



OFFENDER
MANAGEMENT
INSPECTION
INSPECTION

A report on Offender Management in
Lancashire

An inspection led by
HM Inspectorate of Probation

July 2006

FOREWORD

Clear leadership from senior managers and the Board had promoted an attention to performance and also given Lancashire Probation Area a prominent and respected profile amongst its partners and stakeholders. This was particularly so in relation to diversity. The area aimed to foster a culture of continuous improvement, actively using research and evaluation data to amend processes and practice. Lancashire had worked hard to move forward into the offender management model whilst retaining good performance against the targets it was set. As an area being inspected very early in the inspection cycle, inevitably Lancashire was still in the early stages of implementing offender management; it had a few key components of the model yet to finalise but was well-placed to do this.

Lancashire was performing well against many of the measures under our offender management inspection. Activity in the pre-court phase was getting careful attention, with high quality pre-sentence reports assisting sentencers who were positive about the contribution of the probation service. At the assessment stage, work was satisfactory when considering offenders' likelihood of reoffending and ability to engage with supervision, but not in relation to assessment of Risk of Harm. Furthermore, there was not enough evidence of structured sentence planning giving the required shape and order to the offender management programme.

The success of the offender management model now in place in the National Probation Service depended in part on sound inter-agency working towards common goals. Lancashire Probation Area was therefore reliant partly on the performance of partner agencies in order to achieve the highest standards. Despite these additional challenges, staff were committed to working productively with offenders and were generally doing well in delivering both constructive and restrictive interventions, including some good work at Lancashire's approved premises. Most offenders were given appointments at the appropriate frequency, though this was less often the case with unpaid work sessions. Beneficiaries were the direct recipients of the efforts of offenders on unpaid work, with some positive placements undertaken. There was attention paid to diversity issues in service delivery, though this was not always evidenced in sentence plans. There were deficits in relation to the detail of protecting the public, especially the need for increased clarity about Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements and in relation to issues concerning victims. As mentioned above, the lack of ongoing tight planning was evident throughout. This carried over into our consideration of outcomes, where a lack of outcome-focused objectives and regular reviews made evidencing offender progress problematic.

Most of our recommendations link strongly to the need for improved sentence planning and better Risk of Harm work. This dual focus would add considerably to Lancashire's ability to deliver a service to offenders which is of a high standard.

ANDREW BRIDGES
HM Chief Inspector of Probation

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

ACO	Assistant chief officer
CALM	Controlling anger and learning to manage it
CDRP	Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership
CO	Chief officer
CSOP	Community Sex Offender Programme
DAT	Drug action team
DM	District manager
DRR	Drug rehabilitation requirement
DTTO	Drug treatment and testing order
DVD	Digital versatile disc
ETE	Employment, Training and Education
ETS	Enhanced Thinking Skills
FDR	Fast delivery report
HMCS	Her Majesty's Courts Service
HMI Prisons	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons
HMI Probation	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation
HMP	Her Majesty's Prison
HMYOI	Her Majesty's Young Offender Institution
HR	Human resources
ISP	Initial Sentence Plan
IT	Information Technology
LAA	Local area agreement
LCJB	Local Criminal Justice Board
MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements
MAPPP	Multi-Agency Public Protection Panel
NOMIS	National Offender Management Information System
NOMS	National Offender Management Service
NPD	National Probation Directorate
NPS	National Probation Service
NSPCC	National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
OASys/eOASys	Offender Assessment System/electronic OASys
OCA	Observation, classification and allocation

OGRS2	Offender Group Reconviction Score2
OMU	Offender Management Unit
PCT	Primary Care Trust
PO	Probation officer
PPO	Prolific and other priority offender
PSO	Probation service officer
PSR	Pre-sentence report
REM	Race and ethnic monitoring
RoH	Risk of Harm
ROM	Regional offender manager
SARA	Spousal assault risk assessment
SDR	Standard delivery report
SFO	Senior Further Offence
SLA	Service level agreement
SMB	Strategic Management Board
SMG	Senior Management Group
SOTP	Sex offender Treatment Programme
SPO	Senior probation officer
TPO	Trainee probation officer
VLO	Victim liaison officer

SUMMARY

Assessment and Sentence Planning

Pre-sentence reports made a positive contribution to the sentencing process and most sentencers who responded to our questionnaire were satisfied with the quality of reports. During the subsequent assessment phase, overall there was an accurate and comprehensive assessment of the likelihood of reoffending and criminogenic needs. The majority of cases showed good attention being paid to engaging offenders in supervision and tackling obstacles which might prevent their full involvement, such as lack of basic skills. Tiering of cases had been completed though this was not always accurate. Too many sentence plans were of insufficient quality, giving little shape to supervision, and often they did not take into account the diverse needs of offenders.

Implementation of Interventions

Overall, service delivery was seen to take individual needs into account in most cases. Approved premises in Lancashire provided a range of constructive interventions to support offenders and contribute to their safe reintegration into the community. An example of the work undertaken is given in the *sharing good practice* section of the report. Unpaid work supervisors and programme tutors were praised by offenders for their support and encouragement during the intervention. However, there was less evidence of offender managers supporting offenders through their sentence, and there was insufficient liaison with most prisoners pre-release to prepare them for supervision on licence. Generally, there was good communication between offender managers and other agencies delivering interventions. Most offenders were given appointments at the appropriate frequency though this was less often the case with unpaid work sessions. The timeliness of instigation and resolution of breach proceedings needed to improve and joint plans were in place with partner agencies to achieve the shared targets on enforcement. Sufficient attention was paid in most cases to community reintegration of offenders, though there was less evidence of structured interventions to challenge offending behaviour. Overall, the majority of victims we contacted were satisfied with the service provided to them.

Achievement and Monitoring of Outcomes

The majority of offenders had complied with the requirements of their sentence and had not reoffended. Overall, resources allocated were consistent with the assessed Risk of Harm and likelihood of reoffending, including in most prolific or other priority offender cases. Structured sentence planning, though, was evident in just over a quarter of cases. In most cases there was appropriate continuity of offender manager. Just over a third of cases showed a positive change in attitudes and behaviour in relation to offending. There was evidenced progress against the highest priority criminogenic needs for half the offenders. However, Offender Assessment System/electronic OASys was not being rescored routinely so there was limited evidence in some cases of the initial outcomes of supervision.

Leadership and Strategic Management

The area was highly regarded by partner agencies, particularly in respect of its demonstrated commitment to diversity. There was good liaison with sentencers and with prisons at a strategic level. Regional collaboration was a priority in the North-West and this

had brought tangible benefits to the development of offender management. A project management approach was in place to guide policy development and management, and an impressive performance management system was used to monitor, review and evaluate performance. Almost all national targets had been achieved by the end of 2005/2006 and plans were in place to improve performance in the remainder. Implementation of the offender management model was nearing completion. Overall, staff supervision and appraisal were carried out to sufficient standards, though in relation to staff training and development there were evidently some unmet needs. There was good evidence of the use of local and other research to inform policy and practice and the development of the Service User Forum had already made an impact on practice. The area had established a Commissioning and Contestability Board to review all service provided and planned to expand its partnerships with the voluntary, community and private sectors to support offender management outcomes. Whilst there were particular gaps in provision relating to offender accommodation, mental health, and alcohol use, the area was reliant on services provided by other organisations to meet offender needs fully. Inter-agency work was a high priority for the area and efforts were being made to address these needs in conjunction with relevant partner agencies.

Risk of Harm

The quality of Risk of Harm assessment was satisfactory in only half the cases. Work to safeguard children or the general public was less well developed than that to protect known adults. Risk management plans were not comprehensive and Risk of Harm was not being reviewed regularly, with limited evidence of on-going planning to minimise Risk of Harm. Further development was needed in work with offenders on victim issues. There also needed to be improvements in monitoring of restrictive interventions but, across a range of measures, the Risk of Harm posed had been successfully managed in most cases. An example of this work is featured in the *sharing good practice* section of the report.

Whilst there was good engagement with Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements at strategic level, there appeared to be some confusion amongst staff as to which cases fell within Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements categories and which needed formal referral. MAPPA were seen to have been used effectively in only half of the relevant cases. There was evidence that the approved premises in Lancashire were offering an appropriate level and range of restrictive interventions to offenders who presented a high Risk of Harm to the public.

SUMMARY OF SCORES

Outlined below in Chart 1 are percentage scores for each OMI Criterion in sections 1-3. A line of priority for improvement is also indicated. The scores which fall below this line (which is not a line of *sufficiency*) indicate those criteria which form a primary focus for improvement. Table 1 indicates a score drawn from a range of indicators in the *Assessment & Sentence Planning* and *Implementation of Interventions* sections about RoH work. This score is significant in determining whether a further focused inspection will be carried out. Full details of our Scoring Approach are contained in Appendix 3.

