

SENTENCERFOCUS

Cutting Crime – Protecting the Public – Working in Partnership



In this issue:



Essex Probation becomes a Trust



Justice Minister visits Chelmsford Office



Turning round an offender's shattered life



Your questions answered

Essex Probation



MISSION: POSSIBLE

Essex Probation programme a great success at Military Corrective Training Centre

You asked us... A selection of questions from recent Probation-Courts events

Q. What's the evidence that education and skilling of offenders prevents reoffending?

A. Skilling of offenders and employment is just one of a number of stabilising influences that we look to improve. Accommodation, relationships and finance are three others. Most offenders would have failed at school and will have low self-esteem due to lack of qualifications. If we can break this cycle and help them achieve an exam result, they start to believe that they can improve other aspects of their lifestyle. Low self-esteem and a feeling that they cannot achieve, often leads to offenders surviving on the perimeter of society. One exam result can change all that.

Q. Does Essex Probation inform an employer of an employee's probation?

A. No, it is up to the offender to disclose any convictions. We have to abide by Data Protection. We cannot speak to an employer unless we have permission, or reflect that the risk of harm in his employment is unacceptable, i.e. a sex offender working in a school.

Q. Why does it take seven days for an offender to provide evidence?

A. It would take up to 36 hours for warning letters to leave probation and up to 2 days in the post. The offender may need to gather evidence from a doctor or employer. Allowing 7 working days is in the interest of being fair.

Q. You often use the phrase "We offer..." when speaking to an offender. Should we be firmer and tell the offender what to do?

A. In much of our work, we do adopt that approach. However, Probation prefers an offender to enter basic skills on a voluntary basis. This would engender the feeling that it is his/her decision and promote ownership of the decision. The case manager may decide to link reporting alongside basic skills, thereby introducing a level of compliance. Any award at the end of the training would have been through their own efforts and the reward of improved self esteem would be greater. The Case manager would encourage this intervention to be on the sentence plan, so that regular reviews would take place.

Q. How big an issue is illiteracy amongst offenders?

A. Most offenders underachieved at school, and even those with reading skills fall far short of what we would consider the norm. It would be fair to suggest that a very high percentage of offenders would benefit from basic skills training. For example, a large number would like to learn plumbing, but do not realise the standard of maths required.

Q. What do you do when the offender does not want to comply?

A. Early positive contact at court and early

appointments on all aspects of their order will encourage an offender to comply. Ensuring their first 16 weeks appointments are known in advance, and contact through telephone and text messages, encourages attendance. If all else fails, the firm boundaries of breach action should be applied. Breach action should not necessarily be seen as a negative event; it can remind the offender of what is expected of them, and how they have made mistakes in non-attendance. Breach Statement of fact should be made available to the offender, and the problems discussed at interview. The probation service work hard to encourage communication between the offender and the case manager. Involving the offender in sentence planning encourages them to take ownership. The Community Compact is a useful tool in pointing to what they can expect from us. The Probation experience should be teamwork between the offender and case manager to facilitate those changes that would lead to offence free lifestyle.

Q. Is there plenty of unpaid work?

A. Yes, unpaid work is very popular in the community for obvious reasons and many voluntary organisations and charities have benefited from it.

Q. Can we have a copy of the statistics you refer to in your presentation?

A. Yes, copies of the presentation will be made available to everyone attending.

You asked us...

Q. Would we facilitate an OM going to court to prepare an on-the-day report for an offender remanded in custody, if we had been unable to gain entry to the prison or get access via a videolink to the offender.

A. In a word, yes.

Q. What effect would public-sector cuts have on the service we provide?

A. We do everything we can to protect frontline services in difficult circumstances. We are working with our staff on 'demand reduction' measures, i.e. to ensure that they make proposals for supervision and unpaid work on those offenders who can most benefit from our services, and not on offenders with a low risk of reoffending.

Q. Are DRRs skewing the figures? What, for instance, would the completion rate be if DRRs were removed from the picture?

A. The overall completion rate is an indication of the proportion of orders with **all** requirements successfully completed. DRRs are not skewing the completion rate figures – because they are integral to the completion rate figures. Not counting them would skew the figures, by raising the overall target for Order completion rates.

Q. How do you measure success?

A. When an offender completes their Order without re-offending or breaching during the period of the Order.

Q. It would be useful to see statistics comparing Essex with other counties. How, for example, does Essex compare to other areas in regard to enforcement rates?

A. Our enforcement rate (within 10 days) is 100%, and one of the best in the country.

End-to-end enforcement figures, which are derived from HMCS COMet data, show Essex Probation to be above the national average, at 73% (target 65%), and best in the region.

