



OFFENDER  
MANAGEMENT  
INSPECTION  
INSPECTION

A report on Offender Management in  
the  
**West Midlands Area**

An inspection led by  
HM Inspectorate of Probation

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## FOREWORD

At the time of our inspection, the West Midlands Probation Area was still subject to 'Directed Improvement' status, imposed by NOMS in early 2007 because of serious concerns about its organisational capacity. To its credit, the area had responded well and, in response, had launched a 'Solutions Programme', which was intended to see the area through to achieving trust status in 2010. A number of significant changes had also taken place at a senior management level, including the appointment of a new chief officer and Board Chair. All brought with them a commitment to improvement to which, as we found in our inspection, the vast majority of staff responded positively. As a result, their collective efforts were beginning to have a positive impact on frontline service.

Inevitably, much remained still to do. Our inspection revealed deficits in the quality of sentence plans, analyses of Risk of Harm and structure of risk management plans, and, despite the development of an excellent workbook for use with offenders, the attention given to victims' issues. Whilst we were impressed by the efforts the area was making to address many national targets, we were concerned that long-standing problems with the information technology system, which were beyond the area's control to resolve, were frustrating progress. Other issues were, however, within its remit: improvements were still needed in people management and human resource processes to address the level of sickness absence, which remained a major cause for concern.

Nevertheless, it was evident that the hard work undertaken by managers and staff together over the past 12 months was now beginning to pay off and the area was, at last, moving in the right direction. We found a high level of commitment amongst staff to their work with offenders. Whilst there was no room for complacency, we were encouraged by the progress made and felt that a firm foundation had been laid on which the area could now build. The recommendations from this inspection are designed to help that process.

### ANDREW BRIDGES

HM Chief Inspector of Probation

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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

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

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS**

ACO	Assistant Chief Officer
AET	Area Executive Team
CO	Chief officer
DAT	Drug Action Team
DID	Drink Impaired Drivers programme
DRR	Drug rehabilitation requirement
ESOL	English for speakers of other languages
ETE	Employment, Training and Education
FDR	Fast delivery report
HMI Probation	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation
HR	Human Resources
IAG	Information, Advice and Guidance
IDAP	Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme
IDM	Improvement and Development Manager
LCJB	Local Criminal Justice Board
MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements
NOMIS	National Offender Management Information System
NOMS	National Offender Management Service
NSPCC	National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
OASys/eOASys	Offender Assessment System/electronic OASys
OGRS2	Offender Group Reconviction Score 2
OMU	Offender Management Unit
OSAP	Offender substance Abuse Programme
PCT	Primary Care Trust
PIU	Performance Improvement Unit
PO	Probation Officer
PPO	Prolific and other priority offender
PSO	Probation service officer
PSR	Pre-sentence report
RoH	Risk of Harm
ROM	Regional offender manager
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SDR	Standard delivery report
SFO	Serious Further Offence
SMB	Strategic Management Board
SPO	Senior Probation Officer
VLO	Victim liaison officer

## **SUMMARY**

### **Assessment and Sentence Planning**

Reports for court contributed positively to the sentencing process. There was room for improvement in the way pre-sentence report authors used the offender assessment system that had a subsequent negative impact on the quality of sentence planning. Further attention needed to be given to victims' issues. A thorough and accurate assessment of the likelihood of reoffending was found in the majority of cases and included positive and supportive factors. Offender managers actively assessed the factors that might inhibit successful completion of supervision and put measures in place to address them, e.g. by the use of interpreters. Whilst skills for life screenings were undertaken routinely, the rate of referral to provision was disappointing. Most aspects of the quality of sentence plans were unsatisfactory. Objectives were unlikely to reflect the work offenders needed to undertake and rarely related to education, training and employment or to unpaid work requirements. A high proportion of plans were completed late. There was little evidence of matching offenders to unpaid work placements or of using or developing their skills.

