

OFFENDER MANAGEMENT INSPECTION INSPECTION

A report on Offender Management in Gwent

An inspection led by
HM Inspectorate of Probation

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FOREWORD

This inspection of core work with offenders came soon after two other pieces of work carried out in Gwent by this inspectorate, which produced disappointing results. It is entirely to its credit that Gwent Probation Area, together with its partners, has worked hard to promote improvement in the intervening months. More than this, it has succeeded in demonstrating improved quality in a number of key regards and is to be congratulated. In particular we were pleased to see that some of its Risk of Harm work is now being carried out to a better standard.

There is, of course, still more to be done and no room for complacency. Sentence planning needs to be made more central and effective in driving delivery and particular attention should be given to the offender transition between custody and the community, where better preparatory work is required. Whilst staff are generally content with the quality of their own supervision and appraisal, there are some particular development needs amongst core groups such as probation service officers and managers. Board members and senior managers would do well to focus on the review and evaluation of outcome data to inform their planning, and a greater transparency in their decision-making would be valued by staff.

We wish Gwent well in sustaining the broadly positive momentum represented by these inspection findings.

ANDREW BRIDGES

HM Chief Inspector of Probation

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to express our thanks to the Gwent Probation Board, its managers and staff for the considerable assistance received in enabling the inspection to proceed smoothly. Without their help, most especially in arranging a complicated programme of interviews with offender managers, the work could not have been completed successfully.

The inspection also depended on the contribution made by local area assessors who assisted with the offender manager interviews. Their participation and commitment were greatly appreciated.

HM Assistant Chief Inspector: Kate White, Liz Calderbank

HM Inspectors: Joy Neary, Mark Boother, Sue Fox, Iolo Madoc-Jones, Nigel Scarff, Ray Wegrzyn

Practice Assessors: Stephen Hubbard, Karen Rooney, Ushma Sharma

Estyn Inspectors: Peter McGauley, Barry Norris, Claire Yardley

Information Manager: Kevin Ball

Inspection Admin Officer: Gareth Collins

Publications Team: Rachel Dwyer, Alex Pentecost

Area Assessors: Kauser Mukhtar, Claire Powell, Gail Reed, Linda Richley, Karen Turner, Claire Vernon

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

ACO	Assistant chief officer
CALM	Controlling Anger and Learning to Manage it
CO	Chief officer
CSP	Community Safety Partnership
DOM	Director of Offender Management
DRR	Drug rehabilitation requirement
EFQM	European Foundation for Quality Management
ESOL	English as a second or other language
Estyn	HM Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales
ETE	Employment, Training and Education
ETS	Enhanced Thinking Skills
FDR	Fast delivery report
HM	Her Majesty's
HMCS	Her Majesty's Court Service
HMI Probation	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation
HQ	Headquarters
IDAP	Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme
IPPF	Integrated Probation Performance Framework
ISP	Initial Sentence Plan
LCJB	Local Criminal Justice Board
LSCB	Local Safeguarding Children's Board
MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements
NOMS	National Offender Management Service
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
OASys	Offender Assessment System
OCJR	Office for Criminal Justice Reform
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
OGRS2	Offender Group Reconviction Score
OMI	Offender Management Inspection
OSAP	Offender Substance Abuse Programme
PLC	Probation Liaison Committee
PNC	Police National Computer
PPO	Prolific and other priority offender
PSO	Probation service officer
PSR	Pre-sentence report
RoH	Risk of Harm
RoHAA	Risk of Harm Area Assessment
SDR	Standard delivery report
SFO	Serious further offence
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SMB	Strategic Management Board
SMT	Senior Management Team
TPO	Trainee probation officer
VLO	Victim liaison officer
WIP	Workload Information Planning

SUMMARY

Assessment and Sentence Planning

Reports to court were generally of a good standard and made an effective contribution to the sentencing process. The likelihood of reoffending was comprehensively and accurately assessed in most instances. Whilst the diversity needs of offenders had been assessed appropriately in some cases, additional focus was needed on offender engagement. In particular, more attention needed to be given to basic skills screening and subsequent full assessment where this was required. Some elements of sentence planning were undertaken well, including planned contact levels and ensuring offenders fully understood the requirements of their sentence. Further development was needed to ensure that the sentence plan took account of offenders' diverse needs, and fully reflected the interventions planned and the role of other workers in the case. Offenders also needed to be involved more in the sentence planning process.

Implementation of Interventions

Overall, offenders had been prepared sufficiently for interventions, though there was less evidence of new skills being reinforced afterwards. Good communication was apparent between all workers involved in most cases, and encouragement and support for offenders was also demonstrated. The delivery of sentence plans required improvement, but most plans were reviewed on time. In a number of cases, there was insufficient contact with prisons to prepare offenders for release, and activity undertaken in custody was not always followed through in the community. Enforcement of orders and licences was very good, with breach action taken appropriately and in a timely manner in almost all instances where it was needed. There were enhanced levels of contact in all cases involving prolific or other priority offenders, but the frequency of unpaid work sessions needed improvement. Accredited programmes provided a range of constructive interventions, although commencement of the programme was not always consistent with the sentence plan. There was a range of provision in respect of employment, training and education, although basic skills needs were not always being met. Some aspects of case recording required attention.

Achievement and Monitoring of Outcomes

Most offenders had not reoffended, but improvements were needed in promoting compliance with their sentence. In terms of achievement of sentencing objectives, **punishment** and **control** were being achieved more consistently than **help** and **change**. In almost all cases, resources allocated were consistent with the assessed Risk of Harm and likelihood of reoffending. Whilst Offender Assessment System data had been re-scored in most cases, there was room for improvement in demonstrating positive changes in offenders' attitudes and/or behaviour, and reduction in the seriousness or frequency of offending. There was continuity of offender management in most cases, but more attention needed to be paid to structured sentence planning throughout the sentence.

Leadership and Strategic Management

Effective planning processes were in place and there was an increasing focus on necessary performance improvement, which was producing encouraging results. There were very positive relationships at strategic level with partner agencies and evidence of effective engagement with a wide range of statutory and Third Sector partners. Constructive working relationships were evident with the Director of Offender

Management in Wales and there was effective involvement with the Welsh Assembly Government's social inclusion agenda. The need for a greater emphasis on wider community engagement was recognised and being addressed through the Local Criminal Justice Board.

The offender management model was working effectively overall, and resources generally were employed appropriately. The area placed a strong focus on the health and welfare of staff and gave a high priority to staff development. There was a recognised need for increased training and development opportunities for some staff, including managers. Staff sickness rates remained an area for improvement, but supervision and appraisal arrangements were generally good.

Additional focus was needed on the review and evaluation of outcomes generally, including in the use of feedback from service users and stakeholders. A number of commissioned services were in place. Whilst some developments were required to ensure the diverse needs of all offenders were met, additional services used with offenders were rated well overall.

Risk of Harm

Risk of Harm screening was timely and accurate in the majority of cases, but improvements were needed in the overall quality of Risk of Harm assessments. Classification of Risk of Harm was not always accurate at the start of sentence; however in general, staff and partner agencies were notified appropriately of the level of Risk of Harm posed. Risk management plans were structured in the required format in most cases, but they were not sufficiently detailed. More management oversight was needed in the assessment of a number of high Risk of Harm cases and those where child safeguarding was a concern. Reviews of Risk of Harm were being undertaken regularly in most instances, with good on-going planning to minimise Risk of Harm to others, although home visits were not always used effectively to monitor child safeguarding concerns or keep Risk of Harm to a minimum.

Overall, there was encouraging evidence of improvement in Risk of Harm work, reflecting the efforts undertaken by the area to develop practice following earlier inspection and inquiry reports. These included more detailed assessments and more comprehensive risk management plans at the review stage, compared with the start of sentence. This reflected an improvement in practice at a point in time just after most of the cases in our sample commenced or were released from prison. There was a high level of satisfaction with the work of victim liaison staff, but more could have been done in respect of raising victim awareness with offenders and improving some aspects of victim safety. Where restrictive interventions were in place, they were monitored and enforced appropriately in the majority of cases.

There were good links at strategic level between the organisations involved in Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements, and encouraging evidence of these arrangements being used effectively in most relevant cases. The area had no approved premises of its own, accessing provision appropriately in other probation areas where needed, and providing additional support and monitoring through Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements for other offenders posing a high Risk of Harm.

SUMMARY OF SCORES

Outlined overleaf in Chart 1 are percentage scores for each Offender Management Inspection Criterion and for each of the sections 1-3.

Chart 1: Scoring of sections 1-3:

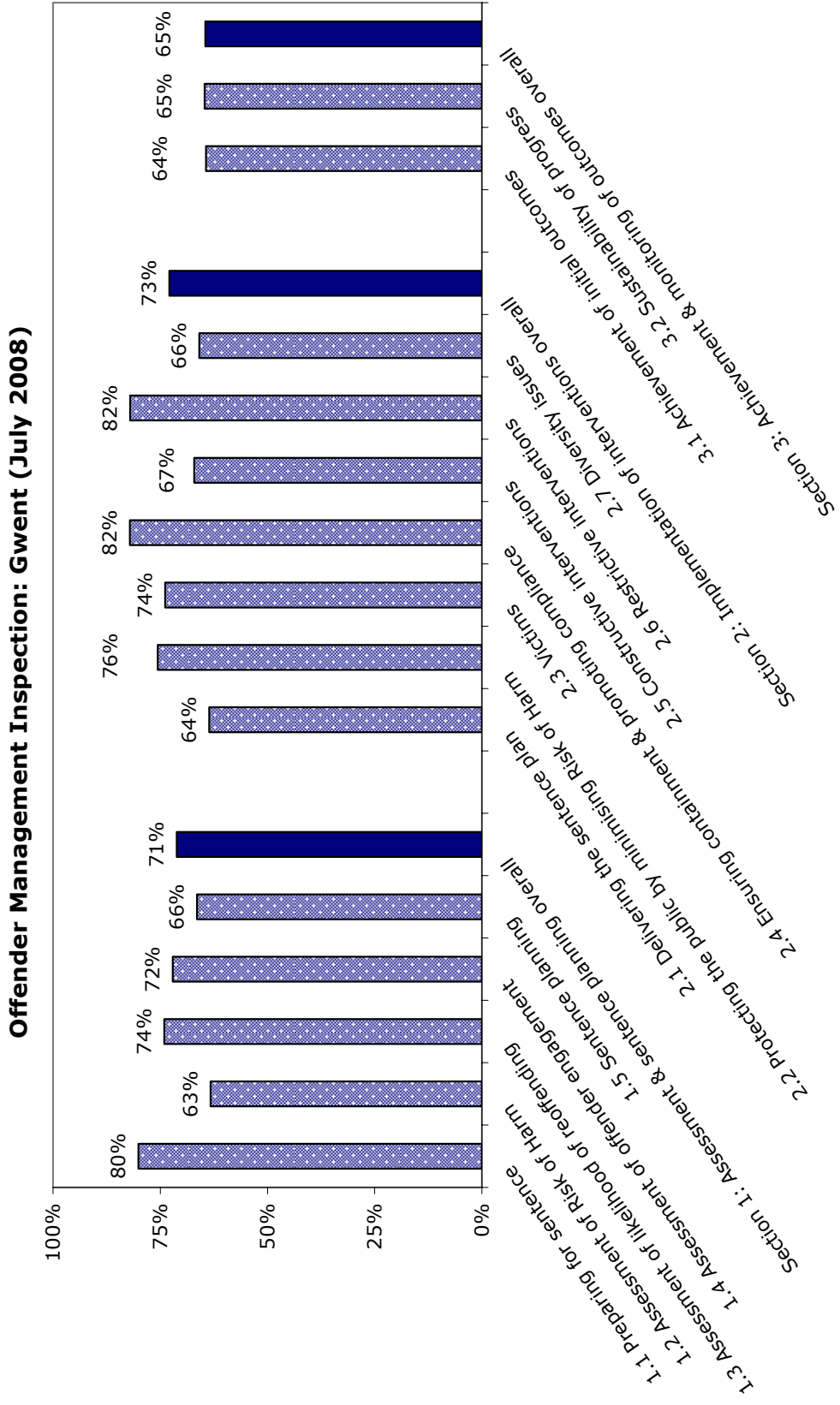


Table 1: Scoring of section 4:

Each of the criteria in the Leadership & Strategic Management section has been graded below, according to the four-point scale described in Appendix 4.

4.1	General Criterion: LEADERSHIP AND PLANNING	Satisfactorily met
4.2	General Criterion: PERFORMANCE AGAINST NATIONAL AND REGIONAL TARGETS	Satisfactorily met
4.3	General Criterion: RESOURCE DEPLOYMENT	Satisfactorily met
4.4	General Criterion: WORKFORCE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT	Satisfactorily met
4.5	General Criterion: REVIEW AND EVALUATION	Not met
4.6	General Criterion: COMMISSIONING OF SERVICES	Satisfactorily met

Table 2: Risk of Harm Thread

Table 2 indicates a score drawn from a range of indicators in the *Assessment & Sentence Planning* and *Implementation of Interventions* sections about Risk of Harm work. This score is significant in determining whether a further focused inspection will be carried out.