Q. Are offender interviews with OMs ever filmed? It would be interesting to see them.

A. We do not routinely record interviews between offenders and offender managers.

However, we are in the very early planning stages to produce a Probation Experience DVD that should give a flavour of the range of work undertaken by probation, including PSR and induction interviews.

Call to end Prison building programme



Amidst a clamour of opposition to short-term prison sentences, the Prison Reform Trust (PRT) has called on the new Justice Secretary, Ken Clarke, and Prisons Minister, Crispin Blunt, to consider a halt to prison building to give time to develop an effective penal policy. It says reversing the unaffordable trend in ever-expanding prison numbers should be an urgent priority for the coalition government.

The prison population in England and Wales has reached a record high of more than 85,200 in recent months. The current prison-building programme is designed to increase that number to 96,000 by 2014.

A spokesperson for the PRT said: "As the new Justice Secretary has previously acknowledged, the current growth in prison numbers is unsustainable. A moratorium on prison building would be a first step in reversing the disastrous legacy of the past two decades which has seen the prison population almost double, while rates of reoffending have rocketed."

Community Payback Pays Off, says Probation

Negative TV programme doesn't show the real picture

Undercover film broadcast on ITV1's 'Tonight' show, showed lax supervision of offenders sentenced to Community Payback.

The footage, which was filmed at projects in Manchester, Nottingham and Derbyshire, follows statements by the new Justice Secretary, Ken Clarke, that Community Sentences are more effective at preventing re-offending than short term prison sentences.

More effective than Prison

Official figures certainly support the Minister's point of view. Community Payback is the most successful order available to the court at reducing re-offending, with 75% of offenders nationally not offending again during the next two years. (The equivalent figure for an offender sentenced to a short prison sentence is 29%).

Work for Essex

But there are other equally impressive elements to Community Payback in Essex.

- **45** schools are benefiting from groundwork, decorating, decking, fencing, and general maintenance.

- **57** churches are getting the treatment in the form of grass cutting, painting & decorating, fencing and cleaning and general maintenance.

- **36** elderly persons' complexes, special needs, and adult learning centres are being painted, cleaned, maintained, or groundwork and gardening is taking place.

- **34** council projects are being helped with crazy paving, cementing, painting, gardening, ground clearance, tree planting and maintenance

- **42** voluntary organisations and clubs are having similar work done;

- **43** other projects are taking place in Community Associations, Servicemens' Clubs, Allotments, Housing Estates, Hostels, country parks, Scout huts, Hospices, Social Services referrals, and National Trust properties.

- **10** Community Action Days and Safer Town days have taken place with police colleagues, involving litter picking, ground maintenance and painting.

Reaction from...

Colchester: Councillor Dave Harris

"I went out with your lads for eight or nine weekends. They were well supervised and a pleasure to work with. All the supervisors worked well managing the really productive work they were doing. They cut back vegetation and cleared footpaths. You wouldn't believe how much effort they put in: we got six lorry loads of rubbish – and I mean the big refuse lorries. One of the weekends it was raining, and they just carried on.

"I started to work alongside them, and for some, it was hard to see how they got into trouble. They were proud of what they did afterwards. People came out on the road bringing drinks out to them; they were so pleased with what they were doing."

Epping: Epping-Ongar Railway

I just wanted to express my thanks to Essex Probation service for their help and assistance. We have been having supervised

groups working down Epping Ongar Railway regularly for quite some time, and have been very pleased with the way that the groups have been organised and managed.

The supervised teams have undertaken a number of tasks, including vegetation management along the lineside, sanding and preparing heritage coaches for repainting and other tasks around our heritage railway. This has complimented our volunteers' efforts, and has enabled faster progress to be made towards getting the line ready for its forthcoming exciting re-opening (encouraging both green tourism to the area, economic prosperity and working toward reinstating the rail link for the local communities).

As part of the supervision, Adele, who manages the work supervisor, has visited the railway on a number of occasions, to review progress, see the teams in action, check Health & Safety and ensure we are happy with the groups.

The railway has also had a number of individual placements. These have proved to be absolutely invaluable – such as preparing the station for our recent Preview Day. I have always known that I can easily contact Essex Probation, and have found they have always dealt with matters in a prompt and professional manner.

We continue to provide individual placements and host regular weekly supervised groups. I am very happy with the work being carried out and I look forward to continuing to host both of these for the foreseeable future.

Simon Hanney, General Manager

Grays: Karen Quincy – Duty Manager, Grays Beach

"We have been working with Community Payback for a very long time – they have assisted us in obtaining our Green Flag status for the past few years.