Chart 1: Scoring of sections 1-3:

OMI Scoring - Lancashire (July 2006)

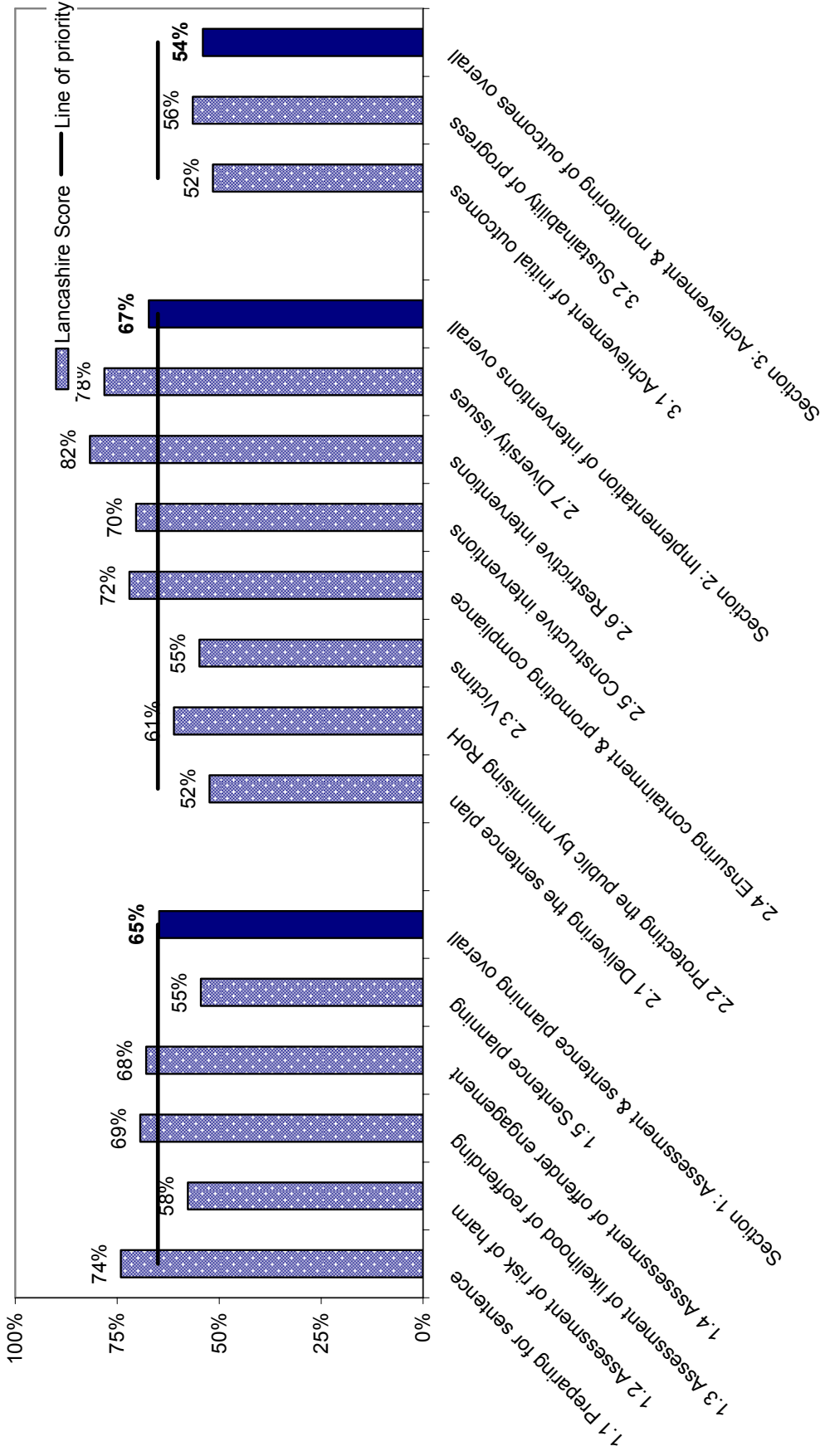


Table 1: Scoring of section 4:

4.1 General Criterion: LEADERSHIP AND PLANNING	Well met
4.2 General Criterion: PERFORMANCE AGAINST NATIONAL AND REGIONAL TARGETS	Satisfactorily met
4.3 General Criterion: RESOURCE DEPLOYMENT	Well met
4.4 General Criterion: WORKFORCE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT	Partly met
4.5 General Criterion: REVIEW AND EVALUATION	Well met
4.6 General Criterion: COMMISSIONING OF SERVICES	Satisfactorily met

Table 2: Risk of Harm Thread

Score for Risk of Harm thread	62%
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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Improvements are necessary as follows:

1. accurate and comprehensive Risk of Harm assessments are completed and regularly reviewed in all cases
2. the quality and timeliness of risk management plans meet the standard set down nationally
3. sentence plans and reviews are completed on time and to a high standard
4. the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements referral process is clarified to improve staff understanding and ensure eligible cases are referred
5. increased priority is given by offender managers to issues of victim safety, and victim awareness work appropriate to the case is undertaken with offenders
6. OASys rescoring is actively used as a progress measure for criminogenic needs and resultant data used to improve practice and provision of services.

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 Risk of Harm work.

There will not be a re-inspection in Lancashire.

SHARING GOOD PRACTICE

Below are examples of good practice we found in Lancashire.

Joint work in DRR cases:

**OMI Criterion: 1.5
Sentence planning**

Alun's DRR sentence in Blackpool started with a meeting between him, his offender manager, the community drugs team, and Addaction (a national drug and alcohol treatment agency), to set joint objectives for his sentence. The programme of work involved high levels of contact and included prescription of medication, keywork sessions, and a return to college. Early outcomes for Alun had been very positive.

Positive community reintegration:

**OMI Criterion: 2.5
Constructive interventions**

Barney had already been recalled to prison because of concerns about his behaviour. When re-released he was placed at approved premises in Lancashire. He had undertaken the SOTP whilst in custody and an individual relapse prevention programme was undertaken with him immediately on his release, through Meadow House, a joint NSPCC and probation project. Alongside the work to reduce the RoH Barney posed, his keyworker at the approved premises was supporting him in finding appropriate move-on accommodation. Employment issues were also addressed with him. To promote successful resettlement into the community, Barney was enabled to undertake voluntary work in a charity shop after careful assessment of his suitability and appropriate arrangements for his supervision. Together, these constructive interventions contributed to Barney's reintegration into the community.

Successful minimisation of RoH:

**OMI Criterion: 2.6
Restrictive interventions**

Following a lengthy prison sentence for serious sexual offences, Charles (who posed a very high RoH) was successfully placed at a Langley House Trust facility prior to a planned transfer to approved premises in another area. Managed appropriately through MAPPA, there were specific additional conditions included in his post-release licence to reduce RoH to a minimum. These included notifying the offender manager of details of his car; and of any relationships with women, and reporting to hostel staff every two hours during the day. Despite strong resistance by Charles to his supervision, the offender manager worked hard to build a working relationship with him, and liaised effectively with all those involved in his case. Charles's placement in Lancashire was successfully concluded and transfer to another area went ahead as planned.

Benefiting the community

A church in Preston was being renovated with the assistance of offenders on an unpaid work sentence. The beneficiary was

**OMI Criterion: 3.1
Achievement of
initial outcomes**

extremely positive about the work undertaken and its benefits for the faith community and the neighbourhood. Further major work was needed on the building and this was being put out to tender. As a result of his positive experience with the probation service and offenders, the beneficiary was insisting that the successful contractor employed a proportion of ex-offenders and those out of work, thus contributing to wider community reintegration in the town.

**Positive outcomes and
promoting the work
of the probation area**

**OMI Criterion: 3.1
Achievement of
initial outcomes**

Lancashire Probation Area's Service User Forum had contributed to a DVD promoting the work of the probation service. *Positive about Probation* was professionally produced and involved offenders telling their own story of supervision and its positive impact on them. In addition, beneficiaries of unpaid work projects talked about the outcomes of work by offenders and showed how these were leading to increased skills and longer-term benefits to the offender and the community.

**Service user
suggestions improve
practice:**

**OMI Criterion: 4.5
Review and
evaluation**

Lancashire was seeking to improve the number of those successfully completing their community orders. It had developed a Service User Forum where those under supervision could be consulted about plans. They were asked for suggestions about what would assist people complying with their orders. One suggestion was using text messaging to remind offenders about their appointments. This was piloted with offenders on DRRs and resulted in a considerable improvement in attendance during the project. Lancashire and Blackburn DATs had agreed to fund the text messaging service for their areas during 2006/2007.

OFFENDER MANAGEMENT IN LANCASHIRE

NOMS Offender Management Model – North-West Pathfinder

Since November 2004 the North-West had been a NOMS Pathfinder region with the purpose of putting into operation and testing the national offender management model in both the custodial and community settings. In its early stages the pathfinder had focused on selected offenders in two HMYOIs – Thorn Cross and Lancaster Farms, and those serving community sentences in Bolton and Stockport in Greater Manchester, the Wirral in Merseyside and in West Cumbria. Later stages of the pathfinder included offenders in Hindley Prison and high RoH offenders and PPOs in both Liverpool and Risley Prisons. A female institution, Styal, had also been included since early this year.

In operating the model, the pathfinder had had an open agenda on the type of staff who would become offender supervisors and on the profile of OMUs. The pathfinder had been clear, however, about the role that offender supervisors should fulfil. It had been left to Governors as to how OMUs were set up and whether seconded probation staff were included or whether they were put into delivering interventions. It was apparent that seconded probation staff were often being used in OMUs for their risk of harm knowledge and assessment skills, though some OMUs consisted entirely of prison staff.

In testing the model the pathfinder had conducted action research and a process evaluation, with plans to do an outcome evaluation next year when the pathfinder is scheduled to finish. Problems encountered and lessons learned so far had included:

- population management – this has been found to be the single biggest element that can undermine the model. There needs to be a clear allocation matrix for Observation, Classification and Allocation and closer liaison with offender management teams
- indeterminate sentence prisoners – these need to be seen as a distinct group as they could be subject to a discontinuity in their offender management. As with other longer-term prisoners, indeterminate sentence prisoners seem to be far more likely to be moved around the prison estate than those serving shorter sentences
- OASys – the quality of the assessment is critical, with poor initial assessments affecting subsequent assessments and sentence planning. There also remain issues around who is responsible for doing the assessment and the offender manager taking ownership of it.
- eOASys connectivity – while there are challenges with the useability of eOASys, connectivity has been found to improve in exchanging information
- cultural changes – offender managers are being required to take on a new role with authority over cases that may be in custody as well as those in the community. It is recognised that new skills are required for this role and training provision is being looked at.

There were also clearly problems with implementing offender management in the private prison estate. They did not, as yet, have access to OASys in its full form and there were problems with what they were contracted to do, with “notices of change” having to be negotiated.