Score for Risk of Harm Thread	71%
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Full details of our *Scoring approach* are contained in Appendix 4.

We advise readers of reports against attempting to compare scores area by area. Such comparisons are not entirely valid as the sizes of samples vary slightly, as does the profile of cases included in each area's sample. We believe the scoring is best seen as a simple summary of what we have found in an individual probation area and needs to be seen alongside the full findings and recommendations of any particular report.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Improvements are necessary as follows;

1. Risk of Harm analyses are completed to the required standard in all appropriate cases, specifying accurately the nature and level of Risk of Harm to victims, the public, and staff
2. the quality of risk management plans meets the standard defined nationally
3. sentence plans and reviews are completed to a high standard, are outcome-focused and are used to drive supervision
4. sufficient resources are dedicated to accredited programmes provision to meet identified need, particularly in respect of domestic abuse
5. a higher profile is given to the assessment and management of offender diversity issues to encourage positive engagement and improve compliance
6. there is an increased focus on evaluations of outcomes, in order to achieve sentence objectives, and demonstrate change and value for money
7. the views of service users and stakeholders are routinely collated, evaluated and used to improve strategic planning and service delivery.

NEXT STEPS

An improvement plan addressing the recommendations above is needed four weeks after publication.

Further focused inspections will be carried out approximately 12 months after the original OMI when HMI Probation has a serious concern about an area's RoH work.

There will not be a further inspection in Gwent.

SHARING GOOD PRACTICE

Below are examples of good practice we found in Gwent.

<p>Risk classification and diversity needs communicated to all staff:</p> <p>OMI Criterion: 1.2</p> <p>Assessment of Risk of Harm</p>	<p>Unpaid work supervisors carried a small card giving codes for the level of RoH posed by offenders as well as individual needs, such as hearing difficulties or the need to take medication. When taking out a work group, supervisors would have with them a list of the offenders undertaking their unpaid work that day, which indicated relevant codes alongside each name. This was a useful and discreet way of ensuring that staff, who often worked in isolated areas in the countryside, were kept updated about the risks and needs of each person in their work group.</p>
<p>Seamless transfer of supervision:</p> <p>OMI Criterion: 2.1</p> <p>Delivering the sentence plan</p>	<p>Tom's case was managed through MAPPA because of the very high RoH posed to the community and it had been agreed that he needed to move to another probation area. There was a well-executed planned transfer to the other area, through cross-area MAPPA liaison, which involved an offender manager in the receiving area being allocated to the case prior to the move, to act as 'shadow' for the home offender manager. This ensured that there was a single, clear risk management plan in place, owned by both probation areas, which was used actively to protect victims. Supervisory responsibility for Tom was thus transferred seamlessly from Gwent to the other area, and work continued on carrying out his sentence plan.</p>
<p>Effective joint work between probation and prison-based staff:</p> <p>OMI Criterion: 2.1</p> <p>Delivering the sentence plan</p>	<p>Kevin was serving a long prison sentence for serious offences of violence. The offender manager in the community and the offender supervisor in custody established a positive working relationship through extensive liaison and regular attendance by the offender manager at sentence planning meetings. Objectives set for Kevin focused on reducing the RoH he posed and increasing his awareness of victim issues. Encouragement by both the offender manager and offender supervisor ensured that Kevin understood what was required of him and he became highly motivated to achieve what was required. His offender manager was actively involved in securing appropriate provision for Kevin so that he could attain the sentence plan objectives. This included pursuing his transfer to another prison so that he could complete the CALM programme before his release. Through the work already undertaken with Kevin, there was evidence of a shift in both his attitudes and behaviour.</p>

<p>Effective use of MAPPA:</p> <p>OMI Criterion: 2.2</p> <p>Protecting the public by minimising Risk of Harm</p>	<p>Andrew had served a prison sentence for sexual offences. His case was managed through MAPPA and prior to release the decision had been made to re-house him in an area way from his victims, to minimise further potential harm to them. An organisation, in partnership with the probation area, provided support for Andrew on his release, helping him resettle into the community and also providing his offender manager with feedback about his activities and behaviour. Through MAPPA, the Jobcentre Plus was also involved, providing guidance about appropriate employment opportunities. While this work was underway with Andrew, VLO staff supported his victims. They had been enabled to contribute their views to the Parole Board, ensuring their concerns about coming into unexpected contact with him were addressed. Despite one formal warning about his behaviour, Andrew successfully completed his licence supervision and then continued to be monitored closely through MAPPA, ensuring on-going protection for the community.</p>
<p>Taking account of individual need:</p> <p>OMI Criterion: 2.7</p> <p>Diversity issues</p>	<p>Abdul, who had come to Wales as a refugee from a war zone, was serving a community sentence. An active assessment had been made of his diversity needs at the start of his sentence and plans put in place to meet those needs. Language issues were addressed initially through an interpreter and then by Abdul accessing an ESOL course to improve his skills. Cultural and religious needs were also taken into consideration by his offender manager in determining the best way to deliver interventions, particularly in respect of unpaid work. To reduce his social isolation and increase his integration into the community, Abdul was linked with the Welsh Refugee Council. Six months into his sentence, Abdul had complied fully with its demands and had been convicted of no further offences.</p>
<p>Community organisations supporting the effective management of offenders:</p> <p>OMI Criterion: 4.6</p> <p>Commissioning of services</p>	<p>New Start was a joint initiative between Gwent Probation Area, A4E (a work-based learning company) and Jobcentre Plus for offenders living in three particular localities. The project had been set up to tackle the poor retention rates for offenders on the Gateway to Work programme which was part of New Deal. Offenders were at risk of failing to complete their programme because of the need to fit in with its mandatory requirements and also the requirements of their sentence. Offenders attended a three-way interview with A4E and probation staff and their needs were carefully assessed. Their programme was then arranged around their needs, and the requirements of New Deal and their sentence. Over half of the offenders on the New Start programme had accessed employment or moved on to further training. For example, one offender had successfully completed a basic skills intervention and the DRR of her sentence, and through New Start was able to access a work placement in a prestigious retail company. This had resulted in an increase in her confidence and her belief in her ability to make positive changes in her life.</p>

SERVICE USERS' PERSPECTIVE

Offenders

Sixteen offenders were interviewed about their experience of offender management; seven carrying out unpaid work in two separate projects, and nine undertaking either the ETS or CALM accredited programmes.

Offenders on unpaid work had all experienced a prompt, full induction that covered health and safety issues and ensured that they were aware of the attendance requirements and the enforcement action taken if they did not comply with the sentence. All remembered being informed that discriminatory behaviour would not be tolerated. Some offenders faced particular challenges in undertaking their unpaid work, for example in respect of the demands of their employment or transport issues. In general, their needs had been handled appropriately. Several were aware that they had a sentence plan, but had had limited involvement in the planning process. Most knew who their offender manager was, but contact between them and the offenders varied depending on their sentence requirements (some had more requirements than others), and on their offender manager. Some spoke of good relationships with their offender manager and appreciated the interest shown in their progress, but were not always aware of liaison between their offender manager and their unpaid work supervisors. Most felt that the rules were applied fairly, but several had experienced being 'stood-down' (sent home) because there was insufficient space on the transport to the project site. There were few opportunities to choose which activities were undertaken; one commented that the choice was "*indoors or outdoors and that's it*". A few offenders referred to the benefit to the community of the work they were undertaking, and spoke of their pride in their achievements, such as rebuilding dry stone walls. Whilst some thought that they had learned skills which were useful for subsequent employment, others did not feel that they were learning anything new. One said: "*There is not much in the way of learning, but it does get you used to the idea of working.*" Overall, offenders were generally positive about their unpaid work.

Offenders on accredited programmes were aware of the rules around attendance and what would happen if they breached their community order or post-release licence. Generally, they thought the rules on absences were applied fairly and equally. They had clearly been informed that discriminatory behaviour was unacceptable and some referred to posters on walls, reminding them of rules about respect for one another. Several had faced difficulties with attending the programmes because of distance from the venue, problems with transport or carer responsibilities, and they felt that they had received appropriate assistance with these. Some had concerns about the formal language used on the programme which was not always user-friendly, but had found the tutors helpful and supportive. One felt that "*there was no real help in terms of personal issues*" from probation staff. All knew who their offender manager was and some had had regular contact with them while attending the programme. Some were clear that their offender manager knew what work they were doing on the programme and thought that there was good communication between tutors and offender managers. All were aware of their sentence plan and some referred to discussions they had had with their offender manager about it. All had undertaken some victim awareness work, either as part of the current programme or through supervision with their offender manager. Some thought that their programme had helped change their perspective, one noting that he now understood that "*there are two sides to every*

story", and another talked of the course "opening his eyes" to what he had done and what he could do differently in similar circumstances. All the offenders on one programme were clear that they had used what they had learned and put it into practice.

Out of 110 questionnaires sent to offenders, 53 were completed and returned – all by offenders undertaking community sentences or subject to post-release licences. Comments were mostly very positive. All but one person reported that the rules covering their supervision, including breach, had been explained to them, either fully or in part. 96% noted that they had a good relationship with their offender manager, who listened to what they had to say. 94% recalled that their sentence plan had been discussed with them and they thought that probation staff and people from other agencies had worked together well in their case. Out of 18 who were on licence, 14 had been visited by their offender manager while they were in custody.

Fifteen of the offenders reported that the probation area had helped them with issues concerning attitudes to offending and 12 noted assistance with ETE, thinking skills, and emotional well-being. Others commented on having received assistance with alcohol or drug use problems, and several mentioned help with accommodation concerns and health problems. Thirteen indicated that they had faced difficulties in taking full part in their supervision, and in the majority of instances these difficulties had been discussed and plans put in place to tackle them. Forty one out of 42 people who responded to the question thought that the work of the probation area had made them think more about their offending, and 36 out of 38 said that it had made them think more about the victims of crime. Thirty seven out of 40 believed that they were now less likely to reoffend.

Victims

As the probation area had conducted a victim survey recently, covering almost identical questions to those used in our own questionnaire, we agreed to use their data rather than contact the same people again. Eighty five questionnaires had been sent to victims who had either indicated that they did not want to make use of the victim liaison scheme, or who had not responded to the offer of contact by a VLO. Fifteen of these were completed and returned. In 14 cases, victims thought that the initial letter from the VLO explained sufficiently and clearly why they were being contacted. Only one thought that more could have been done to engage them, but the action they proposed would have been outside the legal remit of the probation area.

A separate questionnaire had also been sent to 42 victims who were currently involved with a VLO, ten of these were completed and returned. All confirmed that the victim liaison scheme was described fully and clearly, and that the VLO had explained about prison sentences in general. All but one were satisfied that they had been kept informed about the offender's progress through the penal system and eight out of ten confirmed that the VLO had checked whether they had concerns that they wished to be taken into account. Nine out of ten thought that the VLO was able to answer sufficiently any questions that they had about the case, but three thought that the frequency of contact with the VLO was insufficient. All confirmed that they had received appropriate support and had been treated with courtesy and respect. Diversity issues (such as gender, disability, culture or language) had been given sufficient attention by the VLO in all applicable cases.

One victim took part in an individual interview with us to give their views about the service received. This person echoed the positive views noted above, commenting that *"they felt safer and reassured by the work of the VLO"*. This victim thought their needs were taken account of well by the VLO, for example by visits to their home at convenient times, and thought there were no improvements which needed to be made to the service.

Courts

None of the 60 questionnaires sent to sentencers or other court personnel were completed and returned, so it was not possible to comment on their perspective.

1. ASSESSMENT AND SENTENCE PLANNING

1.1 General Criterion: PREPARING FOR SENTENCE

Activity in the phase leading up to sentence is timely, purposeful and effective.

80%

Strengths:

- (a) A court report had been prepared in 59 cases in the sample of 70 community orders and licence cases we scrutinised. Where the court had indicated the level of seriousness, this had been taken into account in all instances.
- (b) A clear proposal for sentence had been made in 90% of reports. Where a community-based sentence had been proposed (in almost all those reports) this was followed by the court in 88% of cases, indicating a good level of sentencer confidence in community sentences.
- (c) All the reports had been completed on time and all used the nationally-approved format. All but two were of the appropriate type, i.e. FDRs or SDRs. 88% had been based on the appropriate RoH and needs assessment and 80% were judged to have met the national standard to be objective, impartial and free from discriminatory language or stereotype.
- (d) 72% of reports contained an appropriate outline plan and 73% were assessed as being suitably concise.
- (e) Where the OASys template had been used in relevant reports, it was judged to have enhanced the quality of the report on 79% of occasions.
- (f) Seven reports were prepared in PPO cases. The likelihood of reoffending was clearly outlined in six reports and offence seriousness in five. Five reports also avoided labelling the offender as a PPO, in accordance with national guidance, and in the same number there was a clear and proportionate proposal.

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) 36% of reports did not meet the national standard requirement to be balanced, verified, and factually accurate.
- (b) Appropriate victim information was included in just over half the reports.
- (c) Self-harm was an issue in 24 cases, but it was clearly recorded in only half. In four of the cases the offender had been sentenced to custody and there was evidence in just two instances that the risk of self-harm had been communicated to prison staff.