"The supervisors and offenders have been friendly and have worked hard. The standard of work and behaviour of the group has been good. Supervisors work hard to motivate the offenders to achieve a good results.

"Generally groups undertake tasks that would not be completed due to lack of resources.

"We are expecting budget cuts of in the region of 40% and it is therefore even more important that we continue with this relationship."

Southend: St. Lukes Church, Prittlewell

The group visit the Church with Tony, their supervisor, and they are turning former allotments into a wildlife garden for the local area. This is part of the wider St. Lukes Ward Regeneration Project.

Betty Wilkin, Deputy Church Warden, describes the group as "smashing".

"They were always polite and are eager to talk to other people on site, she says. The supervisor is brilliant. He actually supervises the group and makes sure that they are doing what they are supposed to be doing. He really works them hard. We have had no problems at all with Tony supervising them."

Chelmsford: Longmeads

"Longmeads could never have managed without them! Behaviour has been impeccable in every case – enthusiastic, and they always work hard. And a special thanks to the Individual Placements: they have all been really really good, and some of them never leave us!

"Probation will always be welcome at Longmeads, and the Supervisors are great. Absolutely nothing negative to say, just a very big thank you."

Finchingfield: Scouts

"Community Payback is a tremendous benefit to the venue with a big cost saving.

"We'd never have been able to afford to do all this vital work ourselves; the Unpaid Work team has completely refurbished the facility.

"The workers have come across as very pleasant and co-operative at all times, knowledgeable about the trades being demonstrated, with no need for additional input from the site, just co-operative to their requests. Ian and Brian, the work supervisors, are very good. They've kept great and constant contact with the venue, used their initiative and taken on board all requests.

Weald Country Park: Claire Mennin

"Weald Country Park has found the work Community Payback

completed on site really helpful, and have been able to undertake larger jobs that would have otherwise been impossible with only a small team of staff and volunteers.

"Using the minimum wage rate, Community Payback has saved us approximately £10,000. Government projections of a 40% cut in the Country Park's funding means we are even more dependent on Probation's assistance.

"The Supervisors have been fantastic, really motivating the offenders. Any bad behaviour, in particular poor language, is cracked down-on immediately and the offender in question made to apologise to the member of staff.

"We have had offenders return to the park, once their hours have been completed, and they have worked as volunteers alongside other staff. We believe this is a really positive move, as they engage in the local community and gain skills to increase their employability.

"We have people on Individual Placements working with us too, and they have also proved to be invaluable."

John Bailey: BTCV (Conservation Volunteers)

"We've been working alongside Unpaid Work teams for 12 months over 3 different Probation offices within Essex.

"The UPW Supervisors have been, without exception, highly motivated, hard working and committed to providing excellent service both to the offenders that make up the teams and the vast number of community projects which benefit from the thousands of hours of free, high quality labour. The standards, integrity and even relationship-skills shown are universally high and make each day a pleasure for us – not a chore."

Harlow: Milwards Primary School

"I am writing to thank you for the fantastic service that we receive at Milwards Primary School and Nursery from Community Payback.

"We have used this service for three years and have always found the work to be of a high standard and invaluable to us, as a school, due to our extensive grounds.

"We have had painting, groundwork

including sweeping and weeding, construction of the children's summer house and fencing work, as well as many other grounds projects.

"The caretaker at Milwards has overseen these projects and always commented on the hard work, dedication and close supervision of offenders working at the weekend, including tidying up after they have finished a job.

"Many thanks again for this support, which I hope will continue in the future."

Kind regards, Angela Callaway

Colchester: Maryland Day Centre

"The quality of work has been excellent. It's a brilliant system: without Community Payback the buildings would not get updated due to a lack of funds.

"We are shown respect by offenders and in return they are treated with respect. They are not there to be judged because they have been to court. They work hard and take pride in what they do; they take ownership of the work they do. We show our appreciation and, in return, the offender works harder.

"The Community Payback Supervisor supervises the offenders quietly and professionally, and has excellent interaction with the beneficiaries."

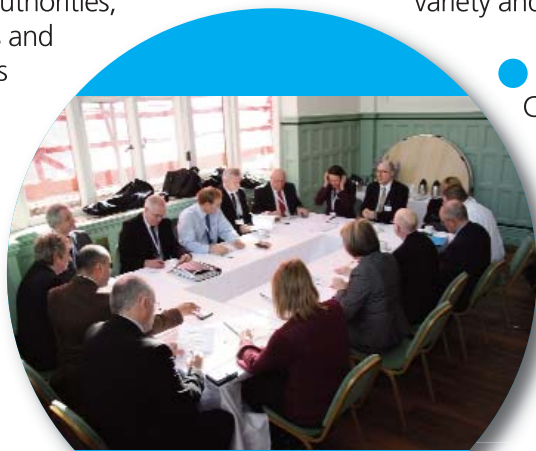
Wendy, Alzheimers Manager



Trust launch marks beginning of new era for Essex Probation

The Old Library at Colchester Town Hall provided the historic backdrop for the launch of Essex Probation as a Trust, on April 1.