Lancashire Probation Area

Planning for the introduction of the offender management model had begun in March 2005 and there were positive relationships with custodial institutions in the Lancashire area which had been strengthened through work on the pathfinder. In October 2005, organisational structures began to change to create OMUs and offender management was separated from delivery of interventions.

Work was still in progress to implement the model fully. Whilst PSO and support staff were in place, job descriptions for PSO and case administrator roles within the model had not yet been agreed, though negotiations with unions were said to be nearing resolution. All cases had been allocated to tiers and three district manager roles had been introduced with effect from January 2006. Whilst expected to focus on performance this role was also seen by the area as key to ensuring that the offender management model was established.

Separate service specifications for 2006/2007 had been devised for offender management and interventions, with the intention of providing clarity to staff about how the model would work in practice. PPOs remained predominantly with specialist offender managers, in some districts seconded to PPO teams, with SPOs in all three districts involved in PPO steering groups and practitioners involved in the Multi-Agency Case Planning and Review Groups.

Whilst there were the usual restrictions on travel by probation staff to custodial institutions, the area was installing video conferencing equipment in its main offices and over time it was intended that liaison take place in this way for reports and offender management.

OASys connectivity with prisons had been achieved during 2005. There had been technical problems for the probation area with regaining ownership of assessments on offenders for parole reports, and once they were released. Whilst some of these difficulties had been resolved others were ongoing. In some cases this was affecting achievement of national standards relating to completion of sentence plan reviews. In particular, the technical process of OASys completion was experienced by staff as having slowed since connectivity and the IT link between probation and prisons was seen by probation staff as fragile.

NOMIS was not due to be rolled-out to the Lancashire Probation Area and HMPs Preston and Garth until October 2007. HMP Lancaster was planned to be the first in the area to receive it, in September 2007, with HMP Kirkham in November 2007 and finally HMP Wymott in December 2007.

OFFENDER MANAGEMENT IN HMP PRESTON

We visited HMP Preston to hear of progress there with the NOMS offender management model.

A local, category B, prison for male offenders, it was based in historic buildings on a small site in the city centre. The lack of space meant there were limited opportunities to develop the prison and careful management was needed of existing space. Pressure on interview space was a particular challenge. As a local prison it had a high turnover, with around

18,000 prisoner movements through reception each year. It faced a rising number of prisoners, many of them challenging and with complex needs. At its last inspection by HMI Prisons in 2004 its strengths included impressive resettlement provision and effective multi-agency public protection work.

Through the offender management model pathfinder, HMP Preston had been chosen as a pilot site for Custody Plus implementation, in partnership with Lancashire Probation Area. This was a six month project, from April to November 2006. The pathfinder was funding a total of four additional posts to support this, two in HMP Preston and two in the probation area. The project was designed to develop and test out a model of offender management delivery, prior to the expected implementation of Custody Plus nationally in November 2006.

The proposed OMU, to be headed up by the SPO based in the prison, was intended to build on existing arrangements, though working from a proposed central base. For example, two senior officers worked effectively in the OCA department with PPOs, and the SPO headed the OASys team, working closely with OCA staff. The recently completed national desktop exercise indicated that around 12 offender supervisors would be needed, some coming from existing prison and probation staff and a further three or four needing to be found above current resources. Some additional funding was expected to be generated through an anticipated increase in the prison population. The current probation team included three probation officers and eight PSOs, alongside the SPO.

We were told that there had been a broad welcome for the concept of offender management from those members of staff already involved in the planning, which included union representation, though as yet there had not been wider promotion of the model to staff working on the landings. It was proposed that offender supervisors would include both prison and probation officers; though they had not been identified formally yet. Training was about to take place on an area-wide basis and those trained initially would then cascade the model to other staff in their establishment. It was anticipated that prison officers working as offender supervisors would not be included in the main shift patterns, to ensure they would not be pulled into other work. The administrative officer currently working as an OASys clerk was planned to take on the role of case administrator, and was getting some experience of the type of work expected through involvement in the pathfinder project. The personal officer role, which had been developed in the last couple of years, was expected to continue as an intervention, running alongside the offender supervisor role.

Current interventions for prisoners included the ETS accredited programme and the short duration drugs programme, alongside education provision and work on resettlement issues with outside agencies. There was an intention to offer more short courses to meet the needs of prisoners who were mostly at Preston on a short-term basis. We were told that 9.98% of the population were from minority ethnic groups. There were 40 foreign national prisoners at the time of our visit and their numbers were said to be increasing. As yet there was no population needs analysis but this was under consideration. A chartered psychologist appointment had recently been made, and this role was expected to analyse information from OASys and from exit surveys being offered to those prisoners who were being released from Preston (as opposed to being transferred elsewhere).

Population movement (around the prison estate) was acknowledged as a potential challenge in ensuring that prisoners were transferred appropriately to complete identified sentence planning targets. By using officers based in the OCA department as offender supervisors initially, it was expected that more appropriate allocations would be made. The prison was also aided in this to some extent by the support of prison area office staff who worked closely with those responsible for population management nationally.

Prison managers, including the governor, reported very good working relationships with Lancashire Probation Area, both strategically and at operational levels. The governor was involved in various joint forums including the LCJB and met regularly with the probation area CO. Prison staff were involved in MAPPAs as appropriate. To facilitate offender manager visits, arrangements were being made for their entry on a fast-track basis, with offender supervisors meeting them at the gate. 75% of offender managers visiting were expected to be from the Lancashire area. In addition, video conferencing facilities were being expanded in the prison, with two mobile units planned.

Experience on the pathfinder project so far had been useful in testing out systems. Deliberately small in scale, it focused on short-term prisoners sentenced from Preston courts who had Preston home addresses. Thirteen prisoners had been involved so far. They had one to one contact with an offender supervisor in the prison alongside contact with an outside offender manager in the Preston Probation Office. At the time of our visit the first of these had just been released, having signed a contract for their period of 'licence' in respect of voluntary supervision by probation. Overall, prison staff were clear about what they wanted to achieve with offender management and some elements were in place, although further resources would be required.

SERVICE USERS' PERSPECTIVE

Offenders

Five focus groups with offenders were undertaken: two with unpaid work groups, two with accredited programme groups (CSOP and Think First) and one with residents of the approved premises in Blackburn. In total, 31 offenders were interviewed about their experiences.

Comments from unpaid work groups were mainly positive about the work undertaken, its benefit to the community and the skills learned. One person commented that they were proud of what they had achieved during their sentence and another said that they had learned useful skills in woodwork and decorating. Another offender indicated that *"they wouldn't change a thing about the programme of work as it was constructive and creative"*. The opportunity to have feedback about their work was appreciated by some, as well as the chance to give their views about their experience at the end of their sentence. Some had limited contact with their offender manager and half were unclear about the sentence planning process. Not all were aware of opportunities to undertake basic skills work as part of their unpaid work hours and several would have welcomed this option.

Some offenders on accredited programmes had limited contact with their offender managers during the period when they attended the group. Several, though, spoke in positive terms about the contact they did have and how their offender manager had discussed with them the effect of their offending on victims, linking it with work undertaken in the group. Some were clear that they had sentence plans which had been discussed with them. Programme tutors, whilst not tolerating poor behaviour, were seen as supportive and helpful to those who had problems outside the group, and there was praise for tutors' willingness to help people understand the material: 'they will go through things till you understand, they don't make you feel stupid'. Some commented on the professional approach of probation staff and their willingness to help with problems *"it's a lot better than years ago"*, though others were not so happy with the way they had been treated by offender managers. Offenders could identify what they had learned during their sentence so far and gave many examples of what had changed about their thinking and behaviour.

At the approved premises most residents were also undertaking the CSOP, which seemed to be the main intervention being undertaken with them. Some had concerns about move-on accommodation, with which they would have appreciated more help. Residents were clear about the curfew requirements on them. There were some negative comments about how offender managers and approved premises staff worked together in delivering the sentence; some residents feeling that communication routes and 'who was responsible for what' were not clear.

Out of 100 questionnaires, 13 were completed and returned. There were mixed views expressed but most comments were positive. Nine recalled having had their sentence plans discussed with them and 12 thought that the rules covering their supervision, including breach, had been explained to them either fully or in part. They reported that the issues the probation service had helped them with the most were drug use and attitudes to offending,

followed by emotional well-being. Three indicated that they did not have a good working relationship with their offender manager. However, 11 thought that the work of the probation service had made them think more about the victims of crime and about their offending, and ten thought they were less likely to offend as a result.

Victims

Eight victims were invited by the area to a focus group and one person attended. Whilst not a statutory victim contact case (the offence against her family member had occurred before the Victims Charter was introduced), the probation area had offered contact with this person on a voluntary basis. Support from the VLO was greatly valued by her, she received regular information about parole reviews and was satisfied that her views had been clearly communicated.

Of the ten questionnaires sent to people who had been victims of crime, three were completed and returned, two from people who had taken up the offer of being contacted and kept informed. All understood why they had been contacted by the probation area, finding the letter clear and easy to understand, but there were mixed views about the service provided. Both felt their particular needs were taken into account; they felt listened to and there was good attention given to issues about their safety. However, neither felt that they had been given enough information about custody sentences in general. One thought that they had sufficient information about the time the offender concerned would spend in custody, and that there had been the chance to talk about any worries relating to the offender's eventual release. The same person was also given the opportunity to express their views on the offender's licence conditions. However, the other person was not satisfied overall with the service provided, not having been contacted until the offender's release and then not being provided with licence condition information in a timely manner.

Courts

Eleven out of 30 questionnaires sent to sentencers and other court personnel were completed and returned. Overall they were satisfied with the work of the probation service. Ten out of 11 were satisfied with the quality of both FDRs and SDRs, and all those who responded to the question thought that liaison arrangements between the probation area and sentencers were effective. Similarly, all who responded to the relevant question felt that they had at least some of the information they needed about the work of the service. Most were satisfied with probation staffing levels in court and all thought that these staff had sufficient knowledge and skills to undertake the task. There was some concern about how well the arrangements for enforcement were working in their courts. It was recognised that more offenders were being returned to court for breach of their orders but these cases were not always being resolved within the target timescales.