### **Implementation of Interventions**

We encountered a high level of commitment amongst offender managers to their work with offenders. We found a good level of communication between them and other workers, particularly in education, training and employment and approved premises staff. The weaknesses identified in initial sentence plans tended to be carried through the rest of the order. Reviews were completed in the main and some were updated but were often of a poor quality. The delivery of interventions bore little relation to what was in sentence plans. There were some improvements, however, including the proper sequencing of interventions according to the Risk of Harm and likelihood of reoffending. There was often a poor level of liaison between the offender manager, prisoner and prison-based staff. There were some positive exceptions to this with some offender managers regularly attending sentencing boards. There was also good use made of a partnership organisation to assist with the reintegration of some black or minority ethnic offenders back into communities and families. Cases identified as Prolific or other Priority Offenders received a premium service that harnessed the required 'stick and carrot' approach. Work with victims in statutory contact cases was carried out to a good standard but it was disappointing that a workbook for use with offenders to raise their awareness about victims' issues was not used consistently.

### **Achievement and Monitoring of Outcomes**

Achievement of sentencing outcomes was mixed. It was clear, however, that the punishment and control elements had been delivered in the majority of cases. The resources used were consistent with both the levels of Risk of Harm and the likelihood of reoffending. There was a good level of continuity of offender manager and a presumption that pre-sentence report authors would manage any subsequent case. There were examples of offenders who had benefited from educational opportunities or job clubs and had been able to move on positively without reoffending.

## **Leadership and Strategic Management**

The strength of the commitment of the new Board and area executive team to work cooperatively to improve performance and the status of the area was impressive. It was taking this work forward through a solutions programme that sought to re-establish lines of accountability and to drive up standards. Despite the hard messages that had been delivered to all staff, the majority thought positively about managers in the area. There was a comprehensive strategic approach to liaison with sentencers and courts that had had a positive impact on efficiency and service delivery in both agencies. Senior managers represented the area well across the districts and made appropriate contributions to public protection and to securing resources for offenders to prevent reoffending. An equalities and diversity unit contributed to the development of strategy and to operational delivery across the board. From a low base the area was making improvements to performance against many national targets. However, the functioning of the information technology system seriously undermined its capacity to do this; this was beyond its control to resolve and was extremely frustrating for staff. There were concerns about staffing levels in some offender management units and about the span of control of some managers. The majority of staff, however, thought they were well supported by supervision and training. The level of sickness absence was a major cause for concern; it reflected the improvements that were still necessary in people management and human resources processes and the extent to which the culture of the organisation had to change. Whilst there were some gaps, there was a good spread of services for offenders commissioned regionally and locally to support offender management.