More than 50 guests, including representatives of local authorities, Criminal Justice agencies and partnership organisations throughout Essex, gathered to hear Board Chair Bill Puddicombe welcome the move to Trust status and outline some of the future challenges facing probation in Essex.



The new Trust Board meets for the first time

In with the new

Earlier, members of the Trust Board and Senior Management Team (SMT) held an inaugural meeting at the venue to usher in the new arrangements.

Praising Probation

During the course of the three-hour event, guests were also shown videos featuring offenders and Community Payback beneficiaries speaking about the successful work Essex Probation has done to help turn their lives around and improve community safety.



Guests mingle in the Old Library

Crime – Protecting the Public – Working in Partnership” were also introduced, along with a 32-page Prospectus designed to showcase to the public, commissioners and partnership bodies the variety and breadth of the work we deliver.

- Chief Officer Mary Archer becomes Chief Executive, under the new system
- Our name remains ‘Essex Probation’ – simple and direct, and without ‘Trust’ in the title



Chief Executive Mary Archer and Board Chair Bill Puddicombe show off the New Trust Prospectus

Re-branding

A new Essex Probation logo and slogan “Cutting

“You’ve made a massive difference to my life”

An active business woman, with two shops to her name before she was 25, Susan thought she had it made. Yet years down the line, she lay in bed in a mobile home in Lincolnshire, penniless, drunk, isolated, with all the tawdry evidence of severe alcoholism around her.

Downward spiral

The route downwards was fraught with drama, and punctuated by up-phases which deceived her into believing that she could manage the secret night-time drinking, a controlling partner, her two children and her working life.

A series of bad moves, poor judgments, blaming and changing either partners or residence as life failed to improve, led eventually to the loss of her children to her original partner, and loss of their trust in her as a mother.

Serious issues

Drunken scenes in airports on holiday with a partner and smashing up hotel bedrooms when challenged were par for the course. Brushes with the law were inevitable as her drinking increased. A Community Payback Order was completed, and she enjoyed it.

There was no possibility that it would address the serious issues however, and another court appearance resulted in Community Supervision.

It was Susan’s mother who found her in squalid circumstances. Having been out of contact for two years, she was horrified by what she saw and decided to take her daughter back to the family home in Essex.

‘Thank you’

Supervision was transferred to an Offender Manager in the NE Delivery Unit, Colchester. “I just want at this time in my life to say a big thank you to Probation. My Offender Manager really seemed to want to help. She’s listened, advised, referred me to CRI. I’ve also used Open Road. I go to AA three times a week. I’ve sorted debts out. I’m getting help with a computer course. Probation subsidised an AA weekender recently. I know I’m an alcoholic and frankly alcohol makes me a deceitful, lying, nasty piece of work. But I have an army of supporters around me now.

I have a lot of work to do: to regain my children’s trust, and make a decent life. I’ve a lot to prove. With all this help I’m getting, I’ll get there.”



“I’m pleased with Susan’s progress so far,” says Offender Manager Laura Moore. “She needs to take things steadily, and build slowly to ensure that her alcohol-free life sticks.”

Justice Minister visits Essex Probation

Under Secretary of State, Crispin Blunt MP, offered The Probation Experience

Essex Probation played host to a VIP visit in July, when Crispin Blunt MP toured the Chelmsford Office on a fact-finding trip.

The new Prisons and Probation Minister spent several hours in the company of Trust Board Chairman Bill Puddicombe and Chief Executive Mary Archer, during which members of staff put on a special presentation of The Probation Experience.

The show, which has played to large audiences in Probation offices across Essex, showcases work with offenders, victims and other agencies, by focusing on the story of fictitious offender Lee Cullen.

Probation journey

The Minister looked on intently as 'Lee' described the background to his sentence and showed video of his PSR interview, before guiding the audience through a series of other scenarios including an offender induction interview, Aggression Replacement Training, Community Payback, an Education, Employment and Training session, and a mock MAPPA meeting.

