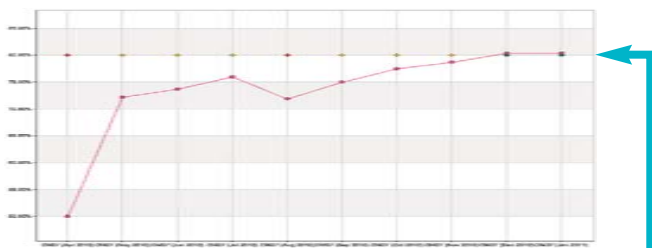
Problems ahead?

Here are a few examples of why we're not yet out of the woods in terms of maintaining our performance record:



● **IPPF03 NS Offender Management**, as an individual measure (not the whole domain), is recorded as 90.6% on January's Scorecard. The graph shows an overall upward trend across the year, but there has been a steady drop in performance since September, picking up slightly in January. This has the potential to slip below the target of 90% and result in a Level 2 (AMBER) grading by the end of the year. **This will result in us losing our 'Exceptional' rating overall for the Offender Management domain.**

Performance: **We're close, will we make it?** continued



● The graph above shows our yearly performance for OM27 Generic Parole Process and you will note that, for the first time this year, **our year-to-date performance rose above target in January**. The numbers involved in this measure are so low that any missed report has a huge impact. It is important that we don't take our eye off the ball here and all PAROM1s are completed on time.

An exceptional performance

Of course I have complete confidence that we will achieve these targets and perform beyond our initial expectations for some measures. A few months ago the message went out that we had decreased in performance on OM35 Tier 4 & PPO OASys Timeliness. There was an immediate response, and I'm pleased and proud to say that **we are now rated as 'Exceptional' and are fifth best nationally**. It will be wonderful to say the same thing in my end-of-year Report.

It's over to you...

So, as ever, it is now over to you to dictate how we are going to finish the year. **Will we just fall short of our high expectations or will we, as I suspect, grasp the opportunity and finish the year on a high?**

6🕒-second interview: New Car Hire Arrangements

Information from Sonja Jarman,
Finance Assistant



What's changing?

Our new hire arrangements now apply to journeys of 100 miles and over.

When will the change happen?

The new arrangements have been introduced with immediate effect.

How is this worked out?

The new daily rate of car hire is £29.30, with an estimated fuel use of £18, making an average daily rate of £47.30. This equates to 100 miles, using the current mileage rate of 46.9p per mile.

Who should staff contact for more info?

For all enquiries about the car hire process as well as feedback on hire, contact the Finance Team.

Contact number for Leasedrive Velo is:
0844 5798847 (8.30–18.00 Mon–Fri).
Quote our account ref: **ZC233**

IMPORTANT!
Travel and Payroll
claims up to and
including March must be
with Finance/HR ready for
payment by 6 March!

This will ensure the cost links with
2010-11 budgets. Claims related to
2010-11 are not guaranteed if
submitted after this date

Jane manages business change. How does that help us?

Jane Dewitt, ex-operational manager in an LDU, is now involved in the process of helping to promote and implement the new systems and strategies aimed at keeping us ahead of the game.



Once in place, she will review the new process alongside the lead Director, and work out ways of gathering evidence of successful implementation, areas for improvement, and lessons still to be learned.

Having monitored the implementation, she suggests the fine-tuning required.



Anything – reorganisation of a function, a change in strategy, the introduction of new technology, changes of legislation – can come under Jane's eagle eye. She will help an SMT member make a business case for SMT to agree how an issue is managed, and follow it through into LDUs, helping us understand what's needed.

Reviews she's done so far:

- ◆ Accessible Services
- ◆ Car Parking Arrangements
- ◆ Children & Families Policy + Practice Instructions
- ◆ Lifer Manual Practice Instructions
- ◆ Merge Courts/OM
- ◆ Performance Targets for Parole Reports
- ◆ Practice Instructions in respect of Working with Foreign Nationals
- ◆ Revised Targeting of ATRs
- ◆ Simple Breaches
- ◆ Warrant Process Review
- ◆ Legal Services
- ◆ Revised Fares to Report Policy



She's found:

- ◆ Variation in practice across LDUs
- 💡 Some people haven't read and accepted policies and practice instructions relevant to them
- 😊 Some training and coaching needed
- 👉 Good practice in some LDUs
- 📉 Good savings and best value in some LDUs
- 🗣️ The need for better communication...