## **Risk of Harm**

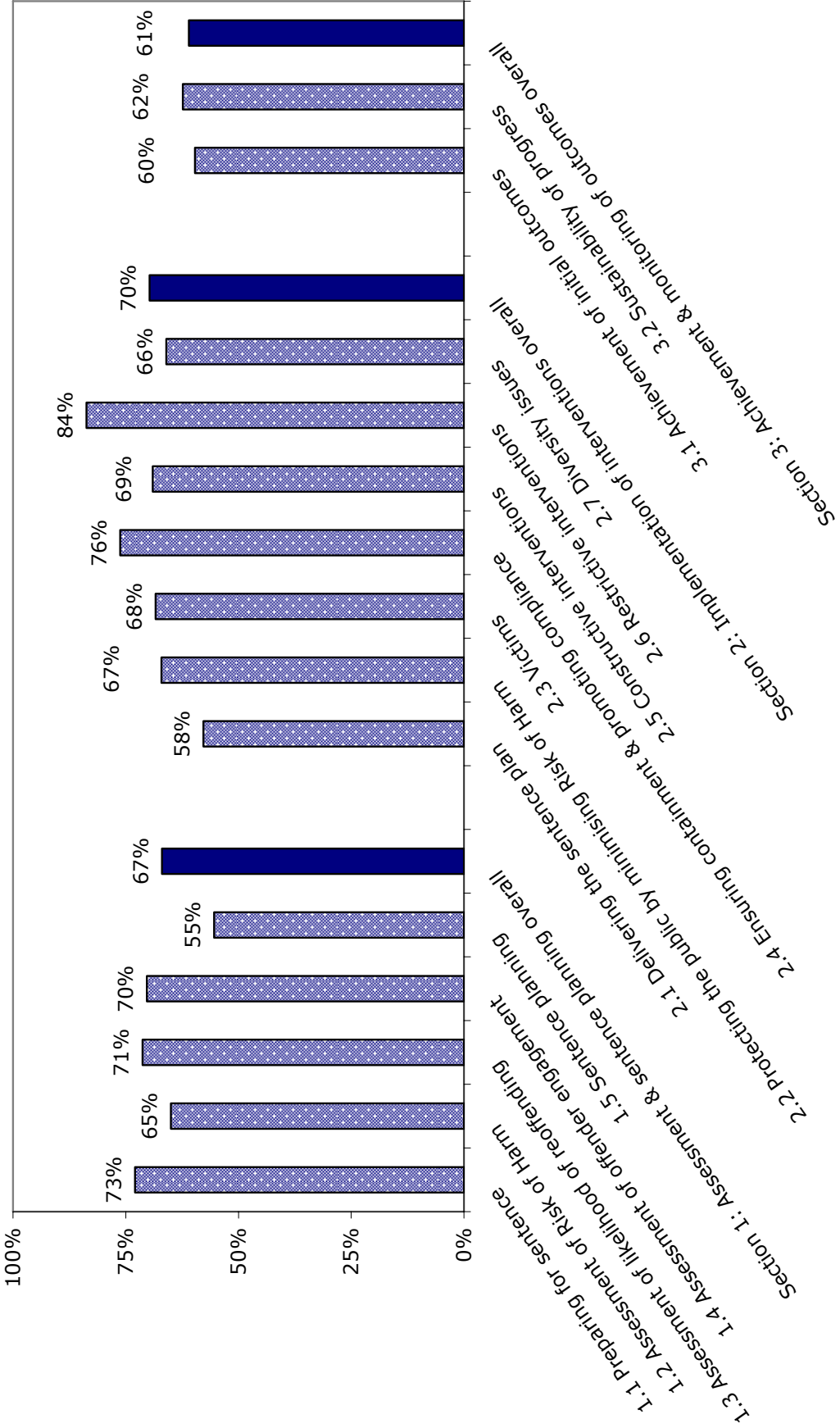
In almost every case a Risk of Harm screening had been carried out and, in most cases, the classification was accurate. The quality of Risk of Harm analysis was found to be satisfactory in just over half of the cases. Whilst risk management plans tended to be structured using the correct format, the majority did not describe how the public was to be protected in individual cases. There was a relatively low rate of registration of cases in Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements that was found to be appropriate. Most of these cases had been well managed. There was a productive approach to partnership working that had supported the development of a guns and gangs project. The quality of planning to address the safeguarding of children was a cause for concern. Too often, in cases of domestic abuse, there was no evidence of ongoing liaison with police domestic violence units. Approved premises were developing positive enhanced regimes and were used appropriately to protect the public. Across a range of measures, we saw evidence that the public had been better protected during supervision through the active management of cases.

## **SUMMARY OF SCORES**

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

**Chart 1: Scoring of sections 1- 3:**

**Offender Management Inspection: West Midlands (June 2008)**



### Table 1: Scoring of section 4:

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

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

### Table 2: Risk of Harm Thread

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

Score for Risk of Harm Thread	<b>68%</b>
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Full details of our *Scoring approach* are contained in Appendix 4.

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

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

Improvements are necessary as follows:

1. the analyses of Risk of Harm and subsequent management plans are completed comprehensively and accurately
2. plans and reviews are completed in a timely manner and reflect concisely the objectives of sentencing for each offender
3. full attention is paid to victims' issues at all stages of offender management
4. all measures are taken to ensure that children are safeguarded
5. the levels of staff attendance at work are improved
6. National Offender Management Service works, as a matter of urgency, with the area to resolve the current information technology problems.

## **NEXT STEPS**

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

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

There will not be a further inspection in the West Midlands area.

## SHARING GOOD PRACTICE

Below are examples of good practice we found in the West Midlands area.

### **Sensitivity to potential barriers to supervision**

**OMI Criterion: 1.5**

### **Sentence planning**

Despite Rafiq's age (he was over 70 years old) he was still regarded as posing a high RoH to children following his release from a five-year prison sentence. His offender manager, Brian, had been allocated the case only shortly before his release. Brian made a swift and accurate assessment of the needs in the case. In a relatively short time he had successfully referred Rafiq to several agencies after discussion with community groups in his local area. Rafiq's needs were complex but, starting with accommodation appropriate to his ethnicity and age, he was then referred to classes in English for speakers of other languages and to provision for alcohol misuse which had been linked to his offending. Addressing these needs, which were linked closely to the plan for managing Rafiq's RoH, clearly had the potential to reduce the level of risk posed.