More effective solutions

Mr Blunt's visit took place in the wake of statements made by Justice Secretary Ken Clarke that short-term prison sentences are less effective at cutting re-offending rates than community



Crispin Blunt MP (centre) flanked by Essex Probation Board Chair Bill Puddicombe and Chief Executive Mary Archer



MAPPA Manager Allan Taplin (standing) explains Probation's role in multi-agency public protection

sentences, and that Probation Trusts, collaborating with other agencies, provide better long-term prospects of rehabilitation.

Speaking after the visit, Essex Probation's Chief Executive Mary Archer said: "I was delighted to have the Minister here and to have the opportunity to show him what we do in Probation.

"I believe he saw a great deal and did say that he felt other new colleagues should come to Essex first to learn about probation."

Pioneering initiative a major success at military prison in Colchester

Praise for Essex Probation's work at Military Corrective Training Centre



A pilot scheme for Essex Probation staff to provide a new Thinking Skills

Programme for military prisoners has been hailed as a major success.

Staff at the Military Corrective Training Centre (MCTC) in Colchester, including Commandant, Lieutenant Colonel David Steel, were full of praise for the results.

"I take my hat off to Essex Probation," he said. "They have been incredibly supportive of us, not only in providing a hugely effective programme, but also in helping us with risk assessment and interviewing techniques. I already have two Company Sergeant Majors seeing real changes in soldiers who they would have expected to be difficult in future."

Close collaboration

The new scheme came about following lengthy discussions between Essex Probation Director Pete Mangan and Lt. Col. David Steel. Treatment



Manager Hayley James and three of Probation's programme tutors have worked closely with the MCTC to pilot the programme with a mixed group of soldiers, some of whom will be leaving the Army after serving their sentence.

John Wharton, Warrant Officer in the MCTC Offender Management Unit, has also played a key role in preparing the ground, doing the

research, writing the papers, and collaborating with Probation's Treatment Manager Hayley James to develop the pilot.

"I am delighted that this joint venture has been such a success," he says.

"We're proving that the programme works. We have had no withdrawals from the programme, and an increase in the good conduct of the participants."

Learning to change

And what of the participants? A good

number have convictions for violent offences. Many have long-term problems which started long before they joined the Army. What do they think, now they've completed the three months programme?

"This shows you how to understand the risks of what you do, and teaches you the skills to avoid your usual reactions that lead to trouble," said one.

"It's the way it's explained, and how we learn to use what we're taught," said another.

Continued on page 8



L to R: Treatment Manager, Hayley James; Programme tutors Ben Childs, Natalie Merenda and Andrea Clarke

Pioneering initiative at military prison in Colchester continued...

"We discuss each element, we also write about it, and then keep role-playing it. The learning goes in."

"At first, I didn't understand it," said one young man about to leave the Army. "But they speak to you in the kind of way that makes you trust them, and you end up learning."

"It's really hard to talk about personal stuff, but the tutors are good at their job," was the consensus.

John Wharton concurs: "In these circumstances, the quality of delivery needs to be second-to-none. These are all Probation tutors with proven track records. I've learned a lot over the last nine months of planning. But I couldn't do this."

Pioneering practice

John and Hayley agree that it has not been a case of de-militarising the military and turning it into a Probation off-shoot. It has, though, been a search for best practice, and as John says, "Probation has put this way of working on the map. It's been phenomenal."

Hayley is equally complimentary of the way the MCTC has embraced the new work and committed to the arrangements. "They're very can-do," she says
Pete Mangan, Essex



John Wharton in discussion with Treatment Manager, Hayley James

Probation Director who leads on this initiative, said: "It has been good to pilot this programme with Army colleagues and prove that our methods adapt successfully to all circumstances. I am grateful to the Military Prison for their commitment and enthusiasm in getting our joint work right."

Positive pay-offs

The final word must go to the participants. Asked to say what the programme has given to each of them, they had no difficulty in expressing themselves: "Maturity"; "Clarity"; "Confidence"; "Self-control"; "Better relationships"; "Fewer problems"; "Better judgement"; "More positive"; "I'm prepared" – were just some of the replies given.

They had words of thanks for Probation too: "They worked very hard. Their attitudes were right, and they were understanding, and very professional."

It's here. Check it out!

More content, new design

Want to add to the info? Send us a message

Visit our website at:
www.essexprobation.org.uk

THE BRIDGE UPDATE

When Patrick was referred to The Bridge in March 2009, the offending behaviour which had dominated his life from a teenager was deeply ingrained.

His addiction to heroin from the age of 18 had seen his offending escalate and resulted in the inevitable revolving door of short-to medium-term custodial sentences over the next 15 years.

A life of crime

"My life consisted of an endless cycle of drugs, crime and prison," says Patrick. "I lost count of how many times I was locked up. Every time I came out, I wanted so badly to sort things out and get healthy, but the addiction beat me again and again."