...so she'll soon be visiting you in LDUs to talk through some of the issues

PAM helps too...

Jane uses PAM, a project management process, to streamline the way all this is handled, and to give a clear picture, to both SMT members and change champions in offices, of our progress.

Drug Interventions
 Health
 Crime Reduction
 Probation
 Prisons
 YOT
 IOM
 Intelligence
 CJB
 Local Authorities
 Reoffending
 Police
 Joint Tasking

Integrated Offender Management

Crime reduction: Joint ownership



Small resources, long journey, but we'll bring with us a lot of people, says Kate Sale.

A long, but interesting road

- A National Board meets, and is putting together a national strategy. There is less central prescription with the new government, and the ideas seem to be in tune with the Green Paper.
- We will learn from the pathfinders, and other developments morphing around the edges, says Kate, but we need to make sure our own governance and planning is right before anything else.
- Probation, Police, YOTs and DAATs are involved in the planning now. Later on, we will slowly be drawing in other vital contributors and setting things in motion.



Last July, a joint conference in Essex first broached the idea of IOM to a wide range of agencies. Not just the Criminal Justice agencies, but those who also have a direct effect on offenders' lives would have joint responsibility for crime reduction. There had already been six MoJ pathfinders, and other counties had also been dabbling with the idea.

What's happening?

Inspector Kate Sale from Essex Police, chosen to do the work on an Essex version, is beavering away in Cullen Mill, doing the all-important back-office planning. She is now responsible to a newly-created IOM Board, with more than 20 high-level members representing agencies and councils.

Where are we now?

After checking out every other IOM scheme, it's been decided that we will use the five existing PPO schemes as a starting point. Each scheme currently works in a

slightly different way. We will develop a general IOM framework, and then expect local schemes to construct their local arrangements to fit local need.

Grappling with the issues...

- The current financial context is an obvious concern, says Kate. But we need to think long-term, which could result in savings eventually.
- Also resources, and how we do the joint working - co-location and where, training, and other issues need thinking about.. We have already asked for the allocation of more dedicated police under their current re-structure when they are losing 1000 support staff.
- Processes (including IT systems) will be crucial. We will need a secure case management tool to avoid duplication of effort. Police have nothing, and Probation's is not accessible.
- Performance and Evaluation – how we do it. The government is working on a new measurement tool.

“Integrated Offender Management is a system that provides all agencies engaged in local criminal justice partnerships with a single coherent structure for the management of repeat offenders...” MOJ

NEWS IN BRIEF



NOMS at the Centre and the Green Paper

Mary has been involved in yet more meetings to feed into the consultation on the Green Paper, which ends on 4th March. The government's response is due out sometime in May. Very little to report currently: there is a lot going on centrally, but not a lot is coming out.

Information for the police

Mary reported that discussions are taking place between Probation and Police regarding recent requests made to us for information on an offender for the purposes of a court case.

- It is not our role to give a statement to the police for court purposes. We provide Pre-Sentence Reports to the courts.
- It is our role to share information with the police when it comes to case management.

Mary has discussed this with the Chief Constable, and Director Shirley Kennerson is following up.

Have you visited our website lately?
www.essexprobation.org.uk

DRRs: nearly there...

Gordon Turl, DRR Manager, needs your help!

(or, in fact, we need his)



He's found a way we can improve our chances of getting green for DRRs...

The Snag: Terminations Codes!

We've been using the wrong ones in some cases.

There are codes for **SUCCESS**.

There are codes for **FAILURE**.

But crucially, there is also a **NEUTRAL** code which is excluded from the score.

Code 54: Revoked on application to court

Where we have taken the case back to court because the offender cannot comply with the DRR, eg Mental health issue, sickness, unable to attend appointments due to other personal circumstances.

Code 56: Revoked: Fail to comply on another requirement

If the offender has failed on another part of the Community Order, but has engaged with the DRR, e.g. attending appointments for treatment but not attending supervision/Unpaid Work





FINANCIAL FACTS

▲ **We're anticipating that we will break even at the end of this financial year in March, says Debbie Came, Director for Finance.** After checking out each business case, we're using our small underspend to respond to particular business needs while we can. Some managers have been given the authority to buy items that will see us through next year, and hopefully beyond. Managers will keep the Finance department informed of their purchasing progress until this month's deadline.