Conclusion:

Performance against this criterion was good.

1.2 General Criterion: ASSESSMENT OF RISK OF HARM

RoH is comprehensively and accurately assessed using OASys in each case and additional specialist assessment tools where relevant.

63%

Strengths:

- (a) RoH screening had been completed in 96% of community order and custody cases and on 93% of occasions this had been undertaken on time at the start of sentence. In 90% of licence cases the screening had been completed or reviewed on release from custody. The screening was considered to be accurate in 81% of cases. These findings were a considerable improvement on those from the RoHAA we undertook in December 2007, which examined the quality of RoH work in the area.
- (b) The full RoH analysis adequately reflected RoH to prisoners in five out of six relevant cases and to staff in 27 out of 33 cases (82%). However, the figure was lower in respect of known adults, judged as accurate in 78% of instances.
- (c) Nineteen cases in the sample were classified as posing a high or very high RoH to others. In 15 instances, this had been communicated to other staff involved in the case. Keyworkers were generally satisfied that they were notified appropriately of the level of RoH posed; information usually came through referral forms or was on OASys.
- (d) There were 26 cases identified as being managed through MAPPA. In all but four this had been communicated to all staff involved.
- (e) Risk management plans were structured according to the required format in 90% of cases in the community, in 89% of custody cases and in 82% of the licence sample.
- (f) As the area did not have its own approved premises it accessed facilities in South Wales and in England. Referrals were made to approved premises outside Gwent in nine cases in the sample and all of these were considered to have been appropriate. Through the Probation Accommodation and Advice Scheme, delivered in partnership with a Third Sector provider, there was specific housing support available for offenders managed under MAPPA which ensured additional oversight for offenders posing a high or very high RoH.

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) In 21% of cases, the initial OASys RoH classification (low, medium, high or very high) did not appear to be accurate. We saw a number of examples where that initial classification was either too high or too low, though in some instances this had been reassessed more accurately when the case was reviewed at the four month stage.
- (b) Ninety four cases indicated the need for a full RoH analysis following the screening, but this had not been carried out in 15 instances. In most of these cases no acceptable explanation was recorded. Where

a full RoH analysis had been undertaken, it was completed to a sufficient standard in less than half the cases.

- (c) RoH to children was not reflected accurately in assessments in nine out of 44 relevant cases, and assessment of RoH to the public was insufficient in a quarter of relevant cases.
- (d) The OASys RoH screening and analysis failed to draw on previous probation or other assessments (such as those undertaken through MAPPA or by other agencies) in 29% of cases.
- (e) Insufficient attention had been paid to victim issues in 56% of relevant cases. This concerned both comprehensive assessment of victim safety concerns and the offender's victim awareness.
- (f) Three community order and three licence cases lacked a risk management plan at the start of sentence. Where plans had been completed, they were considered to be comprehensive in only 40% of relevant community order cases, 50% of licence cases, and one out of nine cases in the custody sample. Whilst the required format was being used in most instances, as noted above, many were lacking in detail. Just under a third of risk management plans in licence cases had been completed prior to release as required. Five out of nine in the custody sample had been completed on time, but neither of the two risk management plans required on high RoH cases in the community had been completed within five working days.
- (g) In just under a quarter of relevant cases, there was insufficient evidence of middle and/or higher management involvement in the assessment of offenders classified as posing a high or very high RoH. Of 24 cases where child safeguarding was a concern, management involvement was judged as effective in 15.
- (h) There were arrangements across Wales to manage cross-area placements and transfer of offenders, but these had not always worked as effectively as needed. For example, we saw one case where there was insufficient liaison between Gwent MAPPA and MAPPA in the receiving area, resulting in a lack of initial attention to victim safety. Issues were being addressed, particularly in relation to MAPPA cases, through improvement work undertaken in conjunction with the NOMS Public Protection Unit.

Conclusion:

This criterion represents an urgent priority for improvement.

1.3 General Criterion: ASSESSMENT OF LIKELIHOOD OF REOFFENDING
Likelihood of reoffending is comprehensively and accurately assessed using OASys as applicable.

74%

Strengths:

- (a) An OASys score had been calculated at the start of sentence or release from custody in 92% of cases.
- (b) Criminogenic factors were assessed in a timely manner in 81% of cases.
- (c) Positive influences on offenders, such as supportive and pro-social factors, were identified appropriately in 78% of cases.
- (d) Out of 12 PPO cases, the OASys assessment was completed on time in 11 instances.

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) Of the nine cases where no OASys had been completed, there was no OGRS2 score recorded for three.
- (b) Criminogenic factors were not comprehensively assessed in 30% of cases overall. In PPO cases, the assessment was sufficiently thorough in only five cases out of 11.
- (c) Where there were previous relevant assessments, these were not drawn on in 27% of cases. Some partner agency staff were unclear whether their assessments were made use of by offender managers.

Conclusion:

Performance against this criterion was good.

1.4 General Criterion: ASSESSMENT OF OFFENDER ENGAGEMENT
Potential obstacles or challenges to positive engagement are identified and plans made to minimise their possible impact.

72%

Strengths:

- (a) Race and ethnicity classification had been recorded as required in 97% of cases.
- (b) Where the basic skills screening indicated a need for a full assessment, this had been carried out in 71% of cases.
- (c) 70% of cases showed that the offender's intellectual ability, learning style, motivation and capacity to change had been taken into account at the earliest opportunity, though this did leave a significant number where there was no evidence that consideration had been given to these important issues.
- (d) For accredited programmes staff, the programme induction session provided the main opportunity to assess individual diversity factors for each offender. The treatment manager for each particular

programme held special responsibility to ensure that needs were appropriately assessed and plans were put in place to encourage attendance and participation. We heard of a number of examples of individual support from tutors and of the involvement of ETE workers in some programmes, such as OSAP, to support offenders with learning needs. There were also examples of ETE workers taking good account of offenders' educational achievements and learning styles in finding suitable provision for offenders to ensure they obtained the maximum benefit. We saw a number of activities which were planned and adapted to meet individual learners' needs and abilities.

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) In over a third of cases there was no evidence in the records of a basic skills screening having been carried out. Case administrators assured us that the relevant forms were included in the 'PSR pack' – the case file put together for report writers – but it seemed copies were not routinely kept with the offender manager's paper case record. We would expect the offender manager to keep a copy of the screening tool and use it to inform their assessment of the impact of any literacy, numeracy or language difficulties on the offender's ability to engage in their sentence.
- (b) Although we saw some good examples of consideration given to the best way to work with individual offenders, insufficient attention was paid to the methods most likely to be effective with the offender in a third of cases.
- (c) Despite some good work in relation to accredited programme cases, diversity issues and other individual needs had been actively assessed in only 63% of cases overall and there were ten instances where potentially discriminatory or disadvantaging factors had been missed. Some offender managers did make good use of OASys to record diversity issues, and individual needs (such as health difficulties) were usually assessed well in unpaid work. However, overall, the area needed to ensure more focus on offender managers identifying needs which posed potential challenges to successful completion of sentences.
- (d) There was no evidence in case records that offenders had been *offered* the opportunity to have services delivered through the medium of the Welsh language. There appeared to be a reliance on offenders actively requesting to use the Welsh language and the area confirmed that no requests had been received.
- (e) Where individual needs had been identified by offender managers, no plans were put in place to minimise their impact in 28% of cases.

Conclusion:

Performance against this criterion was good.

1.5 General Criterion: SENTENCE PLANNING

The offender manager plans interventions in custody and the community with a view to addressing criminogenic factors and managing any RoH to others. The initial sentence plan or unpaid work assessment is designed to describe a structured and coherent plan of work for each offender.

66%

Strengths:

- (a) All cases in the sample had been allocated to a tier, correctly in all but six instances. Where cases had been correctly tiered, sentence planning accurately reflected the tier – in respect of **punish, help, change** and **control** - in 82% of the sample.
- (b) In all community sentences except one, an offender manager had been allocated to the case within the required timescale.
- (c) Some parts of the sentence plan were being completed satisfactorily; for example, plans reflected the sentencing purpose in 72% of cases, and planned contact levels appropriate to the requirements were included in 92% of cases.
- (d) The ISP was completed on time in 77% of community cases, and drew on all other relevant assessments on 74% of occasions.
- (e) Interventions to address offending behaviour were identified in 90% of relevant cases and who would deliver interventions was clear in 71%.
- (f) In 79% of relevant cases, interventions were identified which were likely to reduce or contain the RoH posed by the offender, and in 72% the interventions would clearly meet the punitive requirements of the sentence.
- (g) It was evident from case records that in 97% of instances, steps had been taken to ensure that offenders fully understood the requirements of their sentence and in 96% that they understood the penalties for breach of their order or licence. 73% of plans made clear that all arranged contacts were enforceable.

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) Overall, sentence planning had not been given the priority expected. Plans gave a clear shape to supervision in just under half the cases, set relevant goals for the offender in half, and focused on achievable change in 55%. Fifteen cases (14%) showed no evidence of any of these elements. The area was aware that more attention needed to be paid to the sentence planning process.
- (b) In 52% of applicable cases, the roles and responsibilities of all workers were not clearly defined in the sentence plan. Probation keyworkers delivering interventions (such as ETE workers, programmes tutors, and unpaid work supervisors) were clear about their role in the offender management model but their work did not always feature in the plan.
- (c) How an offender's RoH was to be managed (including cross-references to the risk management plan) was outlined in the ISP in

55% of relevant cases. Where consideration needed to be given to restrictive licence conditions or community order requirements to minimise the RoH posed, there was no evidence of this in 40% of cases.

- (d) Appropriate sequencing of interventions was set out in 51% of cases, and the timing of each requirement identified appropriately in 49%. In the custody sample, five out of nine plans stated clearly what work would be done in custody and what on release.
- (e) Interventions to promote community reintegration were identified in 67% of relevant cases.
- (f) Plans were sensitive to diversity issues, including offender vulnerability, in 55% of relevant cases. From discussions with offender managers, it was evident in some instances that they were giving consideration to the diverse needs of offenders (such as employment or family responsibilities) but were not always recording these in the ISP.
- (g) Records showed that offenders had the opportunity to participate actively in the sentence planning process in 58% of cases. This left a significant group who appeared to have no involvement, although almost all the offenders who responded to our questionnaire confirmed that their sentence plan *had* been discussed with them. This possibly indicated a gap in appropriate case recording.

Conclusion:

This criterion represents a priority for improvement.

2. IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERVENTIONS

2.1 General Criterion: DELIVERING THE SENTENCE PLAN

The offender manager facilitates the structured delivery of all relevant elements of the sentence.

64%

Strengths:

- (a) Arrangements were put in place to prepare offenders thoroughly for interventions in 76% of cases.
- (b) There was evidence of good communication between the offender manager and other workers in 76% of cases. The offender manager oversaw and coordinated the input of all workers in 71% of cases. Probation keyworkers noted good communication with them by some offender managers, particularly in respect of IDAP, but this was not consistent across the area.
- (c) Offender managers had demonstrated commitment to their work with the offender and motivated and supported offenders throughout their sentence in 81% of cases.
- (d) Sentence plans had been reviewed in accordance with the required timescales in 89% of cases.
- (e) Three cases in the custody sample had had reports prepared in order to contribute to decision-making processes in the prison. In all instances the reports were clear and thorough, incorporated accurate RoH assessments and were completed on time.
- (f) In the custody sample, three offenders had been moved to another establishment whilst serving their prison sentence. In two of these cases, this information had been communicated promptly to their offender manager. These were not planned moves consistent with the sentence plan, but were all undertaken for legitimate operational or security reasons.
- (g) At the time of the inspection, when approximately six months had passed from sentence or release on licence for most of the cases, sentence requirements had been fully implemented in 76% of instances. This did leave, though, a sizeable minority where not all requirements had been addressed. In a number of cases this was due to delays in the provision of the appropriate accredited programme, owing to the capacity issues referred to elsewhere in this report.

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) Where there was more than one requirement in an order or licence, interventions were not delivered in an appropriate sequence in 39% of cases.
- (b) Work in the community did not build sufficiently on activity in custody in 38% of licence cases. Substance misuse issues were the

most commonly identified concerns, which should have featured more strongly in post-release work.