### **Enhanced regime in Approved Premises:**

**OMI Criterion: 2.5**

### **Constructive interventions**

Women residents at Crowley House were supported by a comprehensive range of constructive activity which was compulsory for those not in education or employment. The level of participation was high. Some activities focused on the need for residents to improve their self-esteem and some were about developing practical skills. There was an excellent range of provision for improving educational skills and developing job readiness through a job club. Women gained qualifications and employment and were better able to get on with their lives without reoffending.

### **Prison Links:**

**OMI Criterion: 2.5**

### **Constructive interventions – resources directed at community reintegration issues.**

Michael was serving a sentence of two years in prison. He was 23 and it was his third time inside. His family had washed their hands of him for bringing shame to their home. He had had a heroin problem but this time had accepted support inside to kick the habit. He was still isolated though and his offender manager, Sharon, was concerned that on release he would relapse. She referred him to Prison Link, a church-based partnership organisation that provided support to black or minority ethnic prisoners by helping them to reintegrate back into their community. They provided him with a mentor who visited Michael in prison and who was eventually able to broker the resumption of contact with his mother and sister. Michael was soon to be released from prison and would be visited by his mentor in the supported accommodation found

	<p>for him through the scheme. The mentor would also support him in his plan to continue his education, started in prison, and to make contact with the local drugs team if he needed their assistance.</p>
<p><b>Guns and gangs:</b></p> <p><b>OMI Criterion: 3.2</b></p> <p><b>Sustainability of progress</b></p>	<p>Phil was supervised by a probation officer in the gangs unit with assistance from the police. Initially distrustful, it was impressive that after six months he was asking for help to relocate and to change his lifestyle. He had also agreed to meet with a member of the mediation team to look at ways of addressing a particular issue of conflict with his cousin, who was a member of another gang. The potential outcome of this conflict, if the mediation were not to work, could be extremely serious and possibly fatal. The offender manager's open, thoughtful and considered approach had succeeded in causing a very entrenched individual to look more broadly at his situation and to consider options for the future.</p>
<p><b>Workbooks to support interventions:</b></p> <p><b>OMI Criterion: 4.3</b></p> <p><b>Resource deployment</b></p>	<p>Staff in one of the offender management units had developed a series of workbooks on victim awareness, alcohol and domestic abuse. They were developing others on self-esteem, gambling and work pre- and post- <i>Think First</i>. The exercises in the books were delivered to groups of four to eight offenders by two members of staff. Attendance at these groups was high and allowed for constructive intervention to take place even if a particular offender manager was on leave.</p>
<p><b>Regional Sex Offender Unit:</b></p> <p><b>OMI Criterion: 4.6</b></p> <p><b>Commissioning of services</b></p>	<p>The regional sex offender unit was managed by the area on behalf of the region and also had a service level agreement to provide places on its programme for offenders in a Welsh area. This provision had been evaluated nationally and it was found that there had been a significant reduction in reconviction amongst those undertaking the sex offender programme as against those who had not. The unit provided a range of direct work with offenders, as well as an advice service for a church in the region. In partnership with the NSPCC, it also offered a service to assist the partners of sex offenders to recognise risk factors. A consultancy service was available to offender managers working with offenders considered unsuitable for the group work programme, including males under the age of 21 and females.</p>

## **SERVICE USERS' PERSPECTIVE**

### **Offenders**

There were 15 HMI Probation questionnaires completed and returned by the 163 offenders in the sample. All but one said that they had a good working relationship with their offender manager. The majority of offenders were clear about the rules relating to their supervision and recalled discussing their sentence plan with their manager. Six had recently been released from a prison sentence during which four of them had had a visit from their offender manager. The views expressed about the impact of supervision were mixed. Approximately half thought that they were more likely to think about victims of crime and less likely to reoffend. Thinking skills, attitude to offending and employment, training and education were the issues most frequently identified as being addressed during supervision.

In addition, inspectors were able to meet 99 offenders currently under supervision.