What we're going to save

▲ Our budget for 2010-11 was £19.2 million. For 2011-12 it is £18.6 million. Taking into account next year's inflationary pressures (just about everything becoming more expensive!), that we also have to cater for, we will need to save £1.1 million during the year.

How we aim to do it

▲ Efficiency plans for this year include a review of our budgets which will save £151,000; savings made through business cases (stationery, office budgets, e-filing, car park contracts, courts closures: a myriad of ideas) £582,000, and reductions in staffing £386,000.



Members of the Finance Team working for us



One of the regular features of AMM is managers of each function giving an annual update on what's new, what's good in their work. This time it was Southend, and managers Carolyn Butlin, Bill Rossi and Alex Osler gave a clear picture of important local links which improved LDU practice...

Focus on...

SOUTH EAST ESSEX & SOUTHEND LDU

Job Centre Plus

The 2010 pilot: Progress

The idea of offenders signing on in the office with JCP staff presented all kinds of advantages. Probation could gain from enhanced knowledge of the workings of the system, and potential glitches caused by communication difficulties in the JCP office could be ironed out through face to face liaison. SE/Southend took on the pilot, negotiated the use of interview rooms (a room for every day but Wednesday) and then waited for completion of CRB checks. The two JCP staff got to know Probation colleagues, and processes, much better during the hiatus.

Once the process was under way, interesting questions were raised: were some of the offenders claiming to be signing on actually doing so, and were some offenders put off by the combination of Probation and JCP? However, the current caseload is 82 and growing, about the same as other pilots. It comes just from Southend, as Castle Point and Rochford offenders fall outside the pilot area.

Potential crossover with ETE?

Both JCP and ETE have targets to meet: would they get in each others' way? If offenders were already on ETE, they

would remain so, and on completion JCP would then refer on to Basic Skills, SEETEC.

Advantages

- People unlikely to admit to their offender status in the JCP office now get the enhanced service to which they're entitled.
- Problems over availability for work being affected by attendance on a programme can be averted through the JCP rep Helen recording this info.
- Positive feedback from offenders who like the privacy of the interview room.
- Good relationship between them and JCP rep leads to more openness.
- Helen can do motivational work with them.
- She also understands their needs more – e.g. won't send them for an inappropriate job, handling cash, for instance.
- JCP rep now very much part of the office.
- OMs get advice from her also and their feedback is positive.

Focus on...

SOUTH EAST ESSEX & SOUTHEND LDU *continued*



PPO Scheme

"We've worked long and hard for two years on this," says Carolyn. "A great example of police and probation working together." Carolyn chairs the local scheme, with a Deputy from YOS.

"We've got funding from local councils for emergencies to do with equipment for jobs, bus passes and other necessities, we're using five designated beds at a new accommodation project, Nelson's Gate, run by NACRO. We're also finding good ways of occupying people's time – crucial with these offenders." Apart from gym membership, they've set up links with a local waste collection company. Offenders will volunteer, and if the employers are happy, they can be taken on in full-time work. PPOs have helped the police on CSP roadshows, microchipping bicycles – not only providing a public service, but changing offenders' attitudes towards both police and crime."

Community Safety Partnerships

These provide a network of useful connections, says Carolyn, and her interaction with a mixed membership has led to her LDU's involvement in their Open Days. Local councils are increasingly looking to our Community Payback scheme for help with jobs they are unable to do. We will keep a balanced eye on this.

Greater safeguards

Alex Osler and Sam Brinkley are joint SPOCs for the local safeguarding board, Alex on the exec and Sam working on the monitoring group. This is where the really meaningful practice discussions take place, says Alex.

"Good liaison, familiarity with each others' structures and systems means we are able to get to the bottom of where things don't work," she says.

"It makes it easier to be more honest where conflict arises between organisations. We all quickly learn from any mistakes made."

Better practice

One of the most important gains from this close networking with managers from other

organisations is the strides that can be made in practice development.

Both Sam and Alex sit on audits of key working practices, for instance, this year, child protection referrals and core groups. Managers from each agency take a practitioner with them, the learning is terrific, and all agencies move forward together on action points.