- (c) In 35% of relevant cases, arrangements were not in place to reinforce new skills following interventions. Some offender managers were not maintaining regular appointments with offenders while they were undertaking their accredited programme, which made it difficult for them to reinforce the learning.
- (d) 31% of cases lacked evidence of good communication between all workers and the offender.
- (e) The delivery of sentence plans required improvement. In many cases the plan itself had been 'pulled through' from the ISP, so although reviews were timely, as noted above, they were not always effective in identifying what work had been achieved and what remained to be done. Work with the offender was seen to flow coherently from the plan in 64% of cases and 57% lacked objectives and milestones giving a clear direction to supervision. Continuing efforts to ensure ownership of the plan by the offender were apparent in only 47% of cases and 21 cases contained no evidence of any of these elements.
- (f) Reviews did not integrate other plans, for example individual learning plans or MAPPA action plans, in 32% of cases.
- (g) Where the offender had been released on licence following the custodial part of their sentence, we found limited examples of joint work between offender managers and prison-based staff to prepare offenders for a return to the community. Positive joint work was demonstrated in only 46% of the cases, proactive work in 41% and timely activity in 54%. Whilst good efforts were being put into the custody sample (of offenders within the scope of Phase II of the offender management model), this did not permeate to other licence cases where we would still expect appropriate liaison with prison-based staff.
- (h) Four cases in the sample had been transferred between probation areas. Effective transfer practice required that both the transferring and receiving areas worked to national guidance. In only one case had a complete and current OASys been provided to the receiving area. In one of the two instances involving transfer of a high or very high RoH case, the risk management plan was updated by the receiving area within the required timescale. In two out of the four cases transferred, the first appointment had been made within the required five days and a home visit made within ten days. In two cases, none of these required elements had been demonstrated.

Conclusion:

This criterion represents an urgent priority for improvement.

2.2 General Criterion: PROTECTING THE PUBLIC BY MINIMISING RISK OF HARM

All reasonable actions have been taken to protect the public by keeping to a minimum the offender's RoH to others.

76%

Strengths:

- (a) In the community sentence and licence samples, RoH to others had been reviewed within four months of the start of sentence or release on licence in 87% of cases. For subsequent reviews, this rose to 94%. Where there had been a significant change which might have given rise to an increase in RoH in community orders or licences, a review of RoH had been undertaken in 76% of cases. This did leave 11 cases where there were significant changes, but no review had been done.
- (b) We saw very encouraging practice in relation to reviews in the custody sample. In all ten cases, RoH had been reviewed as required no later than 12 months after sentence. In the three cases where there had been a significant change, the RoH had been reviewed appropriately and this had also been done in all relevant instances where release preparation was underway. RoH had then been reviewed within four months of release in relevant cases.
- (c) There was ongoing planning to address RoH to children in 90% of cases, to the public in 80% and to known adults in 85% of instances. In respect of RoH to prisoners, there was evidence of ongoing planning in all the relevant cases. For all four RoH aspects, these figures were an improvement over those seen in the initial RoH analysis and plans, indicating positive developments in practice since the RoHAA. As far as RoH to staff was concerned, however, there were still four cases where this had not been addressed.
- (d) Of the ten custody cases, there was evidence of appropriate engagement with prison risk management processes in eight.
- (d) MAPPA were assessed as having been used effectively in 23 out of 26 cases and offender managers and other staff having contributed effectively in the same number. Partner agencies involved in MAPPA noted that a good level of information was provided by probation staff for MAPPA meetings. They also confirmed that there had been no inappropriate referrals.
- (e) Seven out of 41 offenders released on licence had been recalled to custody because of RoH concerns. In all cases the recall had been actioned properly and recall had formed an appropriate part of the risk management process. However, in two of these cases, there was no evidence of clear explanation to the offender as to the reasons for their re-imprisonment or efforts to re-engage them.
- (f) Changes in RoH were identified swiftly in 77% of cases and acted upon appropriately in the same number.

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) Changes in an offender’s RoH were not anticipated where feasible in a third of relevant cases.
- (b) A purposeful home visit to high or very high RoH offenders only took place within ten working days of sentence or release in half the relevant cases. One was carried out appropriately at a later stage in four out of ten cases and repeated as necessary to keep RoH to a minimum in five. Home visits were used effectively to monitor children’s safeguarding outcomes in only 12 out of 25 relevant cases.

Conclusion:

Performance against this criterion was good.

2.3 General Criterion: VICTIMS

Consistent attention is given to issues concerning victims.

74%

Strengths:

- (a) A high level of satisfaction with the work of VLO staff was expressed by the victims who responded to the area’s own survey.
- (b) Of the statutory victim contact cases in the sample, there was evidence in almost all that the victim had received an offer of face-to-face contact with the VLO within the required timescale and that they had been offered information about the criminal justice process.
- (c) In the 20 cases where the victim had taken up the offer of contact with the VLO, there was evidence that all except one had been given the opportunity to express their views on appropriate licence conditions to promote their safety.
- (d) Fourteen out of 15 victims had been informed of offender release conditions and told of release in a timely manner.
- (e) We saw examples of some offender managers using a victim awareness workbook effectively with offenders and we were told that its use was now being rolled out across the area.
- (f) Thirty six out of 38 offenders who responded to the relevant part of our questionnaire indicated that the work of the probation area had made them think more about the victims of crime; similar views were also expressed by some of the offenders we interviewed.

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) Victim safety (including children’s safeguarding concerns) was an issue in 60 cases in the sample. This was given appropriate priority in 72% of cases, which left 17 instances where it had not been given sufficient attention.
- (b) There was evidence of offender supervisors in custody promoting victim safety in only two out of six relevant cases.

- (c) Victim awareness work had not been undertaken with offenders in 40% of cases where it was appropriate; this contrasted with offenders' views noted above, where a higher proportion indicated experiencing some victim awareness work.
- (d) Where victim contact work had proceeded, there was no evidence in three out of eight instances that the victim had had the opportunity to see the part of the parole report that reflected their concerns.

Conclusion:

Performance against this criterion was good.

2.4 General Criterion: ENSURING CONTAINMENT AND PROMOTING COMPLIANCE (Punish)
Contact with the offender and enforcement of the sentence is planned and implemented to meet the requirements of national standards and to encourage engagement with the sentence process.

82%

Strengths:

- (a) There were satisfactory arrangements in place to restrict the offender's liberty during their custodial sentence in all eight relevant cases.
- (b) In nine out of ten cases there was evidence that offenders in custody were offered a full and timely induction. Similarly, 90% of offenders on community orders or released on licence were offered appropriate induction.
- (c) The frequency of appointments conformed to national standards in 90% of cases, and facilitated the requirements of the sentence in 87%. It met RoH considerations in 76% and supported the achievement of sentence plan objectives in 78%.
- (d) Placements were judged to be of benefit to the community in 89% of cases and to be suitably demanding in 78%. The area had a strong focus on conservation projects (such as repairing dry stone walls) and other environmentally-friendly activities. Many projects had been selected by local civic leaders as meeting the needs of particular communities. There was less evidence though, of placements being positively matched to the offender; 19 out of 27 (70%) cases showed this.
- (e) Enhanced levels of contact were in evidence in all the PPO cases in the sample, and in seven out of ten the reporting pattern was assessed as being supportive of all elements of the sentence.
- (f) Attention to monitoring attendance across all interventions was good, at 93%, and effective action had been taken to ensure compliance in all but three cases (96%). Case administrators played an effective part in monitoring attendance across interventions and preparing breach paperwork.

- (g) Judgments about the acceptability of absences were consistent and appropriate in 92% of cases. Where required, breach action was instigated within the required timescale in all but three cases, and resolved in a timely manner in 79%.
- (h) The quality of case records was good in some respects, with 87% being well organised. Recording of information was clear in 88% of cases and timely in 93%.

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) Contact by the offender manager with offenders in custody and with prison-based staff was judged as insufficient in 44% of licence cases. Arrangements for liaison were considered unlikely to promote effective offender management in the community post-release in a similar proportion of cases.
- (b) The frequency of unpaid work sessions needed improvement; in 44% of cases this did not conform to the national standard.
- (c) Eleven cases required the enforcement of exclusion and/or curfew requirements. In four cases this had not been dealt with satisfactorily; in some instances this was due to insufficient active liaison with electronic monitoring providers.
- (d) Some aspects of case recording required further attention. 23% of cases did not contain all relevant documentation, 14% lacked clear race and ethnic monitoring details and recording was not sufficiently comprehensive in a quarter of cases. We also saw a number of examples of outdated paperwork being included in case files, for example the 'standard' initial letter to offenders in custody being used inappropriately in Phase II and Phase III cases, and some offices not using the current version of the basic skills screening tool. The area needed to review its standard paperwork to ensure fitness for purpose and consistency across offices.
- (e) Whilst PPO and high RoH teams obtained details of offenders' previous convictions quickly through their close links with police colleagues, other teams reported difficulties in obtaining previous convictions in a timely manner. Recently, some had been received with the PNC number blanked out, which made it impossible to complete OASys in full. The area undertook to follow this up with relevant LCJB partners.

Conclusion:

Performance against this criterion was good.

**2.5 General Criterion: CONSTRUCTIVE INTERVENTIONS
(Help and Change)**

Interventions are delivered to identified ends and to meet the requirements of the sentence: help and change.

67%

Strengths:

- (a) Sufficient work and resources were directed at community reintegration issues in three-quarters of cases where it was needed.
- (b) Accredited programme tutors were able to give many good examples of interventions encouraging offenders to accept responsibility for their behaviour and its consequences, particularly in respect of participants in IDAP, where offenders' families had noted the difference in behaviour.
- (c) To ensure that ETE staff received all appropriate referrals and thus could deliver the appropriate inputs, they obtained OASys information identifying those with needs in respect of ETE. This enabled them to follow up instances where no referral had been received from the offender manager. This was an impressive, yet simple, system.
- (d) Offender managers prepared reports and attended DRR review hearings as required in all eight relevant cases in the sample.
- (e) After reception into custody, in all except one case, there was evidence that immediate action had been taken to preserve employment, accommodation and family ties where appropriate. Supporting protective factors were clearly identified in five out of seven relevant cases and help to preserve community links was evident in five out of six cases.
- (f) Four offenders in our sample had been resident in approved premises outside Gwent for at least six weeks at the time of our inspection. Support with finding suitable move-on accommodation was provided for three residents and other constructive interventions included attendance at accredited programmes and help with life skills.

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) In 40% of cases there was insufficient evidence that constructive interventions challenged the offender to accept responsibility for their offending behaviour and its consequences. This was surprising, given the positive examples noted by programme tutors above. This may have reflected issues about insufficiency of recording noted in section 2.4 above.
- (b) Where there were identified needs for offenders to improve their basic skills, no arrangements for an appropriate intervention to be delivered had been made in 30% of cases.
- (c) Thirty one cases in the sample contained a requirement for attendance at an accredited programme. In 48% of these, provision of the programme and its timing were not consistent with the sentence plan. Clear and acceptable reasons for this were recorded

in seven out of 15 cases.

- (d) Constructive interventions undertaken at approved premises were not always included in the sentence plan.

Conclusion:

This criterion represents a priority for improvement.

2.6 General Criterion: RESTRICTIVE INTERVENTIONS (Control)
Interventions are delivered to identified ends and to meet the requirements of the sentence: control.

82%

Strengths:

- (a) Licence requirements were assessed as comprehensive in 85% of relevant cases, necessary and proportionate to the RoH in 89% and proportionate to the likelihood of reoffending in 93%. The figure (at 81%) was slightly lower in respect of protection of victims; in five instances the licence requirements were not thought to be proportionate.
- (b) Out of four PPO licence cases where the offending was drug related, three had appropriate additional drug testing requirements.
- (c) Restrictive interventions were monitored fully in 74% of cases and every reasonable action taken to minimise RoH in 75%. This did, however, leave cases (ten and 11 respectively) where more could have been done.
- (d) The area did not have its own approved premises, but had used facilities outside Gwent effectively in all three relevant cases in the sample.

Area for Improvement:

- (a) In a number of cases, there was no evidence of active liaison by the offender manager with the electronic monitoring provider. Instead, there was reliance on the provider alerting the offender manager to alleged breaches, which was not sufficient.

Conclusion:

Performance against this criterion was good.

2.7 General Criterion: DIVERSITY ISSUES
Full and proper attention is paid to diversity issues.

66%

Strengths:

- (a) ETE staff gave good attention to individual learners' needs; for example, making flexible arrangements to accommodate those with carer responsibilities, arranging catch-up classes for a learner with mental health difficulties and waiting for a detoxification to be

completed before testing for basic skills.

- (b) Programme tutors identified potential singleton placements at the pre-programme meeting and discussed options with the offender at that stage. Each offender's situation was also kept under review, so that if, for example, a lone woman remained in an otherwise all male group she would be offered the opportunity of moving to another programme. If an offender requested that the programme was delivered in the Welsh language, there were arrangements in place with other probation areas in Wales to provide this, although these did rely on the offender being able to travel outside their home area.
- (c) Where offenders had been placed in approved premises outside Gwent, the regime met the diversity needs of the residents in all three relevant cases.
- (d) Offenders were clearly informed in 91% of cases that discriminatory behaviour would not be tolerated. This was undertaken at induction and again at the start of all interventions.

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) The arrangements for interventions had not taken account of the offender's diversity needs in 32% of relevant cases; for example, issues relating to disability had not been addressed properly in six out of 19 cases.
- (b) Although there were generally good arrangements in the area to meet literacy and dyslexia needs, in 17 out of 45 relevant cases these had not been tackled appropriately. For example, in one part of the area, no arrangement had been made for evening ETE appointments where these were needed by some offenders who were in daytime employment. We were assured by the area that alternative supported learning provision was available but, clearly, it had not been accessed in all appropriate cases.
- (c) Despite the positive systems operated by programme tutors, noted above, informed consent to a singleton placement in a mixed setting had not been evidenced in two out of six cases. Where an offender from a minority group had been placed in a mixed setting, in four out of seven cases there was no apparent attention to staff composition or other arrangements to support the offender's engagement. This may have reflected limited recording by offender managers of attention to diversity needs, as we heard some good examples from ETE and programmes staff of their efforts to meet individual need.