Seventeen offenders undertaking unpaid work were interviewed in three sessions in different districts. All were clear about the rules in relation to attendance and behaviour and about the consequences for breaching them. They thought that these were applied consistently. All felt that they had been treated fairly by staff. Offenders in one district commented that they had been thanked for the work that they had completed and were given feedback on how well they had done. The approach to matching offenders to projects appeared to vary. Some offenders had been offered some choice of work that was of interest or benefited from their skills or that might teach them new skills. Others complained that they had been given no choice. Offenders in one district said they had been given no opportunity to undertake skills development whilst, in another district, this had been offered. One person interviewed had had training in forklift truck driving as a consequence. Their views of the benefit of the work undertaken varied with some people questioning its value. However, several had been involved in clearing a canal and could see what a difference that had made to the environment. Others reflected that they had had positive experiences undertaking work for the benefit of elderly people that had clearly been appreciated.

Inspectors visited two approved premises and interviewed eight residents, one of whom was on bail. The residents reported a mixed experience of planning for release with their offender manager with only three of the seven who had a plan feeling involved in the process for drawing it up. Two said that they had had sufficient contact with their offender managers pre-release. All had had a positive experience of induction into the premises and were clear about the expectations. On the whole, they thought that staff were fair and applied rules consistently. There had been an exception in one of the premises where the response to the excessive use of alcohol could vary from resident to resident. All felt that staff in the premises were genuinely interested in helping them. Residents had regular contact with their offender manager and were aware of a good level of communication between them and premises staff. One of the premises had a very full programme of constructive activity and those interviewed felt this was positive and gave examples of benefits, e.g. increasing skills for life and employability. The other had a reasonable amount of in-house constructive activity in addition to encouraging residents to take part in community-based activities. Whilst some thought that this was helpful, others felt that some of the compulsory activities did not meet their needs.

We met ten offenders in two accredited programmes sessions: Drink impaired drivers and the offender substance abuse programme. Most could not recall participating in sentence planning or what the content of their sentence plan might have been. Some said that they had had little or no contact with their offender manager during the life of the programme. However, two were also subject to drug rehabilitation requirements and were receiving a wide range of assistance. All reflected positively about the approach of the programmes tutors; they created a relaxed and supportive environment in which the group could achieve the maximum benefit. All on the drink impaired drivers programme said it had made them think about the danger of drink driving and also the consequences for them and their families. Participants in the substance abuse programme were less clear about what they had achieved with the exception of one who had completed the programme recently; he said it had taught him how to think differently about achieving his goals.

Inspectors from Ofsted interviewed 64 offenders to discuss the opportunities they had had for learning and improving their employability. These offenders felt that they had been treated fairly and with respect by unpaid work supervisors and most other probation staff. They were clear about the rules and gave, as an example, an isolated incident of a racist comment made by an offender and dealt with promptly by a supervisor. Those interviewed were knowledgeable about how well they were doing on their individual learning programmes and many were completing a log of their experience to indicate what they were going to do at the next session.

## **Victims**

Ten of the 25 questionnaires that we sent to victims of offenders in the sample were returned. Eight had taken up the offer of having ongoing contact with the probation service during the offender's sentence. The majority were satisfied with the service received although two thought they had had insufficient information about the prison system and prisoner during the custodial sentence. Three indicated that they had not had sufficient information about their safety in relation to the offender.

Three victims of crime came to meet inspectors and were interviewed individually or, in two cases, with another family member. Their comments were significantly more positive than those found in the questionnaires. They had all found their victim liaison officer both caring and helpful. All had been invited to comment on proposed licence conditions. In one case of murder the bereaved victim had made a visit to the prisoner facilitated by the victim liaison officer. This had been planned and handled very well and was said to have been pivotal in the victim being able to come to terms with the death of their loved one. In another, a victim had been made aware and had taken advantage of arrangements for counselling.

## **Courts**

Sentencers returned 20 questionnaires to us. The majority said that they were satisfied with the quality of the reports presented and with the knowledge of the staff they met in court. Some were concerned about the area's capacity to provide fast delivery reports. Most who completed questions about enforcement were satisfied that arrangements for the breach of orders were working well. All but one respondent thought that liaison arrangements were effective.