"In times when agency structures change regularly, routines and procedures are modified without other agencies necessarily knowing. In Safeguarding, it's vital that agencies are aware of each others' systems – understanding referral thresholds, for instance – if we are to do the job well," says Alex.

Drugs providers

Another good relationship: they meet monthly, and the constant dialogue, sharing ideas keeps us up to date with what's going on locally. Recently it was information about Butane users in the area, and DAAT training has been opened up (free) to Offender Managers.

The key to data security is... YOU!

"Personal information is becoming increasingly valuable. Think before you supply it." Information Commissioner

Data security is key if an organisation is to ensure confidential information is protected and legal requirements, such as data protection, are met. Managing information security within Essex Probation is just as critical.

We're all responsible for security

Information security is the process of protecting information: its availability, privacy and integrity. Securing access to stored information on computers is everyone's responsibility.

Security shortfalls for us

In a recent security audit a few Essex Probation security shortfalls were highlighted, so it's perhaps time we had a refresher on the duty of care we owe to our colleagues, offenders and victims...

Easy prey for attackers

There are four main methods by which a password may be discovered by an attacker.

These are:

- Guessing the most obvious passwords such as words like 'password' or '12345...'
- Researching the intended victim to find out words they are likely to use (e.g. car registration, football team, partner's name)
- The use of automated software tools, such as L0pht Crack, which will run an automated attack
- Seeing the password or PIN written down and left in a prominent place

TO NOTE:

Prohibited

The use of personal or home computers or unsupported IT assets to process Essex Probation information (from remote working locations or otherwise) is prohibited, except in exceptional circumstances where a full risk assessment has been conducted. **It should be noted that the uncontrolled (i.e. unmanaged or unauthorised) processing of personal information on employees' home computers contravenes the Data Protection Act 1998.**

Password Protection: Getting our act together

Essex Probation fared worse than the national average in terms of password protection. This includes writing down passwords and having the same password across all systems. There is no point protecting information with passwords if the password itself is then disclosed.



A list of Don'ts...

- **Don't** use common words that would be found in a dictionary as their password or PIN e.g. dog, cat etc.
- **Don't** use names of relatives or pets that others may easily guess
- **Don't** use any information that could be 'discovered' by a determined attacker, such as the user's phone number or vehicle number plate;
- **Don't** use passwords that contain more than two consecutive identical characters (e.g. AAAA)
- **Don't** write you password or PIN down and leave it in an insecure location. You wouldn't keep your Pin number with your bankcard, would you? You don't want anyone to have access to the info or funds in your bank account, and it is the same with your computer.
- **Don't** store 'smart cards', passwords, etc., with laptops
- **Don't** record any unnecessary information
- **Don't** store information on unauthorised IT equipment
- **Don't** store, copy or transmit copyright information (e.g. to or from CDs) without permission
- **Don't** divulge your password to anyone – you will be held to account for the consequences of your actions

The key to data security is... YOU! continued



Adopt new habits

Authorised users should be encouraged to adopt the following practices when selecting passwords

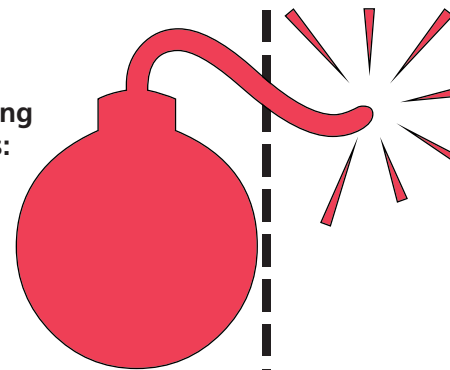
- Do use a mixture of words and letters within a password. Authorised users may wish to consider replacing letters for numbers (though software tools and educated attackers will now routinely try and replace number for letters e.g. replacing the letter 'o' with a zero).
- Do use the initial letter of each word of a saying as the password and replace some of the letters with numbers e.g. "The Quick Brown Fox Jumped Over the Lazy Dog" would become the password "tqbfj0tld"



The 10 worst passwords

Make sure you're avoiding similar password pitfalls:

1. password
2. 12345678
3. qwerty12
4. abcd1234
5. letmein
6. monkey007
7. myspace1
8. password1
9. blink182
10. your first name



Your email account...
Your password...
Your User ID...
Your RAS Card...
...are all potential entry-points to our systems!
Keep them protected at all times!