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.

74%

Strengths:

- (a) *Most cases in the sample of 60 community orders had had a PSR written for the current offence and 75% of these were assessed as being satisfactory. Where the court had indicated the level of seriousness, all but one of the reports had taken this into account. 91% of the sentencers or other court personnel who completed and returned our questionnaire were satisfied with the quality of both FDRs and SDRs.*
- (b) *All reports were completed on time using the nationally approved format. The area was in the process of rolling-out the OASys PSR template having successfully piloted it in one district.*
- (c) *A clear proposal for sentence had been made in 96% of reports. A community based sentence had been proposed in 98% of relevant cases and in 93% of instances this was followed by the court.*
- (d) *88% of reports were assessed as objective, impartial and free from discriminatory language or stereotype, as required by the national standard.*

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) *21% of reports were assessed as not being of the appropriate type for the case. We saw a number of examples where FDRs had been produced in situations where full reports were needed. These included some cases with high OGRS scores and others with a history of violent offending and/or domestic abuse.*
- (b) *21% of reports were assessed as not being suitably concise.*
- (c) *Victim information was included appropriately in only 46% of relevant reports.*
- (d) *Only just over half the reports contained a satisfactory outline sentence plan where a community order had been proposed.*
- (e) *Four reports were prepared in PPO cases. Whilst the likelihood of reoffending was clearly outlined in three of the cases, and a proportionate proposal made in the same number, in two of the reports the defendant was inappropriately identified as a PPO.*
- (f) *Where self-harm was an issue, this was clearly recorded in only 60% of cases.*

Conclusion:

Performance against this criterion was good.

Strengths:

- (a) *RoH screening had been completed in 95% of community sentence cases and completed or reviewed on release in 87% of the 39 post-release licences. The screening was assessed as accurate in 81% of cases. However, see below in respect of its timeliness.*
- (b) *In five out of six cases, an appropriate referral was made to approved premises for placement of high or very high RoH offenders where greater oversight was needed to protect the public.*
- (c) *External agencies working with offenders confirmed to us that they were informed about the level of RoH posed by an offender, particularly if there were any specific risks to staff which might need to be taken into consideration. Likewise, probation staff involved in delivering interventions, such as unpaid work and accredited programmes, also indicated that they were informed about potential harm posed by an offender. There also appeared to be a good exchange of information between offender managers and women's safety workers in domestic abuse cases.*

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) *The quality of RoH assessments overall was described as satisfactory in only 50% of cases. Fourteen cases contained no RoH classification and in a further two cases it was not clear what the assessed level of risk was. In 14 cases where there was a classification it was considered to be inaccurate. There had been technical problems when the national electronic version of OASys was introduced in the area and further difficulties when connectivity with prisons was achieved, as referred to earlier in this report. These appeared to have resulted in some practitioners (and managers) 'disengaging' from the use of OASys because of the impact of the difficulties they faced. Instead of it being regarded as a working assessment and planning tool which underpinned practice, it was viewed as 'something which had to be completed'. So, information which should have been recorded in OASys was either absent or sometimes recorded elsewhere, for example in the contact record. Senior managers were mindful of the technical difficulties posed, and felt strongly that staff deserved credit for what they had achieved. Several measures were in place to improve RoH assessments in OASys, including the introduction in April 2006 of an OASys newsletter for staff. This contained helpful advice and guidance and also reminders about why OASys completion was crucial.*
- (b) *The area used a high risk registration and review system, running alongside OASys, and some information was recorded on this, rather than in OASys itself. Previous inspectorate feedback to the area had suggested that this dual system was potentially confusing for staff. The area recognised that the system needed to be reviewed.*
- (c) *In just under a third of community sentence cases, the RoH screening was undertaken late and in three instances there was no screening at all.*
- (d) *There was evidence of effective middle and/or senior manager involvement in the assessment of only 54% of the high and very high RoH cases. Similarly, in child*

safeguarding cases, management involvement was effective in only half. The middle manager role in quality assuring OASys was underdeveloped; we found a number of cases where managers had countersigned RoH assessments which were inadequate.

- (e) *RoH assessments did not accurately reflect risk to children in 38% of cases, or to the public generally in 39% of instances, though the figures were better in respect of cases where there was a risk to known adults (77%).*
- (f) *We were concerned that there appeared to be confusion amongst staff, both at practitioner and middle manager level, about which cases fell within the remit of MAPPAs. It appeared that some staff were designating particular cases as MAPPA Level 1, without apparent referral through the MAPPA process. Some of these were in fact being managed on a multi-agency basis. In other instances, we found examples of staff being unaware which cases fell within MAPPA categories, for example by virtue of offence type, so not all cases were being referred when they should have been. The new public protection policy, which was in the process of being implemented, did not make the MAPPA 'entry level' process clear. It was accepted by the area that there was a need for greater clarity. The policy was due to be revised to take account of the new national RoH training pack which had just been published at the time of the inspection and the area intended to include a basic guide to MAPPA as part of this.*
- (g) *In 38% of cases where there were MAPPA or other assessments available, they were not used to inform RoH assessments. There was a particular issue in relation to domestic abuse cases where the use of the specialist assessment tool SARA would have been expected. This was absent in most cases where it was relevant and from discussion with offender managers it seemed there was some confusion about when it should be used; with some staff thinking it needed to be completed only if there was a referral to the domestic violence programme.*
- (h) *Risk management plans were comprehensive in only 26% of relevant community sentence cases and 36% of licence cases. Whilst we did see some thorough risk management plans which used the required format, we also found a general lack of awareness about the expected content and structure for such plans. Prior to the inspection, the area had already recognised that improvements needed to be made to the quality of OASys. A quality management plan was introduced in April 2006, requiring all OASys assessors to have one assessment per-quarter checked against a set checklist. The area also intended to introduce internal benchmarking events at district level to improve consistency.*
- (i) *Insufficient attention was paid to assessment of victim issues in 54% of relevant cases. This concerned thorough assessment of victim safety issues and offender victim awareness.*

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.

69%

Strengths:

- (a) *Criminogenic factors were satisfactorily assessed in 79% of applicable cases.*
- (b) *Positive influences, such as supportive and pro-social factors, were identified in 76% of cases.*

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) *Where there were previous relevant assessments available, these were drawn upon in just under two-thirds of cases.*
- (b) *Of seven PPO cases in the sample, only four of these had a comprehensive OASys assessment completed as required within five days of sentence.*

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.

68%

Strengths:

- (a) *Although there were problems with routine screening (see Areas for Improvement (a) below), where a basic skills screening indicated the need for a full analysis, this was carried out in 85% of cases. The area employed specialist PSOs who undertook skills for life work with offenders to remove potential difficulties in them engaging with their supervision.*
- (b) *73% of relevant cases showed that plans had been put in place to minimise the impact of potentially discriminatory or disadvantaging factors. One example was the provision for interpreters to be available on unpaid work sites when needed.*

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) *A full assessment of basic skills should be undertaken where screening indicates that this is needed. However, there was evidence of initial screening having been carried out in only 51% of cases. This was a concern.*
- (b) *Full attention was paid to the methods most likely to be effective with the offender in just 58% of cases, and the offender's learning style, motivation and capacity to change were taken into account in 60% of cases.*
- (c) *There was evidence that diversity issues and other individual needs were actively assessed in 62% of the sample.*

Conclusion:

This criterion represents a priority for improvement.

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.

55%

Strengths:

- (a) *In all but three community sentence cases the offender was allocated to an offender manager within the required timescale.*
- (b) *Some parts of the sentence plan in community orders were completed thoroughly; for example, planned contact levels were included in 74% of cases, and in the same proportion of cases it was clear who was going to deliver the intervention. 72% of plans drew on all other relevant assessments.*
- (c) *It was clear from the records that steps had been taken in 90% of cases to ensure that offenders understood the penalties for breach of their order or licence.*

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) *Sentence plans gave clear shape to supervision in only 35% of cases. Just under half focused on achievable change for the offender and relevant goals were set in 48%. A third of plans were not completed on time.*
- (b) *Plans were sensitive to diversity issues, including offender vulnerability, in under half of relevant cases. It appeared that offender managers were considering diversity factors in individual cases but not always recording these in the sentence plans.*
- (c) *The roles and responsibilities of various workers were clearly defined in only 43% of relevant cases. External agencies working with offenders commented that sentence plans were not shared routinely with all those involved in joint work. Probation staff delivering interventions made similar points, that they were not necessarily consulted about the sentence plan and their roles and responsibilities within it were not routinely communicated. Support staff also commented that, so far, there was no procedural guidance about specific roles within the offender management model, and the case administrator role was not yet established.*
- (d) *Whilst all offenders had been allocated to a tier, we found that 16 had been incorrectly allocated. Tiering was seen by practitioners (and some managers) solely as an aid to allocation of cases, rather than as a way to ensure that resources were allocated appropriately to each case and that sentence planning reflected the sentencing purpose. In view of this, it was not surprising that subsequent planning did not reflect the tier in 25 cases.*
- (e) *Where consideration should have been given to restrictive licence conditions or order requirements aimed at minimising the RoH to others, in a third of cases there was no evidence that this had been done. How RoH was to be managed in community orders was outlined in just over a quarter of relevant cases.*
- (f) *Interventions to address offending behaviour were appropriately identified in 62% of relevant cases, whilst those to promote community reintegration were identified in only 48% of the sample. In only 50% of community cases was there sufficient planning in the ISP to sequence the various elements of the sentence.*
- (g) *Interventions likely to reduce or contain RoH were identified in under half of*

relevant cases.