Intensive support

Finally, in February 2009, Patrick was in court on theft charges, but, instead of the usual custodial sentence, the judge sentenced him to a term which included The Bridge, set up by Essex Probation as an intensive package for individuals otherwise destined for a short-term prison sentence, and needing close attention alongside

the usual supervision. Good partnership co-operation, between the local PPO team, Essex Probation and The Bridge staff, provided the intensive support that enabled Patrick to remain focused and motivated.

"The Bridge gave me the chance to completely change my life and taught me skills that I should have learned a long time ago. I gradually began to feel as if I was part of 'normal' life, and stayed on voluntarily to complete a Peer Mentoring certificate working alongside the Nacro mentors."

Peer mentoring

Patrick's progress over the past 18 months has been remarkable: he has gained full care of his 15-month-old daughter while continuing to work as a Nacro volunteer on The Bridge, where he

From Offender to Mentor: Patrick's story

provides an invaluable Peer Mentoring service to other referrals by drawing on his own experiences.

Future goals

Patrick now has a level of stability in his life to be able to formulate long-term plans: "The thing about prison is that you don't grow up in there. I felt like whenever I went in, no matter how much time passed, I came out exactly the same. But, with the support of The Bridge and Probation, I have completely changed my life. In the future, I would like to train as a drugs worker."



Patrick working as a Peer Mentor at The Bridge

GRAYS SHOW ENDS 18-MONTH RUN FOR PROBATION EXPERIENCE

Follow-up events planned



Having played to more than 500 people in probation offices across Essex, the final Probation Experience took place in Grays last May.

The interactive show used fictitious offender Lee Cullen to highlight Essex Probation's work with offenders, victims and public protection agencies.

It was fantastic to see so many magistrates, local MPs, and representatives from a wide range of organisations attend each show and leave such positive feedback.

A mini Probation Experience was also laid on for MoJ staff accompanying visitors from probation services in the EU and Africa, which was described afterwards as 'the best portrayal of probation seen in 20 years'.

Plans are in the pipeline to produce a sequel event, to take the probation message to an even wider audience.

Watch this space.

Biggest alliance against crime created

Integrated Offender Management the way forward for criminal justice agencies

Lead by Police and Probation in Essex, the biggest alliance against crime ever contemplated in Essex is being introduced by agency planners across the county.

It's called Integrated Offender Management (IOM), and it marks a sea-change in the way offending is tackled, aiming to drive better working arrangements between the criminal justice agencies,

Police, Probation, Prisons, Youth Offending Service, the Drugs Interventions Programme, Health, Local Authorities and private and third sector agencies.

Unprecedented cooperation

Leading the introduction of the new strategy are Chief Constable Jim Barker-McCardle and Mary Archer, Chief Executive of Essex Probation.

The aim of IOM is to encourage all local agencies to identify those offenders causing most damage to their community, whether they are under statutory supervision or not. This will involve agencies working together to share information, design local provision and to ensure that each offender has an identified case manager whose role will be to oversee the offender's journey through what is provided.

All local services will be mapped to identify any duplication and look at ways of working together which create a better joined-up service for offenders.

Historically, services have developed in silos and there are often gaps in provision for offenders where agencies do not link or complement each others' work, and offenders find themselves unsupported and at risk of re-offending.

Offender-focused

Providing the motivation for offenders to quit crime is easier if they are subject to some form of statutory supervision. IOM will not only increase the stimulus for this group, but also give impetus to work with others who pose a problem but who are not subject to a court order.

The IOM approach builds on the success of the current offender-focused cooperation between agencies, such as Prolific and Priority Offenders, Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements and Drug Interventions Programme. These schemes have been hugely successful in involving many agencies in delivering services which support offenders and reduce offending.

Big payoffs

"This will be a big piece of work but the payoff for the community could be just as big in terms of reduced crime," said Mary Archer. "It will be based on the effective sharing of information, effective joint planning and interventions and the reduction of the duplication, waste and inefficiency caused by silo thinking and silo working."

Jim Barker-McCardle said: "In Essex we build on a strong platform of co-operation across statutory, voluntary and business sectors. The opportunities and benefits presented by really effective integrated offender management cannot be understated. There is much work to be done and I relish the challenge. The fruits of our joint labour will be what everyone wants: less offending, less crime, improved lives and an ever safer Essex."

Mary Archer and Jim Barker-McCardle at the inaugural IOM conference in July



CASEFILE:

End-to-end work with offenders makes a real difference...