If you are unsure about what your responsibilities are or would like more information on the Data Protection Act please contact Matt Mackman or refer to your Information Security Staff Handbook which can be accessed here: S:\1 Policies and Procedures\Information and Systems



Diversity Week

Coming Up

We may have a zero budget, but we're having a Diversity Week, to help maintain our awareness of diversity and different cultures.

Plans so far include:

- providing something appropriate for visitors to the office via the reception plasma screens
- a noticeboard theme of culture
- LDU Diversity Quiz
- visiting speakers: Guide Dogs for the Blind speaking at Harlow, Cullen Mill and Chelmsford. Others to be confirmed.
- a lunchtime event – sharing foods from different cuisines or simply sharing a lunchtime together and sharing talents (musical or hobby).

- Diversity Officer Helen Pearce is working on more ideas, including overcoming barriers to communication, women offenders, older or disabled offenders in custody.

- Board members have been invited along to take part in the events

Dates for your diaries:

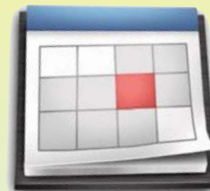
NE: Monday 28th March

West: Tuesday 29th March

Thurrock: Wednesday 30th March

South and Mid: Thursday 31st March

Cullen and SE: Friday 1st April



For further information, please contact your local E&D rep or Helen Pearce, Diversity Officer



WOW!



“Short sentences for men have proved pretty ineffective, and I think that short sentences for women are even more ineffective and deleterious.”

Crispin Blunt, MP, Under Secretary of State for Justice

The Essex Women Offenders Working group is continuing to work on an Action Plan for suggesting improvements to the way women offenders are supervised in Essex.



International
Women's
Day
100 year
Centenary
1911 - 2011

Focus groups and questionnaire in your LDU

The current emphasis is on focus groups facilitated by members of the group and carried out with staff and women offenders in each location, and a county-wide questionnaire which was sent out to all the women we supervise. What they reveal will be fed into the group's thinking.

SPOCs working away

Each LDU has a SPOC and Deputy SPOC (do you know yours?) who are sharing their contribution to the group and making sure that local work planned by the group is taking place. They have also been updating the local databases for services for women offenders.

Corston: Movement, but a long way to go

Up and down the country, it's possible to see a unified focus on diverting women from custody and crime. Prison numbers are holding steady around the 4,000 mark, (going below that number in the first week of 2011, for the first time since 2001). There are 14 women's prisons in England and Wales, however, and it will be some time before much changes in that direction. The Corston report recommendations that they should be replaced by small custodial centres, phased in over 10 years, look unlikely to receive a high priority in the current climate. Three years after Corston's first report, 68% of women were in prison for non-violent offences, compared with 47% of men, despite its demand that custodial sentences for women should be reserved for serious and violent individuals posing a threat to the public.

Making provision in the community

What we can provide for women outside the prisons, and how we do it, will impact on both their future offending, and hopefully, future sentencing. The WOW group's investigations and recommendations are aiming to clarify what is needed. Then we will need to prioritise what we can afford to do, and when. We're headed in the right direction.

POD vehicle boosts Community Payback around Braintree

Delivering Community Payback in difficult locations throughout the Braintree area is no longer a problem, thanks to the 'POD'.

The new multi-purpose POD (Prevention, Outreach and Development) vehicle, with on-board toilet facilities, can double as a base of operations, enabling locations once considered out-of-reach of our Community Payback teams to be accessed for the first time.

A joint endeavour

Braintree District Council in partnership with Essex Criminal Justice Board secured the funding for the vehicle, using cash and assets seized from offenders under the Proceeds of Crime Act. Additional funding was also found under the Community Cashback Scheme.

Big increase in work

The POD has been in action at various locations around Braintree District, including work in the Braintree East Area for the 'Pride in Our Patch Group' and 'Friends of the Ley Wood'.