- (h) *Offenders had the opportunity to participate actively in the sentence planning process in under half of the sample. In only 43% of cases was it clear that steps had been taken to ensure that the offender fully understood the requirements of the sentence. This contrasted with the positive finding in Section 2 about a full induction being carried out in 90% of cases. There did not appear to be a consistent approach to induction at the beginning of sentence; some case records contained checklists to aid this process while in others such evidence was lacking. The area had recognised that further attention needed to be paid to the induction process and this was under review to ensure greater offender involvement and understanding of the requirements of their order or licence.*

Conclusion:

This criterion represents an urgent 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.

52%

Strengths:

- (a) *At the time of the inspection, when approximately six months had passed from sentence or release on licence, 76% of sentence requirements had been implemented.*
- (b) *In a focus group with external agencies, we were informed that generally there was good communication between offender managers and other organisations involved in delivering interventions to offenders. Also, ten out of the 13 offenders who responded to our questionnaire thought that probation staff and those from other agencies worked together well to manage their supervision.*

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) *Where there was more than one requirement in a community order or licence, the interventions were delivered in an appropriate sequence in less than half of the relevant cases. In licence cases, work in the community built sufficiently on activity in custody in only a third of instances.*
- (b) *There was insufficient joint work between prison based staff and offender managers to prepare offenders for release into the community in over half of the licence cases.*
- (c) *Although offenders had been prepared thoroughly for interventions in 71% of relevant cases, arrangements to reinforce new skills acquired were put in place in only 57% of these.*
- (d) *Positive behaviour was reinforced in only 45% of cases. Offenders interviewed in focus groups indicated that when undertaking unpaid work they saw their offender manager rarely or never. However, ten out of 13 of offenders who completed our questionnaire said they had a good working relationship with the offender manager who listened to what they had to say. In addition, those interviewed in focus groups spoke highly of the support and encouragement from their unpaid work supervisors and programme tutors.*
- (e) *Only 34% of sentence plans were reviewed on time and the quality was poor. In most cases, earlier plans had been 'pulled through' on OASys and had not been updated. In part, this related to the technical problems referred to earlier, in terms of OASys passing between custody and the offender manager in the community, but timeliness and quality were issues for community orders as well. In 44% of cases, work was seen to flow coherently from the plan, while 78% lacked objectives and milestones giving a clear direction to supervision.*
- (f) *Reviews integrated other plans as appropriate in just under half of relevant cases.*
- (g) *Six cases in the sample had been transferred between probation areas. Whilst four had had their first appointment in the new area within five working days as required, a home visit was completed within the timescale in only half the cases.*

An up to date and timely OASys assessment had been provided to the new area in the same number of cases.

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.

61%

Strengths:

- (a) *Increase in RoH posed was identified swiftly in nine out of the 11 relevant cases and acted upon appropriately in eight.*
- (b) *In all four licence cases where the offender had been recalled to custody, this had been an appropriate part of risk management. In all but one case the recall had been actioned properly, and following recall clear explanations had been given to the offender and efforts made to re-engage them.*
- (c) *Where a review of RoH had been done there was evidence of ongoing planning to address risk to staff in all eight relevant cases.*

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) *RoH was not being reviewed regularly. Only 39% had been reviewed at the 16 week stage following start of community order or release on licence, dropping to 28% at 16 weekly intervals thereafter. Where there had been a significant change that might give rise to an increase in RoH there had been no review in 42% of relevant cases.*
- (b) *MAPPA were assessed as having been used effectively in only half of the six cases. Confusion in respect of the use of MAPPA, outlined in Section 1, will have contributed to this. In two cases there was limited evidence that staff were contributing effectively to MAPPA.*
- (c) *Ongoing planning to address RoH to children was absent in eight out of 17 cases and sufficient home visits to monitor children's safeguarding issues took place in only two out of five relevant cases.*
- (d) *There was a lack of evidence of ongoing planning to address RoH posed to known adults in 32% of particular instances, and similarly to the public generally in 39% of cases.*
- (e) *Home visits in high and very high RoH cases were carried out as required in 42% of cases and only repeated as needed to keep RoH to a minimum in one case.*

Conclusion: This criterion represents a priority for improvement.

2.3 General Criterion: VICTIMS
Consistent attention is given to issues concerning victims.

55%

Strengths:

- (a) *In the statutory victim contact cases where victims responded to our questionnaire, both of those who took up the contact cases where victims responded to our questionnaire, both of those who took up the offer of contact with the probation area were satisfied that their safety had been a priority.*

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) *Victim safety (including that of children) was an issue in 38 cases. In only 58% of these was there evidence that this had been given high priority.*
- (b) *In only 27% of relevant cases had victim awareness work been undertaken with offenders.*
- (c) *Out of 14 victim contact cases, there was evidence of nine having had a written offer of face to face contact with the VLO within the required timescale and the same number had been offered information about the criminal justice process. In three cases, there was no evidence of either having taken place. Where victims took up the offer of contact, one was not informed of relevant release conditions and another was not given release information in a timely fashion.*

Conclusion:

This criterion represents an urgent priority for improvement.

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.

72%

Strengths:

- (a) *In 90% of the sample there was a comprehensive and timely induction following sentence or release on licence, though as noted in Section 1 this did not always ensure that the offender fully understood the requirements of the sentence.*
- (b) *Overall, the frequency of appointments arranged conformed to national standards in 82% of cases, and facilitated the requirements of the sentence in 71% of cases.*
- (c) *Unpaid work placements were judged as benefiting the community in 73% of cases and facilitating the requirements of the sentence in the same number.*
- (d) *Attention to monitoring attendance was good across all interventions, at 89%, and effective action to support compliance had taken place in 84% of relevant cases. Judgements about the acceptability of absences were consistent and appropriate in 88%.*
- (e) *The quality of the case record was good overall with 86% being well organised, 88% with clearly recorded contacts, and 82% being completed in a timely*

manner.

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) *Although we saw some positive examples of contact with offenders in custody, which clearly promoted effective offender management on release, overall pre-release liaison by the offender manager was insufficient in 31% of licence cases.*
- (b) *The frequency of appointments was sufficient to meet RoH considerations in 66% of cases and to support sentence plan objectives in 60%.*
- (c) *In unpaid work sentences, the frequency of sessions did not conform to the national standard in 35% of cases. Placements were thought to be matched appropriately to the offender in only 58% of instances and to be suitably demanding for the individual offender in 62% of relevant cases. Unpaid work staff commented that there was limited opportunity to match the offender's skills to available placements. A review of the quality and cost effectiveness of unpaid work had been completed in November 2005. Amongst other issues this recognised the need for a more diverse range of placements and opportunity to undertake guided skills learning as part of unpaid work hours. An action plan was in place to address the identified concerns.*
- (d) *Of seven PPO cases, there was evidence of an enhanced level of reporting in only three.*
- (e) *Breach action was instigated in time in 68% of relevant cases, and resolved within the required timescales in only 47%. In several instances, administrative pressures and staff shortages were cited as reasons for slow initiation of breach proceedings. The recently revised enforcement policy had introduced new procedures in respect of community orders, and through the LCJB there was a shared performance improvement plan in place to address the inter-agency target in respect of timeliness of resolution of proceedings, as noted in Section 4.*

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.

70%

Strengths:

- (a) *Sufficient work had been directed at community reintegration issues in 83% of cases.*
- (b) *Of the four male offenders in the sample who were resident in the two approved premises in Lancashire, three were undertaking accredited programmes and this had formed part of their sentence plans in all cases. The approved premises offered a range of facilities including: interventions related to life skills; healthy and positive lifestyles, relapse prevention work, and access and support into employment. Three of the residents in the sample were also receiving assistance with move-on accommodation, though this featured in the sentence plan of only*

two.

- (c) *Offender managers prepared reports and attended review hearings as required in the three DRR cases in the sample.*

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) *Just over half the cases contained evidence that constructive interventions had encouraged offenders to accept responsibility for their offending behaviour and its consequences. Apart from cases that contained an accredited programme requirement, it was difficult to find evidence of structured interventions which tackled this. Interestingly, however, 11 of the 13 offenders who responded to our questionnaire thought that their supervision had caused them to think more about their offending.*
- (b) *Only 18% of the sample had an accredited programme as a requirement, which was lower than would have been expected. The area had met its target in respect of accredited programmes completions, but the findings suggested there was some unmet need in respect of thinking skills in particular, given that this was the most common criminogenic factor in over half the cases in the sample. In six of the cases with an accredited programme requirement, the nature and timing of the programme was not consistent with the sentence plan, and in two there was no clear explanation of why this was the case.*

Conclusion:

Performance against this criterion was good.

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) *For the four offenders placed at approved premises, their residence was being used effectively as a restrictive intervention. Residents had to sign in and out, indicating where they were going, and additional requirements to report to staff during the day had been placed on those who posed most potential RoH to the community.*
- (b) *Licence conditions were judged to be comprehensive and proportionate to the needs of victims in 81% of cases; necessary and proportionate to the RoH in 87% of cases; and proportionate to the likelihood of reoffending in 90%.*
- (c) *In the two PPO cases where offending had been related to drug use, there were appropriate additional licence conditions.*

Area for Improvement:

- (a) *Restrictive interventions were not monitored fully in 35% of relevant cases and a third of cases lacked evidence that every reasonable action was being taken to minimise RoH.*

Conclusion: Performance against this criterion was good.

2.7 General Criterion: DIVERSITY ISSUES

Full and proper attention is paid to diversity issues.