Conclusion:

This criterion represents a priority for improvement.

3. ACHIEVEMENT AND MONITORING OF OUTCOMES

3.1 General Criterion: ACHIEVEMENT OF INITIAL OUTCOMES *Planned objectives are efficiently achieved.*

64%

Strengths:

- (a) Across a range of measures, the outcomes indicated that the public had been better protected during the offender's sentence. There was evidence of responsiveness to changes in the RoH posed, with an increase in restrictive measures in ten cases and a decrease in a small number (five) where the offender's behaviour had demonstrated improvement. There was no increase in MAPPA level for those supervised under these arrangements, and in four instances positive changes in the offender's behaviour had resulted in a reduction in the MAPPA level. Two children had been placed on the safeguarding register, but none had been removed from it.
- (b) 79% of offenders had neither been cautioned nor convicted for a further offence since the start of sentence. Almost all offenders who responded to our questionnaire said that they were less likely to offend as a result of the work of the probation area, and this was echoed by most of those we interviewed.
- (c) There had been direct benefit to the community in 74% of cases where unpaid work had been undertaken by offenders. Many offenders were proud of their achievements and the new skills they had learned.
- (d) Achievement of sentencing objectives was evidenced most strongly in terms of **punishment**, with 92% of offenders experiencing this appropriately.
- (e) Resources allocated to the case were consistent with the offender's RoH in 91% of cases and likelihood of reoffending in 96%.
- (f) Offenders' PPO status was matched with appropriate increased resource in all relevant cases.
- (g) In 88% of cases, resources were judged as being used efficiently to achieve planned outcomes.

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) Increased victim awareness was demonstrated in only 38% of relevant cases. As noted elsewhere in this report, offenders themselves reported more encouraging results in this respect, which may indicate a need for more attention by offender managers to recording positive outcomes.
- (b) Thirty cases in the community involved offenders who had a history of perpetrating domestic abuse. Whilst in 12 cases there was evidence from the police Domestic Abuse Unit that there had been no further call-outs to addresses involving the offender, in four

cases it was not apparent from the record if any such checks had been undertaken. It was thus unclear how successfully RoH was being contained or reduced in these particular circumstances.

- (c) Although 65% of offenders had complied fully with the requirements of their sentence, this left significant room for improvement. As noted in section four of this report, the area was taking steps to improve its performance in engaging offenders to improve compliance.
- (d) In 47 applicable cases there had been no demonstrable benefit to the community from the sentence. 9% of cases showed a reduction in seriousness of offending and 19% in frequency. Slightly more positively, in just under a quarter of cases there was evidence of reduced threat to victims and potential victims.
- (e) Where OASys had been rescored, there was no improvement in the score in 51% of cases (an improved score would demonstrate a reduction in criminogenic needs). Progress in respect of the highest priority need was evidenced in 56% of cases and for the second and third priority needs the figures were 54% and 42% respectively. Thinking and behaviour issues were the most common needs related to offending (present in 92 cases) followed by alcohol misuse in 64 cases and ETE issues in 61.
- (f) Although the area had exceeded its targets for offenders achieving basic skills awards in 2007/2008, which would indicate increased offender learning, in 55% of cases there was no evidence that learning outcomes or skills had been applied by the offender. 44% showed no indication of positive changes in the offender's attitudes or behaviour. This contrasted with offenders' views about the early outcomes of their sentences and, again, may have reflected a lack of focus on recording what had changed.
- (g) Whilst 69% of Tier 4 cases demonstrated that sentencing objectives relating to **control** were being achieved, this did leave room for improvement. 52% of Tier 2, 3, and 4 cases contained evidence that constructive interventions had been delivered to **help** offenders, but only 36% of Tier 3 and 4 cases demonstrated that sentencing objectives in relation to **change** in behaviour were being achieved.

Conclusion:

This criterion represents a priority for improvement.

3.2 General Criterion: SUSTAINABILITY OF PROGRESS
Results are capable of being sustained between different phases of a sentence and beyond the end of supervision.

65%

Strengths:

- (a) There was continuity in offender management, with 89% of cases having experienced only one or two offender managers including the PSR writer.
- (b) 75% of offenders who had a criminogenic need that could be addressed by a community-based organisation had been made aware of how to find assistance. More attention did need to be given though, to longer term community reintegration issues, enabling support for offenders after the end of their supervision.

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) Structured sentence planning had not been given a sufficiently high priority throughout the sentence in 46% of cases.
- (b) There was insufficient action by offender managers to consolidate offender learning and reinforce new skills in 43% of cases. Specifically in relation to unpaid work, offenders needed more opportunities to gain accreditation for their achievements.

Conclusion:

This criterion represents a priority for improvement.

4. LEADERSHIP AND STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

4.1 General Criterion: LEADERSHIP AND PLANNING

There is active leadership in the implementation of national policies via local policies and procedures which are regularly monitored and reviewed, through proactive planning with other key agencies, and by promoting the diversity agenda.

Satisfactorily met

Strengths:

- (a) The area's annual business plan used the required headings to build on national and local priorities and those of the DOM for Wales, the latter including provision to meet need in respect of substance misuse and domestic abuse. The business planning process was clearly linked to the SLA with the DOM and took into account improvement objectives identified from the EFQM self-assessment undertaken annually, as well as performance targets. Divisional and team plans flowed from the overall plan and staff appraisal objectives were cascaded from these. Progress against the plan was reviewed regularly through divisional structures and through the Gwent Probation Board.
- (b) The business planning process was proactive and aimed to involve all staff through an invitation to feedback on draft plans. There was no specific meeting with middle managers as a group to discuss the annual plan, although discussions took place within the divisional management structures. The area had also used cross-grade staff groups to develop, implement and monitor policies such as the introduction and review of the offender management model.
- (c) Of the offender manager staff we interviewed, 77% thought that the probation area's managers demonstrated professional management approaches and 70% felt that they modelled positive leadership behaviour. This did leave a significant minority who took a different view.
- (d) Liaison with sentencers was undertaken primarily through PLC meetings to which the area contributed three times a year. These had focused on a range of topics including information about offenders' response to DRRs and about suitability for FDRs, both of which resulted in an increased level of understanding of the issues involved. The Board Chair, who was also a sentencer, noted the willingness of probation staff and sentencers to find jointly-agreed solutions to any challenges faced, such as the high number of requirements in community orders which then had consequences for offender compliance rates. Recent training in respect of the new sentencing guidelines had been undertaken jointly by magistrates and probation, aiding the understanding of the implications of these for both sentencers and report writers. There was a regular newsletter for sentencers about unpaid work projects and outcomes;

in our view this could be expanded easily to include information and achievements concerning other aspects of the area's work. The CO also met members of the judiciary across Wales, twice yearly. One positive outcome from this had been an agreement that judges would indicate to probation staff, when adjourning for a PSR, the type of sentence they were minded to impose, enabling report writers to target proposals more effectively.

- (e) There was good engagement with the LCJB and the area's contribution to its work was praised by partner agencies within the justice system; one noted that the relationship with probation at a strategic level was "*first class*". There had been effective contribution to developments within HMCS, such as the implementation of the Libra recording system. There were also strong links with the police and local prisons, the latter resulting, for example, in effective partnership work 'through the prison gate' to increase access to accredited programmes by offenders. However, as noted elsewhere in this report, the positive engagement with some local prisons at strategic level did not always result in active pre-release work by offender managers.
- (f) The area made an appropriate strategic contribution to public protection generally, including appropriate involvement with the five LSCBs and domestic abuse forums. Probation commanded respect from partner agencies for its "*general ability to manage dangerous people*" and had contributed positively to a successful police operation to tackle an emerging threat of major criminality in one part of the area. The ACO with public protection responsibilities became chair of the MAPPAs SMB in April 2008 and managed the MAPPAs team (including the MAPPAs coordinator post) on behalf of the SMB. Strategic partners noted the area's strong commitment to the effective functioning of MAPPAs and its engagement in efforts to improve public protection. Dealing with the aftermath (including considerable press interest) of the SFO review on a high-profile case, published earlier in 2008, had been a joint effort on the part of police and probation. Whilst this was a difficult period for the agencies involved, with potential for loss of good reputation for both, they had now accepted joint responsibility for the outcome and for taking forward improvements, as noted below.
- (g) Commitment to collaborative work with other organisations, whether from the statutory or voluntary sector, was very evident from the comments of partner agencies. One partner agency noted the "*brilliant relationship*" and effective communication with the area, comparing this with less positive experience, as a commissioned service, with other probation areas. Other strategic partners from outside the justice system also commented favourably on effective inter-agency working at strategic level, particularly in relation to developments in mental health service provision. As well as their functional responsibilities, the ACOs also linked with the five local authorities within the Gwent probation area. Whilst the development of Local Delivery Agreements was in its very early stages in Wales at the time of the inspection, the area was well engaged with the five

CSPs in respect of unpaid work and PPO strategy and practice. Partner agencies noted good links with the Welsh Assembly Government, with one ACO taking the lead liaison responsibility and contributing to three of its regional meetings. There were positive links to the Welsh Assembly Government's social inclusion agenda through ETE work in particular. The area was engaged effectively with other probation areas in Wales in a number of ways, including through the Reducing Reoffending Action Plan for Wales. As part of this, the CO chaired one of the Pathway groups and represented the Welsh probation areas/Trusts on the national Reducing Reoffending Strategy group.

- (h) Board members and senior managers noted a constructive working relationship with the DOM's office, which they saw as an "*evolving partnership*". Discussions with the commissioner were viewed as a two-way process, and the area had been able to qualify their SLA for 2008/2009 to take into account the negative effects on performance of some of the estate, which was unfit for purpose. Whilst the area was clearly held to account for its leadership and performance, there had also been support from the DOM, for example through a presentation to the Board on the new NOMS structures being piloted in Wales, and through assistance in preparing for this inspection. However, there were concerns expressed at a "*lack of clarity*" about accountability – whether it was to the DOM or to the national Director of Probation. This was a particular issue in respect of the additional funding for 2008/2009 for increasing confidence in community sentencing. As noted elsewhere in this report, the NOMS Performance Improvement Unit had undertaken a targeted performance improvement programme in Gwent earlier in 2008. Its input had been seen as helpful by the area and had resulted in improved performance against the targets.
- (i) A number of specific diversity objectives were detailed in the business plan, including a joint review (with other probation areas in Wales and HMCS) of translation services to reflect changes in need that had been identified the previous year. Other service delivery and people management objectives also focused on diversity issues, such as improving services for mentally disordered offenders and promoting staff well-being, though these were not identified in the plan as having an impact on meeting diverse needs. Alongside the business plan, there was a separate diversity action plan which was taken forward by a diversity action group. This monitored activity against the plan and reported to the Board on a quarterly basis. SMT meetings included a standing item to consider the diversity impact of any decisions and management accountability meetings with the CO included reporting on issues relating to the diversity action plan, as well as providing an opportunity to address individual concerns.
- (j) The area was clearly receptive to the findings of regulatory bodies and acted on these to improve performance. For example, the more negative findings of our RoHAA undertaken in December 2007 and of the *Risk of Harm Inquiry Report* published March 2008 (a concurrent inquiry into the developments of multi-agency management of RoH

in Gwent) had been disappointing and unexpected. Despite this, the area had then worked hard (individually and with its statutory partners) to tackle the issues raised. A detailed action plan had been implemented following the RoHAA and positive outcomes from this were evident in this inspection, including an increased focus on RoH practice. A thorough SMB response to the *Risk of Harm Inquiry Report* had been prepared for the NOMS Public Protection Unit and progress identified in relation to the recommendations. Some issues required action at a national level, such as MAPPA documentation, and this was being addressed through NOMS.

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) Some middle managers expressed the view that, although senior managers showed positive leadership on an individual basis, there was a tendency to operate in the 'silos' of the divisional structures with the consequence that *"we've lost the overview of how we all fit together"*. Middle managers acknowledged the demands on the SMT and the pressures it had faced, but were seeking more clarity about the overall vision for Gwent. The Board Chair and CO had already recognised the need to increase the visibility of senior management and the Board and were planning to visit teams on a regular basis to explain decisions and discuss plans for the future. On the advice of its Investors in People assessor, the senior management team was also examining its own leadership model and style to identify strengths and areas for development.
- (b) Although all offender managers confirmed that policies and procedures were communicated by email, and most also referred to them being discussed in team meetings and supervision, 21% did not feel well informed about them. This was a sizeable minority of key staff.
- (c) Whilst the area had undertaken sentencer surveys in the past and had recently completed a victims' survey, there was limited evidence of the perspective of service users being taken into account in the planning process. This had already been recognised as an area for improvement and the business plan for 2008/2009 included an objective to implement a programme of stakeholder surveys, with particular reference to sentencers, unpaid work beneficiaries, victims and offenders.
- (d) Some partner agencies noted that, whilst relationships at strategic level were strong and effective, there was room for improvement in ensuring that agreements at that level were cascaded to front-line staff.
- (e) A strategic partner commented that probation was *"more focused on individual cases and less on the wider needs of local communities"*. The impact of stretched resources and a small senior management group was acknowledged by all partner agencies, several of which faced similar pressures in terms of community engagement, but it was felt that the probation area's expertise in working with sometimes difficult and dangerous people could aid local

communities in a variety of ways. The demand for a wider focus was recognised by the area, and probation was jointly leading on a community engagement pilot within the LCJB to address some of the issues.