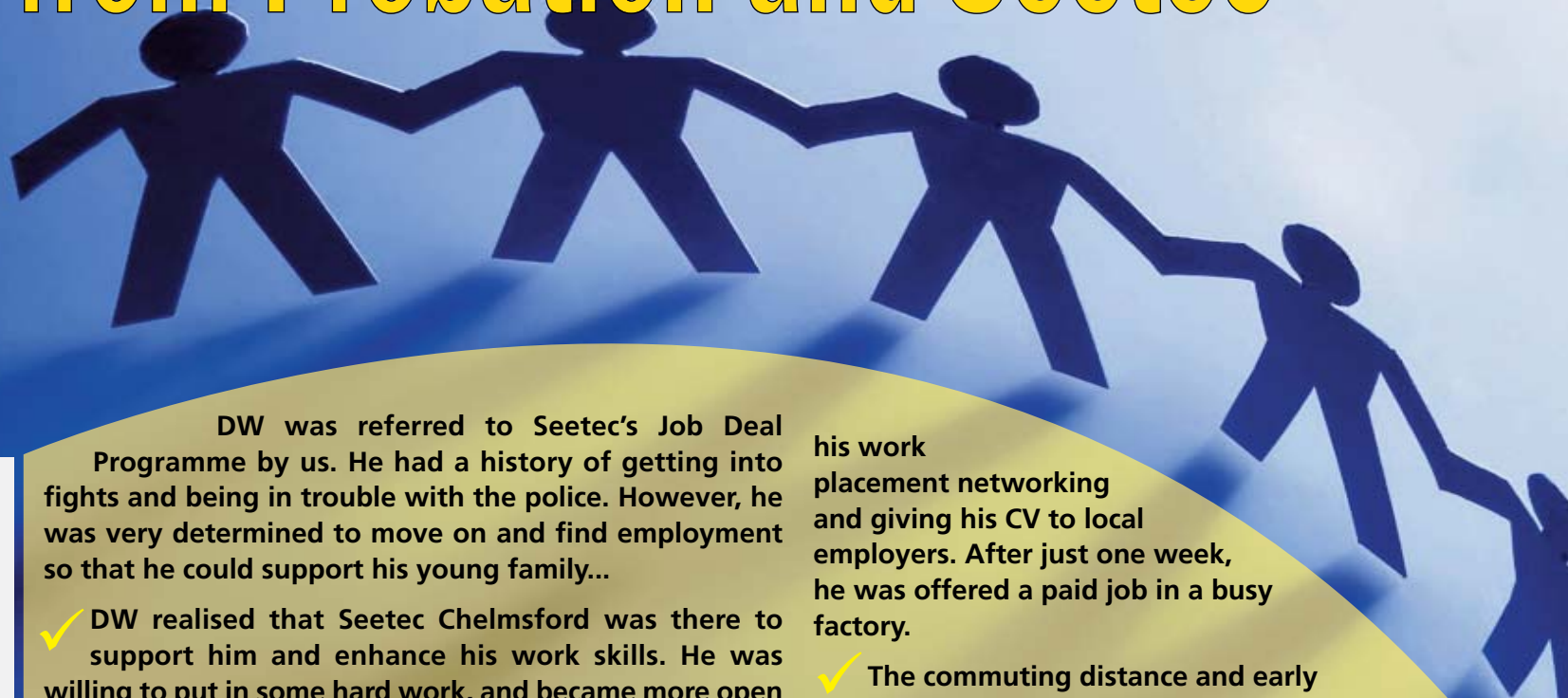
Without the POD, such work would not have been possible. So far our Unpaid Work teams have clocked-up over 6,637 working hours across Braintree district, undertaking projects such as clearing overgrown woodlands, graffiti cleaning, repainting community buildings and constructing community gardens.



L-R: Jill Richardson, Essex Probation; Stephen Nicholas, Chair of Braintree Community Safety Partnership; Braintree District councillor Wendy Schmitt; Brooks Newmark MP; Ken Caley, Chair of Essex Criminal Justice Board and Chief Crown Prosecutor for Essex; Jonathan Dixon, Essex Fire Service, and Katherine Brown, Essex Probation at the launch of the POD vehicle in Braintree last month

Determined to find work - with help from Probation and Seetec

by Eric Smith,
Manager –
Partnerships



As part of our work to improve education, training and employment outcomes for offenders, our ETE officers make referrals to external providers.

One such provider is Seetec, formerly the South East Essex Technical College, who currently work in conjunction with LDUs in South East, South, and Mid Essex. We're working with Seetec to improve both the number of starts and completions on work-related education provision/courses. They also share with us their 'good news' stories such as the following...