Offence:

Burglary, July 2007: He broke into the house of an elderly lady, through the window, when she was at home. In the process, he knocked over her budgies' cage. One bird died. The lady screamed and shouted at him from another room. He eventually left. (Previous history includes serious violence. He was physically very strong, so one blow from him had broken someone's jaw, and on another occasion had done serious damage to another man.)

In court:

A moving witness statement from the old lady spoke of her misery, and concentrated also on the death of her bird, as a companion and friend.

Essex Probation's Pre-Sentence Report writer, assessing previous offending patterns, commented on the possibility that had the victim been in the same room, she could well have been seriously assaulted. Despite objections from the Defence team, the judge upheld the report's assessment.

Sentence:

2008: Two year's YOI



Activity:

"I was delighted with the contact I had with the Young Offenders' Institution," says the Essex Offender Manager. "They had various activities available that I could make use of, and our joint plan came up with a busy sentence aiming to deal with a large number of issues."

The Initial Sentence Plan was constructed through teleconferencing with the prison's Offender Supervisor and other YOI staff, given the distance from Essex. After consideration of the offender's immediate needs, it included completion of PASRO, attending sessions of work with the CARAT team. He was also to attend 10 units of an Art course, as it was clear he had demonstrated some talent while still at school, and not followed it through. The work element was to attend the novel Railtrack course,

providing training on a railway line built at the prison to provide track maintenance courses. JA did well, and became a Team Leader. The offence focus, important to his future attitude towards crime, was that of teaching him empathy for victims. "The course I'd chosen wasn't available in that prison," says the OM. "So the Prison Officer who was his designated Offender Supervisor, did the work

with him on a one-to-one basis, sending me the information to make sure it was appropriate to that Offender. Superb co-operation.

Licence conditions:

A year later, after regular contact between prison and probation staff, he was released on Licence to the original Offender Manager. Licence conditions had already been planned before release: an exclusion zone around a wide area of Romford where contact conditions, and agreements to take part in programmes designated by the Offender Manager, including further Victim Empathy work and learning the link between alcohol and his offending. He was not a big drinker, but when he did take alcohol, it was a major disinhibitor. Improvements in his thinking skills and temper control were also planned in.

'END-TO-END' WORK WITH OFFENDERS, contd...

Setting targets:

The Offender Manager set him some serious targets, which were achieved by aiming for mini-goals each week. "I needed to stabilise him in his new surroundings, so I was regularly planning with him what would happen in the immediate future," says his OM. "We agreed that he would attend a college foundation course, and keep up to date with his course work. He thought he might manage to get modelling work, so we agreed he would get a photo portfolio done, and register with one modelling agency within a certain period of time. Another requirement was that he had to continue to drink within sensible limits. He had to associate with positive influences. Though not religious, he started to attend his parents' church, playing the drums for services, as part of his reintegration back into a community much more willing to receive this changed young man."

Positive results:

He obtained part-time work in the evenings, around his college work. To ensure that this was the case, and he was not returning to previous drinking habits, the Offender Manager demanded, and received, regular wage slips. He also took up boxing with a proper gym instructor. "I had some thoughts about this kind of contact sport, but if done in the right way, was happy to encourage him," says his OM.

He is now doing a university course on IT, and is in his second year. He sells his art on e-bay.

"It was all about appropriate goal setting," says his OM. "He rose to the challenge because he had received encouragement and commitment from those who dealt with him, both while in prison and then out with Probation in the community."

His Licence was completed in January. No further offending.

NEWSExtra

Mary awarded OBE in Queen's Birthday Honours



Chief Executive Mary Archer has received an OBE for her services to Probation. Speaking after the announcement in June, Mary said: "I was amazed and delighted to receive the official letter some weeks ago, and it has been a hard job keeping the knowledge from my Probation colleagues. For many years I have pointed to the success of Probation. I view this OBE as an acknowledgment of the massive contribution we make to public safety."

Cautious welcome for new drugs policy

The charity Drugstore says there is no 'silver bullet' when it comes to tackling drug misuse. The statement follows publication of the Coalition Government's new Health Strategy, which identifies a number of commitments relevant to drug policy, including:

- A commitment to exploring alternative forms of secure, treatment-based accommodation for mentally ill and drugs offenders
- A commitment to receive full advice from the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs on a substance's harm, before making a decision on a permanent ban.

Drugstore goes on to say that although there have been significant improvements in the standards of healthcare in prisons, there is a need for improved services for offenders who have mental health and drug and alcohol problems and, where appropriate, "alternatives to custody should be explored."

New national victims service launched

A national service for victims of crime has been launched, with the initial aim of providing long-term support for families torn apart by murder or manslaughter.

The National Victims Service will offer tailored support and counselling to bereaved relatives, for as long as they need it, with the most vulnerable assigned dedicated professional support workers to liaise with other agencies on their behalf.