4.2 General Criterion: PERFORMANCE AGAINST NATIONAL AND REGIONAL TARGETS <i>Key performance targets are consistently met, with careful attention to diversity issues throughout.</i>	Satisfactorily met
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Summary of results for Gwent from the NOMS Integrated Probation Performance Framework (IPPF): Q4 April 2007 - March 2008	
IPPF domain	
Public Protection	Good performance
Offender Management	Passable performance
Interventions	Passable performance
Operational Capability, Resource Use and Strategy	Good performance
Area score	Passable performance

Detailed results for each metric making up the above domains are at Appendix 1.

Strengths:	<p>(a) There was a strong Board and management focus on the achievement of key national and local targets. Having demonstrated an improving performance in the weighted scorecard (the previous national performance measure) the area had been made the subject of a NOMS targeted performance improvement project in January 2008, following disappointing IPPF results in the second quarter of the year 2007/2008. The Board received regular performance reports, on an exceptions basis, and more recently these had been extended down from team information to individual team member level. Findings from the RoHAA had also enabled the area to pinpoint more accurately where it needed to improve. There had been considerable effort by the area to turn round its performance, in partnership with performance advisors, and the 2007/2008 year-end figures showed overall improvement. Collaborative work with NOMS Performance Improvement Unit staff had resulted in identification of some measures that had been incorrectly calculated earlier in the year, and there was an increased focus on the crucial role of middle managers in improving the quality of data collection</p>
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and sustaining improvement. In addition, the area had revised and reissued its practice direction on compliance and enforcement practice in April 2008. Primarily designed to assist the area perform better against compliance targets, it was a very comprehensive document which drew on best practice from other probation areas.

- (b) The year-end IPPF indicated outstanding performance against some targets across the public protection measures, including national standards compliance and Tier 4 OASys assessments, with good performance in relation to PPO assessments, OASys assessments in Tier 1, 2 and 3 case, and victim contact. It should be noted, however, that these measures were not identical to inspection criteria. Whilst we found that RoH was successfully managed in most instances, improvements were still needed in the quality of public protection work. According to NOMS data, there was also impressive performance against a number of other targets in the offender management and interventions domains, including enforcement activity, unpaid work completions (despite the issue with stand-downs noted below) and DRR starts.
- (c) Middle managers received monthly performance figures, which were disseminated to their teams and used in team meetings. They were able to give a number of examples of how they had used information to improve performance in their teams. For example, psychometric testing of offenders prior to accredited programmes was not being completed on time; the team's solution was to devise a staff rota to deliver the testing, which proved effective in achieving the required standard. Other examples related to tackling individual performance issues based on the monitoring of practice.
- (d) Senior and middle managers were now clearly held to account for performance issues. The area used a framework of accountability meetings with the CO on a divisional basis, to identify performance gaps and find solutions, and this had led to some of the improvements noted above. Some middle managers gave examples of how they used the accountability process with their teams; preparing with them to identify what the gaps were and what needed to change. The meetings were seen by managers as an opportunity to share good practice and learn from each other, as well as being challenged about performance figures.
- (e) Very strong performance in relation to referrals to basic skills provision and in offenders retaining employment, demonstrated a focus on these aspects of individual offender need. There was also other evidence of attention to diversity in meeting targets, for example the provision of accredited programmes and some ETE services during the evenings, and the availability of weekend unpaid work to meet the needs of offenders in employment. Within DRRs there was a particular focus on making the offender's timetable as individualised as possible, to ensure engagement as well as meeting targets.
- (f) In respect of joint targets with partners in the justice system, an OCJR representative attended all LCJB meetings, feeding in good

practice examples from elsewhere, and performance had improved against all targets bar one. A business manager had been appointed early in 2008 and this was seen as re-invigorating the planning and delivery process. There were a number of examples of cooperative working with other agencies to achieve joint targets, including the PPO scheme and work with the Supporting People programme.

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) Performance against targets in respect of offender compliance with sentences, and of successful completion, was below the national average, as were the performance figures in respect of unpaid work days lost due to stand-downs. Compliance with national standards in interventions also needed improvement. There were improvement plans in place in respect of all these concerns, which were regularly reviewed by the NOMS Performance Improvement Unit. Given the progress made, the area was expecting to exit the performance improvement project in Autumn 2008. The Board and senior managers recognised that there was a continuing need for vigilance to ensure consistency of performance over time and between teams. More robust internal quality assurance measures would be needed once the Performance Improvement Unit's role came to an end.
- (b) Although the area was meeting the relevant targets, ETE provision was not meeting some offenders' needs. Whilst there were some good examples of offenders on unpaid work being encouraged to take up basic skills provision as part of their unpaid work hours, there was insufficient opportunity overall to improve literacy or numeracy skills whilst undertaking unpaid work. Although unpaid work supervisors gave good informal advice and guidance to offenders, those undertaking unpaid work would have benefited from more opportunities to gain accreditation for the occupational skills learned.

4.3 General Criterion: RESOURCE DEPLOYMENT
There is a strategic approach to deploying resources to deliver effective performance and support diversity initiatives and there are positive indications in relation to value for money.

Satisfactorily met

Strengths:

- (a) The area had a positive reputation for sound financial management and budget performance was scored as 'outstanding' in the year end IPPF for 2007/2008. Some difficult decisions had needed to be made in order to achieve this and the area had chosen not to employ all its TPOs who qualified that year. Understandably, this was not a popular decision, but some of the additional funding from the recent Confidence in Community Sentencing grant was being used to recruit all those who qualified during 2007/2008.

- (b) To complement use of the national workload measurement tool, the area had created the WIP, in use from September 2007. This was intended to ensure more equitable and transparent allocation of staff resources between teams. Whilst recognised by middle managers as a useful extension to the national tool, it was seen to have limitations, as noted below.
- (c) Appropriate priority in resourcing was given to both RoH and PPO work, and strategic partners commented positively on the priority given to these areas of probation work. 94% of cases were correctly tiered, which indicated that resources followed risk as required. The PPO performance visit by NOMS in March 2008 had shown some very positive findings, including a good average contact level with offenders matching national guidance and an *"encouragingly high"* number of home visits. The report also concluded that *"most of Gwent's PPOs appear to be managed on a sound inter-agency basis"*.
- (d) Although there was no feedback from sentencers, strategic partners were satisfied overall with probation staffing levels in courts, and staffing capacity was regarded by operational managers as *"just about sufficient"* to provide appropriate information for sentencers. The area had identified in its business plan for 2008/2009 that it intended to review current staffing arrangements across magistrates' and Crown Courts to ensure that resources were deployed effectively and efficiently. Some of the new Confidence in Community Sentencing grant was also being devoted to increasing probation staffing levels in magistrates' courts in order to facilitate increased delivery of oral reports and FDRs.
- (e) Resources had been dedicated to a number of diversity initiatives, though, as yet, there were none specifically focused on the Welsh language and culture. There was a SLA with South Wales Probation Trust to provide diversity and equality services. As part of the training plan associated with the SLA, diversity awareness training was being rolled out for all staff. The diversity advisor visited local offices to offer support and suggestions, which were valued by managers. The role also included oversight of impact assessment arrangements for policies and of the action plans associated with the area's equality schemes, which were monitored regularly. There was less evidence, though, that diversity initiatives were monitored for their impact on practice.
- (f) As well as the shared diversity advisor post, noted above, the area also shared a health and safety advisor post with two other Welsh areas/Trusts, which made good use of resources. CSPs provided some funding for unpaid work activities, PPO schemes and DRRs, and the area made effective use of community resources for ETE work with offenders, including links with Careers Wales. In addition, the area contributed to the joint funding of a mentoring scheme together with prisons and the Welsh Assembly Government, to support those serving short custodial sentences who would not usually receive any supervision. This scheme was chaired by the CO, and this demonstration of commitment was thought by the area to

have had a positive impact on inter-agency collaboration. Welsh Assembly Government funding was also drawn on to support NVQs for staff. The area acknowledged that more could be done to seek out additional resources for work with offenders and had been considering the best way to take this forward.

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) The WIP was not designed to tackle resource deployment in relation to interventions such as accredited programmes and not all middle managers were convinced that it was an effective tool for resource management and planning. For example, it did not take account of the offender supervisor role in DRR cases. Staff knew how workload prioritisations were made, but were not always clear about the reasons behind the decisions. The area planned further development of the WIP to increase its usefulness across teams and divisional structures.
- (b) Strategic partners raised concerns about the level of resourcing for IDAP, and programmes team capacity was also an issue for probation staff. There were long delays for some offenders in obtaining a place on the programme, though we were assured by programme tutors that offenders on waiting lists were prioritised according to the RoH they posed. There were only five full-time programme tutors, covering all the accredited programmes, supplemented in part by sessional staff and accredited staff within offender management teams. TPOs had also run programmes in the past. Lack of capacity had already been recognised by the area and plans were in place to allocate two more staff to the team, and recruit additional sessional staff from outside probation to meet the need for more male tutors, for IDAP in particular. Whilst staff were aware of this, there were still concerns about the length of time it would take to train new colleagues and thus relieve the current stretched position.

4.4 General Criterion: WORKFORCE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT <i>Workforce planning and development leads to a good match between staff profile and service delivery requirements. Relevant diversity legislation is observed in staff recruitment and deployment.</i>	Satisfactorily met
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Strengths:

- (a) The introduction of the offender management model, as well as seeing the formation of offender manager clusters, had resulted in the creation of three specialist interventions teams covering unpaid work, accredited programmes, and ETE. The area had reviewed its implementation of the model in May 2008 and although it had found some inconsistencies between teams, the model had generally been implemented as planned. Following the review, the decision had been made to combine the unpaid work and ETE teams under one

manager, to maximise the links between them. The introduction of the case administrator role had been seen as particularly successful, for example the development of the role to assist with tracking performance in relation to enforcement. There was detailed implementation guidance for the offender management model, which had also been reviewed recently. The area made good use of its PSO staff as offender managers in Tier 1 and 2 cases, and in some Tier 3 cases, but did need to focus more on PSO development needs, as noted below.

- (b) 95% of the offender managers we interviewed were clear about their role in the offender management model, and this was echoed by case administrators and probation and partner agency staff delivering interventions.
- (c) The area gave a high priority to staff development. A costed staff training plan was in place, using an All Wales format, which focused on the delivery of the offender management model as well as other national and local priorities. The area had held Investors in People status since 1998 and the Chartermark since 2001. With other Welsh probation areas it had also won the Wales Quality Centre Public Sector Award in 2005 and 2007. Annually, it undertook the EFQM self assessment, which indicated very positive views overall from staff about attention to their development.
- (d) Out of 65 offender manager staff we interviewed, 74% thought that their training and development needs were being met. This did leave a sizeable minority who were not satisfied. TPOs in general thought that sufficient attention was paid to their training and development needs.
- (e) Specific support was in place for black and minority ethnic staff and the area contributed to an All Wales scheme (similar to the NOMS Accelerate scheme in England) to develop potential managers from minority groups.
- (f) There was evidence of a constructive working relationship with the recognised trades unions, and senior managers regarded discussions as being genuinely collaborative in approach. Recent meetings had included consultation about the planned move to new premises in Newport.
- (g) The area had a strong focus on the health and welfare of staff; it had had a Positive Health and Well-Being Strategy in place since 2006. Recently reviewed, the strategy (which was compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995) had resulted in a reduction in sickness absence and in staff turnover. Almost all (95%) offender managers interviewed were clear about the procedures in place to address staff sickness absence.
- (h) Arrangements for staff supervision generally were good. 91% of offender managers we interviewed reported that they received formal supervision at six-weekly intervals or more frequently, and all but three described the quality of that supervision as good or excellent. This was a most encouraging result.

- (i) All case administrator and offender manager staff interviewed (excluding TPOs) had received an appraisal in the last 12 months. For offender managers this was linked to the business plan in all except three instances.
- (j) The area operated in accordance with the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 in respect of all its responsibilities, including as employer. There was a Race Equality Scheme in place along with other equality schemes, and these were reviewed regularly. The area had paid good attention to positive recruitment practices and these had ensured that it exceeded previous national targets for the employment of black and minority ethnic staff on a consistent basis. In respect of other equalities issues, it had taken steps to reduce any potential age discrimination for staff by introducing more flexible working patterns and responding positively to staff who wished to work beyond the age of 65. The area was also seeking to increase the number of women Board members and was taking steps to develop interest in the role by targeting local community groups to offer talks on the probation service and stress the valued contribution which could be made to the community. The area was compliant with the requirements of the Welsh Language Act 1993, for example regarding bi-lingual signage in offices. It was also taking steps to develop the Welsh-speaking capacity of staff by introducing a Welsh Language Development Scheme in 2008/2009 for staff already fluent in Welsh to enable them to undertake report preparation and case management responsibilities for offenders and victims whose preferred language was Welsh.