DW was referred to Seetec's Job Deal Programme by us. He had a history of getting into fights and being in trouble with the police. However, he was very determined to move on and find employment so that he could support his young family...

✓ DW realised that Seetec Chelmsford was there to support him and enhance his work skills. He was willing to put in some hard work, and became more open about himself and his past. This made it easier to produce a strong CV that highlighted his skills effectively and helped him perform more confidently during job interviews.

✓ He attended a workshop to help him deal with debt issues and the money problems incurred during his time in prison. He was also keen to go on a work placement. As he didn't have any smart clothes to wear to the interview Seetec supplied him with trousers and shoes. DW wanted a permanent job and used his time on

his work placement networking and giving his CV to local employers. After just one week, he was offered a paid job in a busy factory.

✓ The commuting distance and early starts meant DW struggled to walk to work each morning. In order to help him stay employed, Seetec provided the financial assistance to buy himself a bicycle.

✓ Even though DW now has a secure job, he is looking for a second one to fill his time and provide for his family. One of his goals is to move to a larger home. Seetec may be able to help.

✓ DW has repeatedly praised the high level of support he has received from Seetec.

Reducing Our Carbon Footprint

By Andrew Butt, H&S Manager

The Probation Carbon Management Programme was launched at a Probation Conference in September 2010.

The MoJ, which includes us, is one of the largest users of energy in the public sector, and last year reduced its carbon emissions by 6.7 per cent.

Reducing our impact

Did you know that nationally the Probation Estate currently spends £6.5m per year on utilities?

With such an obvious need to save money and energy, the Carbon Trust advise that savings of 10% can be achieved by making simple but deliberate behavioural changes within an organisation, such as turning lights off when not needed and reducing heating temperatures when not in the office.

Felmores leading the way?

Staff at Felmores have replaced one of the outside waste bins with a bin specifically for

cardboard, which is being emptied every 2/3 weeks. Previously all bins were emptied every week. They have also arranged for the local council to leave a large number of pink bags used for recycling, which are put out for collection every two weeks, at no cost.

Felmores is already making significant savings in terms of waste-management, and will be looking at making even more with the proposed energy saving ideas.

Treading lightly in future

At the next Service Support meeting the group will be discussing other ways to reduce our carbon footprint. We will keep you posted on the outcome.

In the mean time, if you have any ideas, please send an email to **Staff Suggestions**

High Sheriff's Prize event – coming soon



Nominations have flooded in for this year's High Sheriff's Prize. Thanks to all of you who nominated. Your entries were poured over by our Judging Panel on 8 March.

And the winners are...

Best Manager: Neeve Bishop (West)

Diversity: Kirsty Gibbons (Mid)

Offender Management Award: Fiona Bearman (South)

Interventions: Vanessa Comiskey (SE/S)

Public Protection: Rich Curtin (South)

Support: Andy Pickering (Cullen Mill I&S)

Best Team: Community Payback's RO team: Nikki Calver (South), Sue Wooding (Thurrock) Jenna Sicheri (SE/S), Beth Pond (West), Sue Taylor(NE), Ian Ball (Mid)

Partnerships: John Hawkins (West)

Innovations: Alan Pedley (West)

Chair's Award for 2010-11: Carol Parker (Thurrock)

The Overall Winner of the High Sheriff's Shield is the RO Team. Having a whole team as overall winner is a first.

Nominees and nominators will be invited to attend the Awards Ceremony being held on Friday 25 March.

Leading lights

Julie and Tony first in our region to achieve new qualification



Left: Mary Archer opens the Awards Ceremony. Below: Keynote address by NOMS HR Director Robin Wilkinson



Essex Probation's Julie Dove and Tony Jones have become the first in the Eastern Region to pass the VQ3 Diploma in Probation Practice.

Both candidates were presented with their certificates by Chief Executive Mary Archer at the Regional Awards Ceremony held recently at Stirling House. The new Level 3 award assesses the skills required to determine risk of harm and need for interventions, as well as the ability to communicate, manage

information effectively and respond to diverse needs of service users and others.

True professionalism

Speaking after the awards ceremony, Emma Scott, Internal Verifier & Development Officer for Essex Probation, said: "The VQ3 Diploma is a qualification which represents true professionalism and competence in practice, and Julie and Tony have more than lived up to our expectations."