78%

Strengths:

- (a) *The identified diverse needs of offenders had been properly addressed in 82% of relevant cases and approved premises were seen to meet the particular needs of all four residents in the sample. Several examples were given by staff of sensitivity to the individual needs of offenders. In one instance, an offender undertaking his unpaid work in a group was anxious about mixing with others, so he was allocated work which could be completed away from the rest of the group.*
- (b) *Offenders with needs relating to disability had these appropriately addressed in 17 out of 20 cases. A particular example seen related to accommodating the needs of older offenders with mobility difficulties who were undertaking the CSOP.*
- (c) *Staff from programmes teams told us of examples of attempting to ensure that singleton ethnic minority or women offenders were not placed on accredited programmes on their own, for instance by appropriate sequencing of programme starts. In unpaid work, there was also provision for offenders from minority ethnic groups to have a mentor to support them through their order.*
- (d) *In 89% of the sample, offenders were clearly informed that discriminatory behaviour would not be tolerated.*
- (e) *People from external agencies delivering interventions to offenders confirmed to us that there were appropriate facilities available for those whose first language was not English. Examples included colleges offering basic skills tuition which operated on the basis that everyone had diversity needs which had to be addressed, and interpreting facilities being made available for offenders involved with an independent counsellor. Within the multi-agency criminal justice intervention team working with substance users, it was practice to offer women offenders the opportunity to work with women staff.*

Area for Improvement:

- (a) *37% of offenders with literacy or dyslexia needs had not had these met. This may have been connected with some of the inconsistencies in basic skills referrals and/or provision across the area, noted in the useful research referred to in Section 4. Our findings thus indicated unmet need despite the good performance against targets. Some concern was also expressed by staff that there was no provision for basic skills training being undertaken on a one-to-one basis, which could prove a barrier to some offenders taking up this service.*

Conclusion: Performance against this criterion was good.

3. ACHIEVEMENT AND MONITORING OF OUTCOMES

3.1 General Criterion: ACHIEVEMENT OF INITIAL OUTCOMES

Planned objectives are efficiently achieved.

52%

Strengths:

- (a) *Across a range of measures we found that the public had been better protected during supervision, with RoH successfully managed in the majority of cases. There was evidence of responsiveness to changes in risk posed, with an increase of restrictive measures imposed in 12 cases, and a decrease in a small number where the offender's behaviour had demonstrated improvement.*
- (b) *There had been some direct benefits to the community, including unpaid work carried out in 18 cases. Staff also told us about two offenders completing individual unpaid work placements who had been offered employment by the organisations concerned.*
- (c) *Achievement of sentencing objectives was strongest in the lowest tier cases, 84% of all cases in the sample experiencing appropriate punishment.*
- (d) *The resources allocated to 88% of cases were consistent with the offender's RoH, and in 90% of cases to the likelihood of reoffending. In three out of four PPO cases, the resources allocated were consistent with the offender's status.*

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) *Thirty-four offenders had been reconvicted since the start of sentence or release on licence and a further two were cautioned.*
- (b) *Increased victim awareness had been demonstrated in only 20% of relevant cases in the sample, although, more positively, 11 out of the 13 offenders who replied to our questionnaire believed that their supervision had made them think more about the victims of crime.*
- (c) *Only 60% of offenders had complied fully with the requirements of their sentence.*
- (d) *There was evidence of offenders applying their learning and skills in just 20% of the sample.*
- (e) *No positive change in attitudes and behaviour in relation to offending was evident in 62% of cases.*
- (f) *OASys had been rescored in under half the cases. Where it had been undertaken, there had been no improvement in the score in 59% of cases. In the factors linked to offending that had been identified as the highest priority in each case, there was found to be progress in half the cases but deterioration in 44%. Thinking and behaviour was the most common criminogenic factor in 58 cases, followed by lifestyle and associates (37 cases) and alcohol misuse (30 cases).*
- (g) *Reduction in the frequency of reoffending was evidenced in only 17 cases, and reduction in seriousness in six. Reduced threat to victims and potential victims was evident in 14 cases.*

- (h) *There was evidence in 69% of Tier 2, 3 and 4 cases that constructive interventions had been delivered to help offenders and in 38% of Tiers 3 and 4 that sentencing objectives relating to change in behaviour had been achieved. The control objective had clearly been achieved in 55% of Tier 4 cases.*

Conclusion: This criterion represents an urgent 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.

56%

Strengths:

- (a) *There had been some continuity in offender management, in that, including the PSR author, 33 cases had had a single offender manager, and a further 42 had experienced just two.*
- (b) *79% of offenders who had a criminogenic need which could be addressed by a community-based organisation had been made aware of how to find assistance.*

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) *Structured sentence planning had not been given a high priority throughout the sentence, as was apparent in Section 2. Only 26% of cases demonstrated this.*
- (b) *There was sufficient action by offender managers to consolidate learning and reinforce new skills in just 38% of cases.*
- (c) *Full attention had been given to longer-term community reintegration issues with offenders in 57% of cases.*

Conclusion: This criterion represents an urgent 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.

Well met

Strengths:


- (a) *Lancashire Probation Areas's Business Plan built on the national template and the North-West region business plan. Shadow SLAs with the ROM had been developed during 2005/2006 covering delivery of offender management services and these included performance targets and measures. Separate SLAs between the Probation Board and the ROM for offender management and interventions were in place for 2006/2007. The Audit Commission annual audit letter for 2005 noted that overall corporate governance arrangements were satisfactory and that the area's financial position "had improved on the previous year through prudent financial management".*
- (b) *A project management approach was in place to guide policy development and implementation. For example, the offender management model implementation was undertaken using project plan processes and progress was reported using the national framework.*
- (c) *There was a formal strategy in place, agreed with HMCS, outlining liaison arrangements between the area and sentencers. This had built on earlier positive measures and included regular meetings with sentencers and court staff, at a variety of levels, including evening stakeholder meetings in each district to promote the work of the probation service. 100% of sentencers and court staff who responded to our questionnaire were satisfied with the liaison arrangements.*
- (d) *As part of its links with local authority strategies, the area had incorporated its targets on PPOs into the LAA, as a contribution towards the Safer and Stronger communities element, and reported on performance through the same structure, thus informing local communities about this aspect of its work. Following the disturbances in Burnley in 2003, the area had been involved in the resulting community action plan along with other statutory and voluntary agencies.*
- (e) *Strategic contribution to public protection was evident through senior management involvement in MAPPA and in the three Children's Safeguarding Boards in the area. Good links with strategic partners were evident from meetings we held with local agencies. The probation area was held in high regard by its partners, including police and local authorities, and there was particular praise for its commitment to diversity issues as evidenced in the use of the diversity panel in recruitment and selection. The contribution of its domestic abuse programme to community safety was seen as particularly important, and greater capacity to deliver more such programmes, including to those not subject to court orders, would be highly*

welcomed. There were strong links with Victim Support whose Chief Executive Officer for Lancashire regularly attended meetings of the Probation Board. Victim Support contributed to MAPPAs and saw its involvement as demonstration of the commitment of the area to work with victims.

- (f) There were six prisons in the Lancashire area and COs in the region met regularly with the area manager for the Prison Service to tackle issues in common. Good relationships between prisons and probation were evident, which had been enhanced by joint work on the offender management model pathfinder. Recent research in the region indicated that 75% of prisoners from Lancashire spent their last few months prior to release within regional prisons. This was a deliberate policy to aid the resettlement of returning prisoners.
- (g) Diversity issues had a high strategic priority. The CO chaired the area's Strategic Diversity Group, which also included Board members and the HR ACO. As noted elsewhere in this report it was involved in a number of different initiatives including commissioning and evaluating research to inform service delivery. Close links with the Race Equality Council were evident, and the area was seen by its strategic partners as contributing strongly to the public confidence agenda, particularly in respect of its efforts to reach out to minority ethnic communities. A partner agency commented to us that "diversity was built into everything the probation area did, it wasn't an add-on, they really champion it".
- (h) 79% of staff interviewed felt that their managers demonstrated a professional management approach and 71% that they modelled positive leadership behaviour. Middle managers commented to us that they felt supported by senior managers as well as being held to account. Briefings from the CO were welcomed by them as a way of keeping staff informed.
- (i) The area was clearly receptive to the findings of regulatory bodies and acted on them to improve performance. For instance, the latest annual audit letter (2005) referred to recommendations from previous Audit Commission reviews having been implemented. In particular, arrangements around (business) risk management had been strengthened and it was clear from the 2006/2007 risk register that it had been expanded to include reference to both the impact and likelihood of risk, as required.

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) Although the area was well engaged with MAPPAs at a strategic level and a middle manager was seconded to the police public protection unit at their headquarters, evidence from case file reading and discussion with offender managers and middle managers indicated that there was confusion around MAPPAs processes, referred to in more detail in Section 1.
- (b) While some staff found policy briefings by senior managers to be helpful when new policies were introduced, over a quarter of offender managers interviewed did not feel well informed about their area's policies and procedures. The majority of staff we spoke to referred to receiving information by e-mail and a quarter to discussion in supervision, but a significant minority reported feeling overwhelmed by the information they did receive, particularly through e-mail. Many would prefer to have more opportunity for discussion in team



meetings. Whilst most staff thought there was a clear link between the business plan and targets, support staff commented that people were not always aware of how their role related to the those targets.

4.2 General Criterion: PERFORMANCE AGAINST NATIONAL AND REGIONAL TARGETS

Key performance targets are consistently met, with careful attention to diversity issues throughout.