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) Although PSO staff accessed the area's training and development activities, there was no structured PSO development programme in place. The area had recognised the need to address this issue, and at the time of the inspection had recently appointed a PSO development officer and sessional NVQ assessors to take forward its plans.
- (b) Despite the introduction of the Positive Health and Well-Being Strategy, noted above, staff sickness rates were still above the target set by NOMS, although they were lower than the England and Wales average. The area was continuing to address the issue, which predominantly related to long-term sickness.
- (c) Case administrator staff were not always receiving training appropriate to their needs; gaps identified included information about licences and additional OASys training. There was also inconsistency across sites in respect of the frequency of formal supervision for case administrators, although where it did take place the quality was described as good.
- (d) The area recognised that the middle manager role needed to be refreshed and more attention given to the training and development needs of operational managers to support them in their key role in

the organisation.

- (e) Whilst all case administrator staff we interviewed confirmed that they had completed an ethnic monitoring questionnaire in the past 12 months, 43% of offender manager staff interviewed could not remember completing one.

4.5 General Criterion: REVIEW AND EVALUATION
Outcomes of interventions are assessed and reviewed using available data.

Not met

Strengths:

- (a) An extensive survey of victims (in statutory victim cases) had recently been undertaken by the area. A summary of the outcomes was noted in the Service Users' Perspective section of this report. The views were very positive overall and the area had already taken action to follow up some of the concerns raised.
- (b) For PPO schemes, there were arrangements to share information on outcomes to enable analysis of effectiveness in reducing reoffending in particular geographical areas. Quarterly returns on changes over time in OASys scores (a measure of improvement or deterioration in criminogenic needs) for individual offenders were submitted to the Welsh Assembly Government and were discussed within the PPO team.
- (c) The programmes team had used national research on attrition rates for accredited programmes to review its practice. Having adopted some of the recommended procedures, its average completion rate had improved. This was a good example of using research findings to inform policy and practice.
- (d) Processes were in place to spread the learning from SFO reviews. A report to the Board in April 2007 analysed all the SFOs over a 21 month period, identifying learning points for staff which included more attention needed on the management of domestic abuse cases. This had been shared with middle managers for discussion with teams and had also been considered at MAPPAs SMB. It was now planned to cascade the analysis and learning on a six-monthly basis. The MAPPAs coordinator had also adopted good practice examples from other coordinators in England and Wales and at the time of the inspection had been comparing RoH classification with MAPPAs levels.
- (e) The area's response to the small number of complaints it received was reported to the Board on a regular basis, detailing action taken in respect of each. However, there was less evidence of processes in place to spread the learning from any complaints.

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) There were no routine processes in place to collate, evaluate and use the perspective of service users and stakeholders to improve service delivery. There were a number of examples of service user views being collected at the end of interventions, such as completion of unpaid work or accredited programmes, but these data were not used. As noted earlier in this report, this had been identified already by the area as something it needed to improve and action was proposed in the current business plan.
- (b) The area did not routinely collect and evaluate concordance data in respect of report proposal and sentence.
- (c) Whilst there were some examples of aggregated information from OASys being used to inform planning processes, there was no routine collection of outcome data across interventions which was then used to aid improvements in practice. From discussions with middle managers it appeared that some did receive aggregated OASys data relevant to their specific teams, but we were told that there were technical difficulties for the area in producing this across the board. This was a source of frustration for operational managers who recognised that the area was "*better at measuring outputs than outcomes*".
- (d) There was limited evidence that information about the outcomes of interventions, or research findings in relation to effectiveness, were discussed in teams on a routine basis and used to inform practice.

4.6 General Criterion: COMMISSIONING OF SERVICES
There is efficient provision of effective services to support offender management outcomes and to ensure equal access to provision for offenders.

Satisfactorily met

Strengths:

- (a) The Board had a business development committee which oversaw the contract monitoring and management responsibilities held by one of the ACOs. The Board was keen to ensure good value for money and was examining a number of its services to identify non-core activity, with a view to contracting out provision. Some services were directly commissioned by the area from third sector agencies, including provision for drug testing and treatment services, and for the Probation Accommodation and Advice Scheme. In respect of the former, the contract had been reviewed recently to ensure Best Value, and cost reductions had been achieved by agreement. Several organisations provided unpaid work projects on behalf of the area. A recent audit report (April 2008) undertaken on behalf of the DOM on unpaid work concluded that the work reviewed was adequately controlled.
- (b) Where services were commissioned through other bodies, the area played an active part in their commissioning arrangements, for example through the Supporting People programme. Working with the Welsh Assembly Government, the area was also engaged in a

tendering process for commissioning substance misuse services across Gwent. Given the high number of offenders in our sample with alcohol misuse problems this was a welcome development.

- (c) The area contributed to sharing resources across Wales, to support effective offender management. As noted elsewhere in this report, the MAPPA coordinator post was jointly funded with the police and the post housed within probation. Several posts were shared with other probation areas in Wales, such as the diversity manager post referred to earlier.
- (d) There were very positive views from a partner organisation about the relationships at strategic level between probation and local prisons. As a result, the CO had been invited to join the senior management group of one of the prisons. Probation and prison staff had undertaken joint training for the implementation of Phases II and III of the offender management model and the area placed considerable emphasis on offender managers attending and chairing sentence planning boards in custody. For two local prisons, attendance was monitored and a high level of participation by Gwent staff was evidenced. In the case sample overall, working arrangements between prisons and offender managers were seen as more effective in Phase II and III cases than in other custodial sentences.
- (e) Senior managers identified mental health provision as the key need in the area. Probation already had good access to consultant forensic psychiatric services through MAPPA and, as noted earlier in this report, was well engaged with health services in the development of specific services for mentally disordered offenders.
- (f) Generally, additional services used with offenders were rated well in the inspection, based on the case assessments undertaken. Out of seven cases accessing mental health services, provision was rated as sufficient in all but one. There was 84% satisfaction with education and training services, and 81% with offender employment provision. Where other additional services had been used with the offender, such as accredited programmes, these were rated as sufficient or excellent in all but three instances. However, there was slightly less satisfaction with substance misuse services; in 12 cases out of 54 the provision was viewed as insufficient. Staff from partner organisations, such as those delivering ETE services, were well integrated into the work of the probation area and, in general, partner agencies commented on good working relationships which contributed to effective offender management.
- (g) ETE services made a strong contribution to provision for minority groups. For example, there was an in-house ESOL course and other classes which engaged and met the needs of specific groups, such as women and those with dyslexia.

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) Whilst there was no apparent demand for delivery of services in Welsh, it was accepted by the area (in common with its strategic partners) that this was an issue that needed to be addressed in a bilingual country where Welsh had been taught in schools for over ten years. As noted in its business plan for 2008/2009, the area was intending to develop the Welsh language skills of its staff, but further attention also needed to be given to the Welsh dimension in current service provision and to strategic planning to meet future need.
- (b) Where ETE services were delivered through sub-contracting arrangements with external agencies, these did not operate under SLAs or formal memoranda of understanding. The lack of agreed expectations made it difficult for the area to monitor how well sub-contractors delivered the programmes.
- (c) In just under a quarter of cases in the sample, gaps in service provision had been identified which impacted on effective offender management. These ranged from limited accommodation services for PPOs in some parts of the area, to lack of access to substance misuse provision for offenders who were in employment and needed evening appointments.
- (d) There was limited evidence of service user views being a key factor in commissioning, maintaining or decommissioning services. The area recognised this as a matter for development and the Probation Accommodation and Advice Scheme contract, for example, had been extended for 2008/2009 to include monitoring of the views of service users.

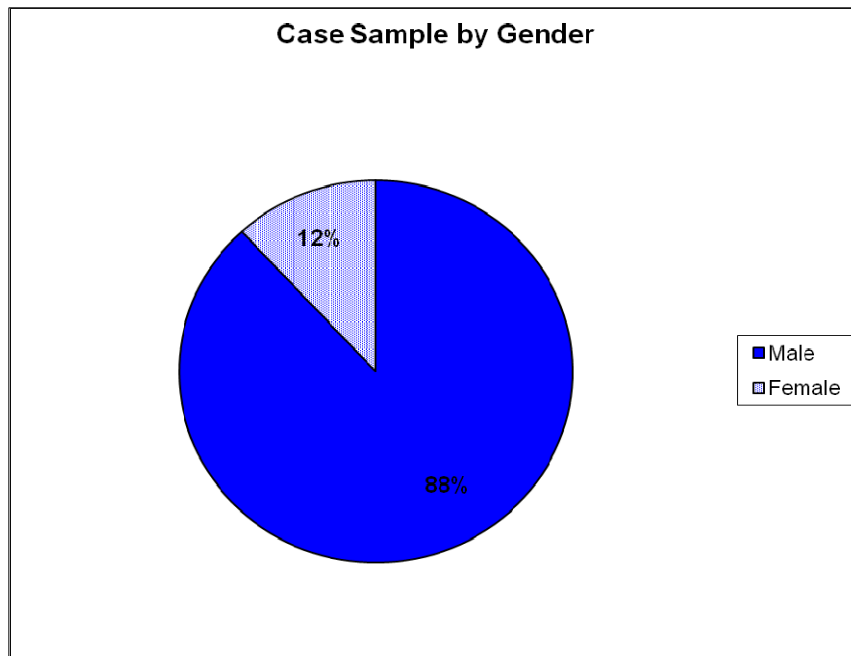
APPENDIX 1 Integrated Probation Performance Framework: Q4 2007/2008

IPPF +	Q4	IPPF Area Score										2	Gwent																			
IPPF Domain Score:	3	IPPF Domain Score:					IPPF Domain Score:					2	IPPF Domain Score:					3														
Public Protection	Actual	Target/	Milestone	National	Previous	Year - Q4	IPPF	Grade	Actual	Target/	Milestone	National	Previous	Year - Q4	IPPF	Grade	Actual	Target/	Milestone	National	Previous	Year - Q4	IPPF	Grade								
NS Public Protection	91%	90%	90%	88%	88%	4	3	3	85%	90%	82%	83%	3	NS interventions	68%	90%	66%	66%	72%	1	Sickness Absence	10.2	9.0	12.1	9.7	2	Operational Capability, Resource Use & Strategy	10.2	9.0	12.1	9.7	2
Tier 4 OASys Assess	###	90%	90%	96%	n/a	4	4	97%	90%	95%	93%	4	Upaid Work Completions	584	538	5771	643	4	Ethnic Monitoring	99%	95%	98%	99%	4	Budget Variance	11153	11272	866776	10741	4		
PPO OASys Assess	96%	90%	90%	96%	n/a	3	3	91%	85%	87%	84%	4	Accredited Programme Completions	175	182	14531	208	2	Sex Offender Treatment Programme Completions	15	16	1360	14	1	Domestic Violence Programme Completions	23	12	2560	14	4		
Tier 1, 2 & 3 OASys Assess	89%	90%	90%	69%	n/a	3	3	66%	70%	72%	66%	1	DTTO/DRR Starts	227	222	16607	209	4	Employment Sustained For 4 Weeks	174	170	16823	162	4	Employment Sustained For 4 Weeks	174	170	16823	162	4		
Victim Contact	98%	90%	90%	96%	###	3	3	99%	90%	95%	n/a	3	% UPW Days Lost Due To Stand-Downs	6.9%	1.0%	2.6%	4.7%	1	DRR Retention	85%	75%	85%	n/a	3	DRR Retention	85%	75%	85%	n/a	3		
Approved Premises	n/a	30.0	26.4	n/a	n/a	0	4	172	170	68298	0	4	% Completions Of Unpaid Work	61%	n/a	68%	62%	1	OBP Attrition	26%	n/a	31%	37%	3	Employment Gained	199	n/a	22000	n/a	n/a		
OMI Risk of Harm Assessment	62%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2	1	63%	70%	68%	75%	1	End To End Enforcement	62%	60%	54%	n/a	4	Accommodation	72%	80%	n/a	n/a	1	DTTO/DRR Completions	76	n/a	6253	88	n/a		
Management Information	Actual	Predicted	Difference	Significant?	IPPF	Grade	Management Information	Management Information	Management Information	Management Information	Management Information	Management Information	Management Information	Management Information	Management Information	Management Information	Management Information	Management Information	Management Information	Management Information	Management Information	Management Information	Management Information	Management Information	Management Information							
Reduce Re-offending	10.3%	10.6%	-0.3%	No	2	2	Offenders Manager Changes	0.8	n/a	1.0	n/a	3	Average Acceptable Absences	3.2	n/a	2.6	2.5	1	Alcohol Treatment Requirement Starts	83	n/a	5138	n/a	n/a	Alcohol Treatment Requirement Completions	19	n/a	1695	n/a	n/a		
IPPF Grade	Outstanding Performance	Good Performance	Passable Performance	Poor Performance	4	3	2	1	IPPF Grade	Outstanding Performance	Good Performance	Passable Performance	Poor Performance	4	3	2	1	IPPF Grade	Outstanding Performance	Good Performance	Passable Performance	Poor Performance	4	3	2	1						