The £8m service builds on work already provided by police family liaison officers, and will operate in partnership with Victim Support.

It will extend eventually to all victims of crime nationwide, regardless of the offence committed against them.

Quote... Unquote

"Britain's ballooning prison population is a disastrous mess. In such a severe economic crisis it is folly to have policies that make the prison population substantially higher than is necessary" –
former Lord Chief Justice, Lord Woolf

Prolific Offender hits the headlines

by Chief Executive Mary Archer and Director Shirley Kennerson

The case of Bradley Wernham, a PPO in Essex, was destined to result in a press field day were he to re-offend.

Complaints about the leniency of his original sentence filled the Tabloids. He committed another offence, and the judge, true to his word when he made the original order, sentenced him to five years for all offences, including those not detected but admitted to by him.

Active Minority

Prolific Offenders are the 10% of the offending population who commit 50% of crime. Though not dangerous, their offending is frequent, damaging and costly to us all. Around 200 in Essex

repeatedly steal, take drugs and commit antisocial behaviour, and cause the most distress to residents.

Challenging work

A good number of us could be tempted to throw away the key. That not being realistic, one of the

questions that police and probation must ask is: Who are these people? Why do frequent bouts of imprisonment fail to have an impact?

The profile is challenging. A chaotic group, with major problems in all areas, they are often serious drug/alcohol abusers. They often turn up in A&E departments, and are frequently admitted to hospital.

They will

be in police custody suites many times. They're in and out of prison. There are frequently mental health problems. Family ties are often poor, so few prospects of any good role models. They will be committing offences as an established pattern: the way they have learned to survive more often than not. And every item on this list costs us – a lot.

Multi-agency response

The next question: what DO we do with them? They will come out of prison at some point, and they go on to commit more offences. What do we want to achieve? Retribution and deterrence rarely work. To be deterred, they need to know how to think as we do and solve problems in a different way – to think before they act. What most victims want is that the criminal activity is stopped.

Hence the set up of Prolific Offender teams nationally, and in every big Essex town about 25-30 offenders are targeted by Police, Probation, and other agencies as Persistent and Prolific Offenders (PPOs)

They get what we call a premium service. This

means surveillance,



monitoring, targeting their activities. They know they're being watched individually – a variety of agencies are on their case. If they co-operate, they get intensive support for what is a massive effort to change.

It could be support with drugs or alcohol problems; courses to develop skills and help in seeking jobs; specialist Probation programmes; help with finding accommodation (they have to pay for it – no freebies, contrary to media claims); possible removal out of area, away from criminal contacts, and police/probation collaboration, which can include joint interviewing in the Probation Office.

Costing the benefits

Is all this work at great cost to the community? Most of the work that is planned should be done anyway, by separate agencies. The difference is, in bringing in the agencies to the table, and planning with them, we can be

Continued on P14

PPO offender hits headlines, cont'd

more efficient, effective and tailor the work to that individual. He or she is told that we are concentrating on them – an uncomfortable experience, but one that some unlikely offenders have taken on board, moving on for the first time in years.

The reduction in costs of crime to the community and to us as individuals also includes less use of hospitals, police custody suites and other facilities. It also means a lot less victims.

Risks worth taking

But won't they reoffend, given their past – thus causing the scheme to fail? What we do know is when they come out of prison normally, their high rate of offending is maintained. The reality is if we are going to stop the huge volume of crime, we have to take extraordinary steps. If they do fall by the wayside, and some do, the surveillance component is there to catch them – quickly. It is a risk, but is successful enough to make it a worthwhile one.

Award-winning work

Essex Probation won the first national Probation championship last year for work with a prolific offender who received all kinds of help to move away from his criminal fraternity. Intensive work with him by all the agencies, using both stick and carrot, paid off. This year, too, there has been some excellent similar work which has received commendation.

This will never be a popular solution. But Police, Probation, Health and other agencies have to step back, take a long cool look at how we're going to stop this group of offenders, and on behalf of the community we serve, get on with it. It may not be popular but it is more effective.

PPO CASEFILE:

Matt, well known to police and probation, is a case in point. He's a number one prolific offender. As he says himself: "Since the aged of 11, I've had the odd month or two out, but basically I've been behind the door for 18 years."

What's changed? Since being targeted as a PPO, he is no longer on drugs: his tests have been negative over a long period. Apart from being recalled to prison by Probation for criminal damage to a DVD player, he has not been arrested, and he is proud to own a key to his own fairly modest accommodation – for the first time.

"This year has been the longest I have ever been out of prison," he says.