# 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.*

**73%**

### Strengths:

- (a) There were PSRs in 75 of the relevant cases in the sample. Overall, their contribution to the sentencing process was found to be effective; a clear and appropriate proposal was made in most reports that tended to be followed by the court. Where the seriousness of the offence was stated, this had been taken into account in all but two reports. Sentencers who completed the HMI Probation questionnaire indicated that they were satisfied in the main with the quality of the reports presented.
- (b) Most of the reports prepared were of the appropriate type (SDR or FDR) and 96% had been completed within the timescale set by the court. We found that 81% were based on the appropriate risk and needs assessments and were also objective and free from stereotype.
- (c) Seven of the reports were from the PPO sample. Most did not label the offender explicitly as a PPO but clearly outlined the seriousness of the current offence and likelihood of reoffending whilst making a proportionate proposal. Two, however, did none of these things.

### Areas for Improvement:

- (a) The approach to using the eOASys PSR template we found problematic; in almost half of cases we thought that it did not enhance the quality of the report although there was only one adverse comment from sentencers in the completed questionnaires about the relevance of information. Reports in the area pulled through the contents of the ten needs sections from eOASys, each with a sub-heading. The result was a long list that led to 40% being assessed as insufficiently concise. Often there was little or no analysis in the sections and they included information that was not relevant to sentencing for this offence. It was of concern that the lack of analysis at this stage set the scene for the supervision of the subsequent sentence as the sections were usually pulled through for the initial plan and subsequent reviews.
- (b) Only 55% of cases contained appropriate information about the victim(s).
- (c) An outline sentence plan was missing from 59% of the relevant reports.
- (d) Four cases sentenced to immediate custody had had self-harm identified as an issue. We could find no evidence that these concerns had been communicated effectively to prison staff in three of them.

- (e) There were two PSRs where unpaid work would appear to have been the appropriate disposal and where it had been discounted by the report author due to a disability in one case and childcare responsibilities in the other. These potential barriers could have easily been overcome. As a consequence, each offender was sentenced to a longer, less appropriate community order.

**Conclusion:**

This criterion represents a priority for improvement.

**1.2 General Criterion: ASSESSMENT OF RISK OF HARM**

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

**65 %**

**Strengths:**

- (a) In all but four cases a RoH screening had been completed. 74% of cases in the community and custody samples had been completed on time and 88% of licence cases had had a screening completed at the time of release. In 89% of completed screenings the classification was found to be accurate.
- (b) Where a full RoH analysis had been required it had been completed in the majority of cases. In ten of the 15 cases where a full analysis was indicated, but not completed, there was no satisfactory explanation for this. We found that in 85% of the 46 relevant cases the RoH to children had been identified accurately. However, this meant that in seven cases it had not. The RoH to staff had been accurately identified in the same proportion with five where this was not the case.
- (c) There were few MAPPA cases in the sample; this reflected the relatively low proportions in the area. In most of these cases and other high or very high RoH cases the classifications were clearly marked on the record.
- (d) Referral to approved premises had been made appropriately in 14 cases with no gaps identified in other cases.
- (e) An additional element of assessment necessary in parts of Birmingham and some other districts was whether the offender was a member of a gang. We saw examples of where placing such a person in the wrong setting could be life threatening. Probation and police officers were working proactively to address these serious issues.

**Areas for Improvement:**

- (a) The RoH analysis, where completed, was of a satisfactory standard in 52% of cases. In relation to high RoH cases, 54% were satisfactory and in medium RoH only 35%. Whilst the summary box

may have been completed accurately as described in b) above, there tended to be insufficient detail to support the assessment. Sections were left blank or contained out-of-date information as a consequence of continually pulling through old material. In too many cases risk to children was marked as 'not known' and there was no systematic checking with children's services. We saw little analysis as opposed to factual information.