Satisfactorily met

NPS Performance Data	Target	2005 – 2006	
		Area	England and Wales
Enforcement – breach taken where required within ten working days: all orders/licences	90%	90%*	91%
Offender compliance including orders allowed to continue	85%	80%	81%
Appointments arranged in accordance with national standards	90%	91%*	85%
Appointments attended in accordance with national standards	65%	67%*	62%
Accredited programme completions: % performance in relation to target	100%	100%*	114%
Unpaid work completions: % performance in relation to target	100%	92%*	101%
DTTO/DRR starts: % performance in relation to target	100%	104%*	88%
DTTO/DRR completions: % performance in relation to target	100%	105%*	99%
Basic skills: % performance in relation to starts	100%	186%*	112%
Basic skills: % performance in relation to awards	100%	164%*	149%
Sickness absence: average days absence	9 days	13.5	12.3
Proportion of magistrates' court PSRs prepared to court's timescale	90%	97%*	97%
Accurate and timely ethnicity data	95%	99%*	97%
Home Secretary's Race Equality Employment Target for 2009	(North-West Region) 5.4%	6.8% region	
Proportion of victims of serious sexual/violent offences (where offender sentenced to custody of 12+ months) offered contact within eight weeks	85%	94%*	93%
RoH assessments and plans for high RoH cases completed within five working days of start/release	90%	87%*	81%
RoH assessments and plans for PPO cases completed within five working days of start/release	90%	85%*	82%
* Asterisk indicates area has met target or is 'near miss'.			

Joint 'end-to-end' targets on enforcement for Local Criminal Justice Board	Target	Rolling quarter January-March 2006	
		Area	England and Wales
Average time to resolve community penalty breach proceedings from relevant unacceptable failure	No more than 35 working days	67 days	43 days
Proportion of all breach proceedings resolved within 25 working days of relevant unacceptable failure to comply	50%	7%	43%

Strengths:

- (a) *Achievement of key targets was a high priority in Lancashire and performance against the weighted scorecard targets had improved over the year, the area's position in the scorecard moving from 31st in the first-quarter of the year to 22nd at the year end.*
- (b) *The area's strongest achievement, at 186% of target, was in relation to basic skills starts, followed by basic skills awards at 164%. Considerable effort had been made to achieve targets and specialist PSO staff were in place to support skills for life work. (However, we did have some concerns about unmet need, as outlined in section 2.7 Areas for Improvement (a).) The NPD regional manager noted that the area's performance in respect of DRRs was particularly impressive in the context of difficulties in commissioning and in provider delivery affecting drug services in parts of the county.*
- (c) *The 2005 annual audit letter noted that "arrangements for monitoring and reporting performance internally were robust". On a routine basis the area's 'performance tracker' provided data to the SMG against the weighted scorecard performance targets, broken down to office level. The performance targets and measures in the shadow SLAs with the ROM in 2005/2006 were formally monitored at quarterly review meetings.*
- (d) *Regional collaboration was well developed across the North-West, with Lancashire contributing strongly to developments. This included SMG members chairing a range of regional groups and involvement by the Board chair in respect of sentencer liaison issues, and an ACO was seconded currently to the region to conduct the 'best value' review of unpaid work.*
- (e) *Whilst focused on meeting LCJB targets for enforcement of community orders, the recently revised enforcement policy and associated practice guidance made clear that offender managers were obliged to ensure that all offenders understood what was required of them and to use available resources to meet different needs, for example with those who may have a learning disability or be affected by dyslexia.*

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) *LCJB targets on enforcement had not been met, performance being considerably weaker than the national average. This was despite efforts at senior management level to tackle the problem, with the CO chairing the LCJB sub-group on enforcement. Data analysis indicated that delays were occurring predominantly at later stages in the process, rather than at the instigation of breach proceedings. A multi-agency protocol regarding enforcement had recently been agreed and a performance improvement plan (developed in conjunction with the NPD quality unit) was in place. This was expected to produce an upturn in performance by December 2006.*
- (b) *The weighted scorecard targets which had not been met (or nearly met) by the year-end were related to staff sickness and offender compliance, though the latter was very close to the national performance figure. Staff sickness absence was a cause for concern for the SMG and Board and had been the subject of an extensive review. A number of recommendations had been made to improve sickness absence management, including: new occupational health provision; improved recording systems and a revised sickness absence policy had recently*

been introduced. This is discussed further at Section 4.4.

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.

Well met

Strengths:

- (a) *DM posts were introduced in January 2006. Developed to ensure a greater focus on performance, the role was also seen as crucial in full implementation of the offender management model. Still in its early stages at the time of the inspection, the role was seen by middle managers as a helpful one as it was located closer to operational delivery and it enabled ACOs to concentrate on strategic planning.*
- (b) *The area used a resource allocation formula which recognised high RoH cases as a priority, allocating them the maximum workload weighting. The formula for 2006/2007 allocated staffing resources according to the tiering profile identified, to ensure that resource followed risk and need. The formula, which used workload weightings from the national workload management tool where available, was transparent and was shared with trade unions and staff.*
- (c) *A workload prioritisation policy had been updated in February 2006. Communicated to all staff, it made clear which tasks, such as completion of OASys and enforcement of orders, had high priority and which, such as prison visits at the request of the offender had less priority.*
- (d) *All those who replied to our questionnaire for sentencers and other court personnel were satisfied that probation staff in their court had sufficient knowledge and skills to work effectively in that setting. 90% of respondents were satisfied that court staffing levels were sufficient to provide appropriate information to sentencers.*
- (e) *A diversity and equality team supported a variety of initiatives including the work of the diversity panel in staff recruitment and selection and in impact assessments of policies and procedures. Praised by external agencies, as noted elsewhere in this report, the panel was composed of community members specifically selected as representative of diverse groups.*
- (f) *Two trainee psychologists were employed by the area. Managed by the MAPPa coordinator and part of the police public protection unit, their skills had initially been used in relation to accredited programmes and in research such as that into basic skills provision, noted elsewhere in the report. Their role had now shifted to focus on work with MAPPa, including research into domestic abuse and undertaking specialist assessments.*
- (g) *A PPO strategy was in place, work with PPOs being conducted under the auspices of the LCJB. Middle managers in all three districts were involved in PPO Steering Groups and multi-agency forums had been established at district level to identify and review PPO cases. Drug testing for PPOs had been introduced in 2005, undertaken by a private sector company. Funding for this provision (in whole or in part) had been secured for 2006/2007 from each of the three DATs in the Lancashire area.*

Area for Improvement:

- (a) *Whilst all teams had been reorganised to match the offender management model, with interventions split from offender management, PSO staff were not acting as offender managers in their own right. See Section 4.4 for further discussion of this. The outcome was that many PO offender managers were carrying very high caseloads and staff resources were not being used as efficiently as they could be.*

4.4 General Criterion: WORKFORCE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

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.

Partly met

Strengths:

- (a) *A HR and training strategy was in place, linked to the business plan. In addition, particularly good attention was paid to the developmental needs of TPOs. All of those interviewed commented very positively on the training and practice learning opportunities to which they had access. As well as specific input on their professional training course, TPOs were also provided with additional training in respect of domestic abuse and child safeguarding issues.*
- (b) *79% of staff interviewed reported satisfaction with the quality of supervision they received, with over a quarter describing it as excellent. 90% reported that their formal supervision took place six weekly or more frequently and many commented on the accessibility of their managers for informal consultation.*
- (c) *In respect of staff appraisals, 84% of those interviewed indicated that they had had an appraisal in the last 12 months, almost all of which were linked to the business plan. Support staff commented, however, that appraisals did not feel individual and would have preferred a more action oriented process.*
- (d) *The area operated with full regard to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act, 2000, including in its responsibilities as an employer. Black and minority staff made up over 7% of establishment. There was a support group for black and Asian staff which focused on practice issues in respect of offenders from minority ethnic groups as well as staff support. It had used its members' knowledge of local communities to make links with them. A comprehensive Diversity and Race Equality Scheme was in place for 2005/2008 and work plans for 2005-2006 had recently been reviewed. Priorities for 2006/2007 included implementing a Disability Equality Scheme.*
- (e) *The Investors in People award had been achieved by the area and there had been a recent successful review of this. It also held the 'Two Ticks'(Positive about Disabled People award and the Navajo Chartermark as being a lesbian and gay friendly organisation.*

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) *Whilst 90% of staff interviewed indicated that they were clear about their role in the offender management model, OMUs were not properly in place. Job descriptions regarding PSO and case administrator roles were not yet agreed*

with unions, and middle managers commented on the difficulty of implementing the model without these. Staff role boundaries, particularly in relation to unpaid work, were a source of confusion and concern to some offender managers, with PSOs not acting as offender managers in their own right in Tier 1 and 2 cases. We were informed that the issues in relation to job descriptions were close to resolution.

- (b) *Some staff using assistive technology reported problems with the suitability of the equipment provided and their consequent difficulties in keeping case records to the required standards. The Disability Action Group (a sub-group of the strategic diversity group) was addressing this issue to ensure staff with a disability were not disadvantaged. The national assistive technology IT module had been made available to probation areas recently and was due to be piloted in Lancashire in the near future.*
- (c) *The training and development plan was not costed. Also, a significant minority of staff (21%) did not feel their training and development needs were being addressed. Unmet needs were reported in work with sex offenders, life sentence prisoners, and working with mentally disordered offenders. Supervision planning and reviews were identified as learning needs by several staff and this need was clearly evidenced in many of the case files we saw.*
- (d) *Staff sickness levels, at 13.5 days on average per person, were well above the target figure of nine days and also above the national average. This was a major source of concern for the Board and a thorough review had taken place. HR staff had considered good practice examples from other, better performing, areas and a revised sickness absence policy was now in place. This was expected to address the problems. However, middle managers reported feeling under pressure in addressing sickness absence in some of their teams and the new policy was felt to be overly harsh by some staff, with less focus on the duty of care owed to employees. Senior managers acknowledged that tougher measures were in place but given the cost of sickness absence (including the consequent effects for staff who were present at work) the business risk of continuing high absence had to be tackled.*

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

Well met

Strengths:

- (a) *The area had developed a Service User Forum to obtain feedback from offenders under its supervision and used this improve service delivery. Whilst still in its early stages, the forum had already made a significant impact and is cited in two of the good practice examples earlier in this report. It was planned to develop the initiative so that it could be sustained on a district basis. In addition, during 2006 the area intended to survey the views of those in contact with victim liaison services and a draft questionnaire had already been developed.*
- (b) *On a regional basis, a recent review had been undertaken of approved premises. This had led to continuing work on spreading best practice across*

the region, for example in relation to use of performance information.