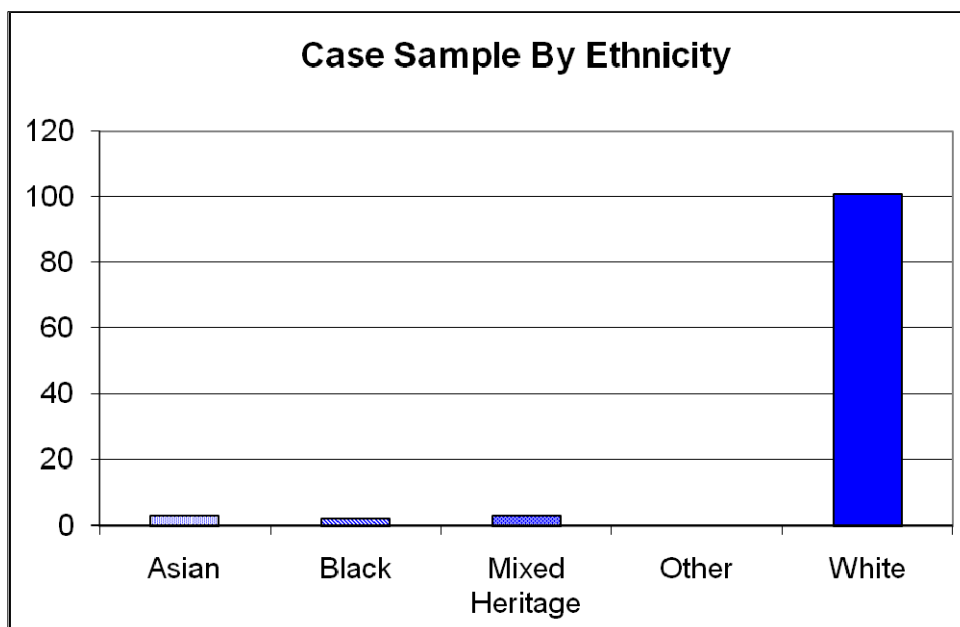
IPPF is the performance framework operated by NOMS. Under this, for each probation area, a score is assigned for each of four 'domains' as indicated, based on results for the metrics specified. Using these scores, an overall score for the probation area is also assigned.

APPENDIX 2 Contextual information

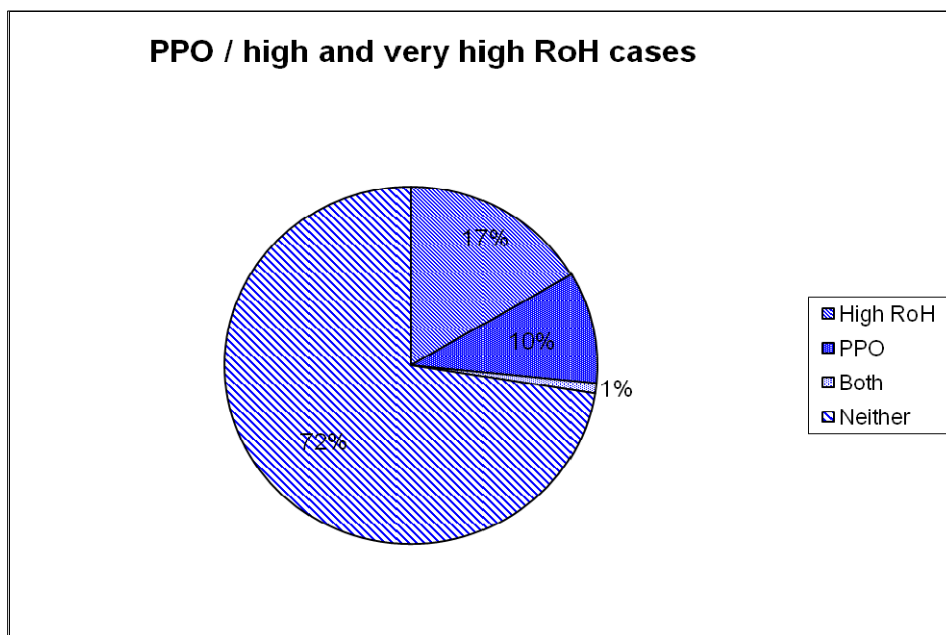
The chosen sample takes into consideration the number of female offenders in the area. A representative number is then included in the sample of cases.



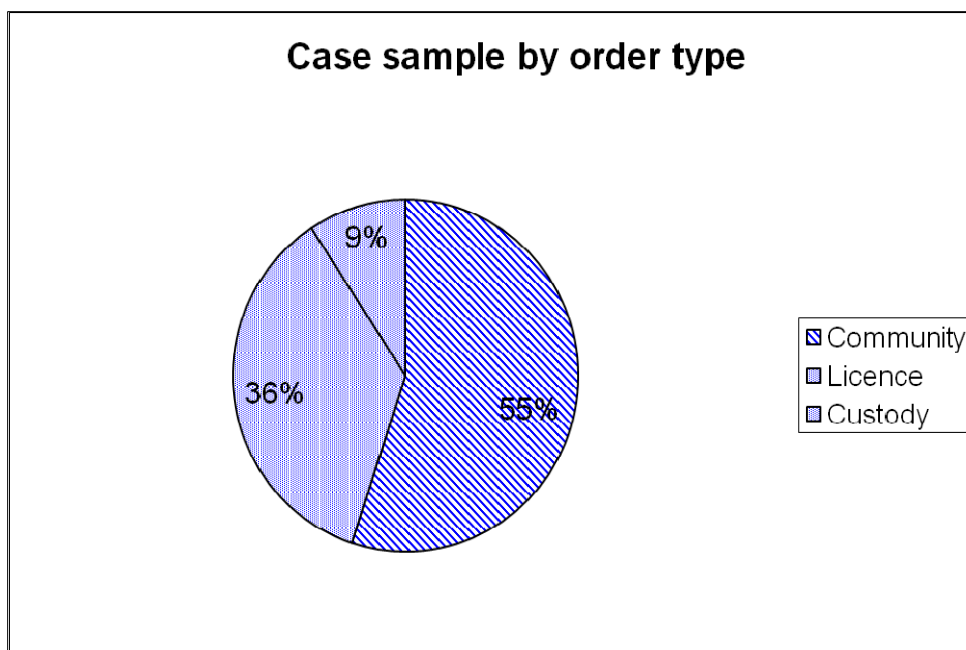
The chosen sample takes into consideration the number of black and minority ethnic offenders in the area. A representative number is then included in the sample of cases.



Each case sample contains a representative number of high risk and PPO cases.



Each sample is made up of 40 licence cases, 60 community order cases and ten custody cases.



Caseload at end of March 2007

Total caseload	2,815
% White	95.4%
% Minority ethnic*	4.6%
% Male	88.5%
% Female	11.5%
Number of cases subject to MAPPA:	366
Level 1	273
Level 2	89
Level 3	4
Number of PPO cases	85
* Excluding cases for which ethnicity information is not available.	

The local definition of a PPO case – on which the above figure is based – is *any individual who is assessed by the local management body of PPO schemes in Gwent as being a PPO.*

Total revenue budget in 2007/2008: £10,175 million

Total revenue budget in 2008/2009: £11,021 million (including £500,000 Confidence in Community Sentencing allocation)

Approved premises: There are no approved premises in Gwent.

APPENDIX 3

Inspection model, methodology and publication arrangements

Model

- The OMI programme started in May 2006. All NOMS areas in England and Wales are being inspected over a three year cycle, region by region. We hope to identify and promote effective work with offenders and disseminate information about good practice.
- Probation areas are being assessed on how well they have met defined inspection criteria focusing on:
 - Assessment and sentence planning carried out on offenders
 - Implementation of interventions delivered to offenders
 - Achievement and monitoring of outcomes
 - Leadership and strategic management.Particular attention will be given to RoH issues – it is performance against these measures which will determine whether a re-inspection is carried out.
- The inspection takes account of the regular NOMS performance data. These are produced by NOMS which is responsible for their collection and quality assurance.
- Each inspection takes place over one week. The area is asked to identify a random sample of 110-120 offenders (more in the largest areas) who have been managed by a probation offender manager for approximately six months. We then ensure that there is a minimum number of the following types of cases: high/very high RoH; PPOs; approved premises residents; statutory victim contact; black and minority ethnic offenders. The cases are drawn from community orders, licences, and those in custody.

Methodology

- During the inspection we examine the probation case file and carry out an in-depth interview with the offender manager. We also interview offenders, victims, keyworkers and case administrators. We send questionnaires to offenders and victims whose cases arise in the sample and to a selection of magistrates, judges, and legal advisers involved in sentencing. Colleague inspectors from Estyn or Ofsted work alongside us, examining offender learning.
- We interview senior and middle managers, Board members of the probation area and partners.
- Inspection of about a third of the cases in the sample is carried out by area assessors, experienced staff/managers of the probation area being inspected. We think this provides a positive experience both for the area and the staff directly involved and that it increases ownership of the findings.

Publication arrangements

- Summary verbal feedback is given to the area at the end of the inspection week.
- A draft report is sent to the area for comment four to six weeks later. Publication follows approximately 12 weeks after inspection. A copy is sent to NOMS HQ and copies are also made available to the press and placed on our website.
- Reports on offender management in Wales are published in both Welsh and English.

APPENDIX 4

Scoring approach

This describes the methodology for assigning the scores to each of the general criteria, to sections 1 to 3 and to the *RoH Thread*. A fuller detailed description is on HMI Probation's website at:

<http://www.inspectorates.justice.gov.uk/hmiprobation>

For each of the **general criteria in sections 1 to 3** – i.e. those sections based on the scrutiny of the case sample – that is:

Section 1: Assessment and sentence planning

- 1.1 Preparing for sentence
- 1.2 Assessment of risk of harm
- 1.3 Assessment of likelihood of reoffending
- 1.4 Assessment of offender engagement
- 1.5 Sentence planning

Section 2: Implementation of interventions

- 2.1 Delivering the sentence plan
- 2.2 Protecting the public by minimising risk of harm
- 2.3 Victims
- 2.4 Ensuring containment and promoting compliance (Punish)
- 2.5 Constructive interventions (Help and Change)
- 2.6 Restrictive interventions (Control)
- 2.7 Diversity issues

Section 3: Achievement and monitoring of outcomes

- 3.1 Achievement of initial outcomes
- 3.2 Sustainability of progress

The score is based on an average, across each of the questions in the Offender Management Tool for that criterion, of the proportion of relevant cases in the sample where the work assessed by that question was judged sufficient ('above the line'). (In the calculation, the results for the individual questions and for the summary question are weighted 80/20. Further details are given in the description on the website.)

The **score for each of sections 1 to 3** is then calculated as the average of the scores for the component general criteria.

The **score for the RoH Thread** is calculated as an average, over all the questions in the Offender Management Tool in sections 1 and 2 relating to RoH, of the proportion of relevant cases where work was judged 'above the line'.

For **each of the general criteria in section 4**, that is:

Section 4: Leadership and strategic management

- 4.1 Leadership and planning
- 4.2 Performance against national and regional targets
- 4.3 Resource deployment
- 4.4 Workforce planning and development
- 4.5 Review and evaluation
- 4.6 Commissioning of services

A score of either **well met, satisfactorily met, partly met** or **not met** is assigned on the basis of the performance across the specific criteria which make up that criterion. (Details are given in the description on the website.)

APPENDIX 5

Role of HMI Probation

Statement of Purpose

HMI Probation is an independent Inspectorate, funded by the Ministry of Justice and reporting directly to the Secretary of State. Our purpose is to:

- report to the Secretary of State on the effectiveness of work with individual offenders, children and young people aimed at reducing reoffending and protecting the public, whoever undertakes this work under the auspices of the National Offender Management Service or the Youth Justice Board
- report on the effectiveness of the arrangements for this work, working with other Inspectorates as necessary
- contribute to improved performance by the organisations whose work we inspect
- contribute to sound policy and effective service delivery, especially in public protection, by providing advice and disseminating good practice, based on inspection findings, to Ministers, officials, managers and practitioners
- promote actively race equality and wider diversity issues, especially in the organisations whose work we inspect
- contribute to the overall effectiveness of the criminal justice system, particularly through joint work with other inspectorates.

Code of Practice

HMI Probation aims to achieve its purpose and to meet the Government's principles for inspection in the public sector by:

- working in an honest, professional, fair and polite way
- reporting and publishing inspection findings and recommendations for improvement in good time and to a good standard
- promoting race equality and wider attention to diversity in all aspects of our work, including within our own employment practices and organisational processes
- for the organisations whose work we are inspecting, keeping to a minimum the amount of extra work arising as a result of the inspection process.

The Inspectorate is a public body. Anyone who wishes to comment on an inspection, a report or any other matter falling within its remit should write to:

*HM Chief Inspector of Probation
2nd Floor, Ashley House
2 Monck Street
London SW1P 2BQ*