Regional Awards Ceremony: Stirling House, 4 March 2011: Colleagues from Essex were there to collect a variety of awards including: Certificate in Counter Terrorism; Level 2 and Level 3 NVQs, and Level 3 & Level 4 certificates in Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector



Essex Probation Staff at the event: Back row, L to R: Catherine Paige; Rhys Jones; Diane Turner; Melissa Prince; Darren Kiggins; Mark Sadler; Lorraine Neill; Sarah Atkins; Emma Scott; Carol Carbutt; Jenny Gibson; Clare Moorhead; Anita Travis; Andrew Butt; Carla Reilly; Tony Jones; Sue Atkinson; Lisa Leader.
Seated, L to R: Rachel Morgan; Fiona Bearman; Kathy Perry; Mary Archer; Caroline Grace; Julie Dove; Tracey Redgewell; Susan McDiarmid

Staff SUGGESTIONS

Thanks to all staff who have taken the time to send in suggestions. Keep your ideas coming. All are discussed with the Senior Management Team.



Mary Archer, Chief Executive

Scanning to secure savings

In order to save LDUs' paper and postage, could more items be scanned and sent to a central in-box for HR or finance (after they are signed off by the appropriate managers)? This could include invoice & invoice approval slips, expenses, Pay 4, Pay 5, Pay 420, and I'm sure many other forms.

The original could still be kept locally for audit purposes, but importantly emailing scanned documents would safeguard against post going astray (which has happened recently). The scanned copy could even be kept on the shared drive in an organised electronic filing system.

Clare Moorhead, D-MSS, Colchester

Thank you for sending your suggestion to us. We have discussed this at SMT. We think this is generally a good idea but we will need to ensure at the same time that we meet all necessary financial regulations. Debbie Came will look into this further.

De-cluttering the Message Board

Regarding the Essex Probation Bulletin Board: the board has lots of items on it that are very old, obviously sold, etc, and they are never deleted. I thought that the reason it asked "How long do you wish to display it" was to delete it after that time, but that is not the case. Items continue to be displayed unless deleted by the person who created them.

Could the system be updated to delete listed items after a specified time – for instance one month – or could the creator

be sent a reminder-email to delete their out-of-date listings?

Anne Wood, Finance Officer, Basildon

Thank you for sending this to us. It has brought to our attention an issue that we needed to be aware of and to resolve. Pete Mangan will take this forward so that we can we can have a more up to date system.

Transfer Pending issue

I have just set up a case on CRAMs that is transferring-in from YOTs. The offender has a 36 months YOI Custody sentence and turns 18 in June 2011. He is due to be released on 28/05/11 on HDC.

I have been asked to set him up, as his allocated OM will be liaising with YOTs and possibly attending meetings prior to us accepting transfer. YOTs have correctly completed a Transfer Request Form and the case has been allocated.

I have attempted to set this up as a 'Transfer Pending' but, there is no option on CRAMs for transferring-in from YOTs, we can only transfer in from outside areas.

I was wondering if this facility could be added to CRAMs so that when we have a transfer from YOTs, it is set up and looks correct on CRAMs by stating 'Transfer Pending', until we accept formal transfer when the offender turns 18?

As it stands I have had to set this case up as normal, but leave it uncommenced, allowing the allocated OM to complete contact logs for input with YOTs so as not to show any late commencements or failures.

It would, of course, be a lot easier if YOTs used the same computer systems as Essex Probation, so that there is a seamless transition from YOTs to Probation, but I do understand that this would probably be impossible.

Gary Davis, SSO, Colchester

We do think in principle that the idea is a good one but we are conscious that we are moving towards the implementation of a new system Delius, to replace CRAMs in the Autumn so it may not be appropriate to make changes at this stage.

Fay Hepworth sings for Anne on The Weakest Link



Anne Robinson got a bit more than she'd bargained for, when retired Manager Fay Hepworth launched into a rendition of an Edith Piaf classic – in French – during an episode of the TV quiz broadcast in January.

Fay was commanded to perform by the notoriously strict hostess, after revealing she had musical talents including playing the organ. Unfortunately it wasn't enough, and Fay was voted off at the end of Round 2.