- (c) *There were a number of examples of research being undertaken and outcomes used to improve service delivery. For example, a detailed investigation into the experiences of skills for life (basic skills) provision of 70 offenders was carried out in 2005 in collaboration with the University of Central Lancashire. The research was initially commissioned because of concerns in 2004 about achievement of targets for commencement and completion of basic skills qualifications. It found that offenders' experience of completing basic skills awards had been a positive one, with particular importance attached to coordinated work between tutors, skills for life workers and offender managers to support offenders. By the time the research was completed, performance had already improved but the findings were used to address inconsistencies in practice across the area. The findings had already impacted on policy and procedures, having led to additional support for offenders accessing basic skills provision, for example, being accompanied to college to meet tutors.*
- (d) *Other research had been undertaken in-house into appropriate targeting of sex offenders for the CSOP. This found that some offender managers were not referring eligible offenders, particularly those on licence, and the results were fed back to divisional managers to encourage a change in practice.*
- (e) *Processes were in place to spread the learning from SFO reviews, with these and findings from inspection reports and independent inquiries being considered at quarterly meetings of relevant lead managers in order to promote best practice in management of RoH.*
- (f) *The area's Commissioning and Contestability Board had commissioned a project on the quality and cost effectiveness of unpaid work, prior to a regional contestability exercise. At the time the project started, unpaid work completions were below target. Using external advisors as well as probation staff the project sought to identify best practice locally and in other probation areas. Reporting in late 2005, recommendations included the need for a more diverse range of placements, and for opportunities for offenders to undertake basic skills work as part of their sentence. At the time of our inspection practice was beginning to change and more placements were being identified which focused on community safety needs.*
- (g) *Aggregated information from OASys in respect of offenders' criminogenic needs had been produced on a district basis, though little variance was shown so far. Other OASys information was being used at regional level to inform work on the Reducing Reoffending Action Plan.*

Area for Improvement:

- (a) *Most sentencers who responded to our questionnaire were not aware that any monitoring of sentencing proposals was taking place, such as the correlation between proposal and sentencing outcome, as compared with successful completion of community orders. So, monitoring and evaluation research was not routinely reaching all sentencers.*

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) *A Commissioning and Contestability Project Board had been established, to review all services provided and compare them with what was required to support offender management outcomes. This also linked with plans to further develop work with the voluntary, community and private sectors.*
- (b) *The area delivered six different accredited programmes to meet offender need. Recently, it used OASys data to identify which programme should be rolled-out next, opting for CALM given the number of offenders with a history of violence.*
- (c) *The Strategic Diversity Group had recently reviewed the use and cost of interpretation services against future needs. This had highlighted that needs and usage varied between offices and districts and that the profile of need had changed. A project was in process to produce a SLA with the current service provider (a voluntary sector organisation) to ensure that appropriate services were commissioned to support work with minority groups and to implement a standardised framework for referral across the area so all staff were aware of how to access appropriate services.*
- (d) *Probation areas across the North-West jointly sponsored a seconded prison Governor to work on delivery issues between prisons and probation. A review of the work of seconded probation staff in prisons was underway, and improvements to visiting arrangements for offender managers were in progress. One outcome was that video conferencing facilities had been installed in the area very recently, to support offender manager interviews with those in custody without the necessity for travel.*
- (e) *A 'best value' review of unpaid work was in progress across the region and, as noted earlier in this report, there had been a thorough review of the provision in the area in preparation for this. The area already commissioned some unpaid work placements from a community agency.*
- (f) *The area had led development in the region for commissioning and implementing drug testing for PPOs with an external provider from the private sector. The added value of this initiative was that over half of these tests were undertaken in the offenders' homes.*
- (g) *Whilst there was no history in the area of specific provision for offenders from minority ethnic groups, there was an agreement in place with Greater Manchester Probation Area to access their Think First programme for Black and Asian offenders.*

Areas for Improvement:

- (a) *Difficulties in smooth transfer of OASys information between prisons and probation have been referred to earlier in this report. Senior managers were also concerned at the lack of clarity around offender management responsibilities in respect of contracted out prisons, as these did not have access to OASys. This was an issue which awaited resolution at a national*

level.

- (b) *The area was involved in Supporting People commissioning bodies in its local authority areas but senior managers acknowledged that the Supporting People programme had not delivered what had been hoped for in terms of accommodation for offenders. Recent Supporting People inspections in the Lancashire area had noted the lack of appropriate supported housing for offenders and difficulties in securing move-on accommodation. In interviews with offender managers this was identified as a key gap in provision which showed no signs of improving. The area was currently bidding for additional resources from the ROM in order to commission accommodation, debt and benefit advice from the voluntary, community or private sectors to tackle these needs.*
- (c) *Whilst the work of Inward House was praised by probation staff, some expressed the view that additional provision was needed in respect of alcohol services. Lancashire had already been identified in health statistics as having a high rate of alcohol problems compared with the rest of the country and the area was keen to ensure appropriate provision for offenders. It was part of a county-wide forum bringing together all PCTs and current work involved collaboration with PCTs in developing provision for alcohol treatment requirements as part of offender management. Access to mental health services was also experienced as a difficulty by some offender managers, including for residents in approved premises. Research into gaps in provision for mentally disordered offenders was underway through the MAPPA SMB and it was noted that there were particular issues in relation to offenders with personality disorders. In respect of all these gaps in provision, the area was reliant on services provided by other organisations to meet offender needs fully. Inter-agency work with relevant partner agencies to address these needs was a high priority for the area.*

APPENDIX 1
Contextual information

Caseload at end of September 2005

Total caseload	6,360
% White*	91.7%
% Minority ethnic*	8.3%
% Male	87.3%
% Female	12.7%
Number of cases subject to MAPPA:	506 (6.9%)
Level 1	436 (5.9%)
Level 2	56 (0.76%)
Level 3	14 (0.19%)
Number of PPO cases	114
* 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 the local CDRP agrees is a prolific or priority offender.*

Total revenue budget in 2005-2006: £ 20.227 m

Total revenue budget in 2006-2007: £ 21.021 m (an increase of 3.9%)

Approved Premises:

Highfield House, Accrington - capacity 22

Haworth House, Blackburn – capacity 26

APPENDIX 2

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 follow-up inspection is carried out.

- The inspection takes account of the regular NPS performance data. These are produced by the NPD who are responsible for their collection and quality assurance.
- Each inspection takes place over one week. The area is asked to identify a random sample of 100 offenders (more in the largest areas) who have been under supervision 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 both community orders and licences.

Methodology

- During the inspection we examine the file and carry out an in-depth interview with the offender manager. We also hold focus groups with offenders, victims, keyworkers and case administrators. We send questionnaires to offenders and victims whose cases arise in the sample and to a selection of those involved in sentencing.
- We interview senior and middle managers, Board members of the probation area, strategic partners and managers in a custodial setting. For the prison meeting we are joined by a colleague inspector from HMI Prisons.
- Inspection of about a third of the cases in the sample is carried out by area assessors, experienced staff 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.

APPENDIX 3

Scoring Approach

This describes the methodology for assigning the scores to each of the general criteria, to sections 1 to 3 and to the *Risk of Harm Thread*. A fuller detailed description is on HMI Probation's website at <http://inspectorates.homeoffice.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 Protecting the Public
- 2.2 Victims
- 2.3 Promoting compliance
- 2.4 Delivering interventions
- 2.5 Diversity needs

Section 3: Achievement and monitoring of outcomes

- 3.1 Interventions are delivered with the desired 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 Risk of Harm Thread* is calculated as an average, over all the questions in the Offender Management Tool in sections 1 and 2 relating to Risk of Harm, 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 allocation
- 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 4

Role of HMI Probation

HMI Probation is an independent Inspectorate, originally established in 1936 and given statutory authority in the Criminal Justice Act 1991. The Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 renamed HMI Probation 'Her Majesty's Inspectorate of the National Probation Service for England and Wales. HMI Probation is funded by the Home Office and reports directly to the Home Secretary.

Home Office Objectives

HMI Probation contributes primarily to the achievement of Home Office Objective II:

- more offenders are caught, punished and stop offending, and victims are better supported
- and to the requirement to ensure that custodial and community sentences are more effective at stopping offending. We also contribute to the achievement of Objective III through scrutiny of work to address drugs and other substance misuse, and to other relevant criminal justice system and children's services objectives.

Role

- Report to the Home Secretary on the work and performance of the National Probation Service and Youth Offending Teams, particularly on the effectiveness of work with individual offenders, children and young people aimed at reducing reoffending and protecting the public
- In this connection, and in association with HM Inspectorate of Prisons, to report on the effectiveness of offender management under the auspices of the National Offender Management Service as it develops
- Contribute to improved performance in the National Probation Service, the National Offender Management Service and Youth Offending Teams
- Contribute to sound policy and effective service delivery by providing advice and disseminating good practice, based on inspection findings, to Ministers, Home Office staff, the Youth Justice Board, probation boards/areas and Youth Offending Teams
- Promote actively race equality and wider diversity issues in the National Probation Service, the National Offender Management Service and Youth Offending Teams
- Contribute to the overall effectiveness of the criminal justice system, particularly through joint work with other criminal justice and Government inspectorates.

Code of Practice

HMI Probation aims to achieve its purpose by:

- undertaking its work with integrity in a professional, impartial and courteous manner
- consulting stakeholders in planning and running inspections and regarding reports
- forming independent inspection judgements based on evidence
- the timely reporting and publishing of inspection findings and recommendations for improvement
- promoting race equality and wider diversity issues in all aspects of its work, including within its own employment practices and organisational processes
- developing joint approaches with other Inspectorate and Audit bodies to ensure a coordinated approach to the criminal justice system

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:

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