- (b) The proportion of relevant cases where the RoH to the public generally was accurately identified was lower than for children and staff at 75%; this meant that it was inaccurate in 27 cases. The level of accurate assessment in relation to known adults was 79%, with 13 cases inaccurately assessed.
- (c) The offender manager did not use other assessments to inform the RoH analysis in 36 (37%) of 98 relevant cases. Typically, information from the prison was not referred to in licence cases and there was often a failure to contact the police in cases of domestic abuse. In addition, 48% failed to cover victims' issues thoroughly.
- (d) The RoH management plan was found to be satisfactory in only 13% of relevant custody cases, 39% of relevant community orders and 42% of relevant licence cases. Across the samples, there were 13 cases where a RoH management plan was required but not in place. Whilst most were structured using the correct headings (plus some extra as standard), they tended to consist of a list of bullet points and could not be described as a plan of work to address the RoH posed by this offender. The inclusion of a standard contingency plan was, in theory, positive. However, with the exception of one approved premises case, where there was a concrete plan that set out what the specific danger was and the action to take should it arise, contingency plans were either 'breach' or 'recall'. In addition, plans in six of the high or very high RoH cases were not completed within five working days of commencement or release.
- (e) In 13 of the 23 cases where child safeguarding was an issue, there was no evidence of effective middle or senior management involvement. These were often cases that were appropriately not assessed as posing a high or very high RoH, frequently of domestic abuse. This meant that they fell below the radar of automatic review by a manager and often they had not been brought to their attention by the offender manager. In 11 or 31% of the high or very high RoH cases where a manager ought to have had involvement, there was also a lack of effective middle or senior manager involvement. This included middle managers countersigning poor quality work and, in several cases, giving inappropriate advice.

**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.*

**71%**

**Strengths:**

- (a) A full eOASys had been completed in most cases where one was required. 71% of these had been completed in a timely fashion.
- (b) Overall, we found that criminogenic factors had been accurately assessed and in 88% of relevant cases included positive and supportive factors.

**Areas for Improvement:**

- (a) In 16 of the 19 cases where an OGRS2 score was required as an alternative to OASys, it had not been calculated.
- (b) Only twelve out of the 20 PPOs in the sample had had a timely and comprehensive assessment of their likelihood of reoffending.
- (c) The offender manager did not use other available assessments to inform the analysis of the likelihood of reoffending in 35 or 30% of 116 relevant cases.

**Conclusion:**

This criterion represents a priority for improvement.

**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.*

**70 %**

**Strength:**

- (a) In 88% of cases where there were potential barriers to effective supervision, e.g. speakers of languages other than English, these had been identified. Measures to address them had been put in place in most cases; for instance there had been comprehensive access to an interpreting service.

**Areas for Improvement:**

- (a) There were good arrangements for the initial assessment and then diagnostic assessment of literacy and numeracy needs. However, these had not been used consistently. Whilst we saw evidence that a skills for life screening was routinely undertaken at the PSR stage or during induction unless there were contra-indications, only 58% of those with an assessed need had gone on for a full assessment and access to provision. This was most disappointing in unpaid work, where there was little evidence of planning to permit access to provision.

- (b) The ability, learning style, motivation and capacity to change had been taken into account at the planning stage in 63% of cases. Insufficient attention had consequently been paid to the methods most likely to be effective with offenders in 43% of cases.

**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) Offenders were allocated to the correct tier in 88% of cases. The most frequent discrepancy was where Tier 2 cases had been incorrectly identified as Tier 3. The planning reflected the stated tier in 72% of the sample. 85% of cases were allocated to an offender manager within the correct time limit.
- (b) In 72% of all cases an intervention was identified that addressed offending behaviour. Surprisingly, as we confirmed that offender managers did address these issues, plans were less likely to identify the work to promote community reintegration. Examples included a lack of attention to ETE activity in plans, even where provision had actually been planned. This also led to a lack of clarity and inconsistency between cases about whether this activity was enforceable.
- (c) There was evidence on file that steps had been taken in almost all cases to ensure that the offender fully understood the requirements of the sentence and the penalties should it be breached. All the offenders interviewed confirmed that this was the case.

**Areas for Improvement:**

- (a) Most aspects of the written sentence plan were unsatisfactory. The main exceptions were the level of planned contact and the expectation that contacts would be enforceable in 81% and 76% of community orders and licences respectively. Overall, 41% were found to be unsatisfactory and 12% poor. This included 49% of the high RoH and 61% of the medium RoH cases.
- (b) It was clear that the written plan often had little connection with the work undertaken by offender managers. Most were able to articulate the plan that they had had in their head for the offender's supervision but they could not share it with OMU colleagues, their manager or the offender. In many cases, they undersold the work that they did with the offender, e.g. only in 42% of all plans did the

objectives set give a shape to the interventions planned. It was of concern that many offender managers were apparently unaware of their ability to edit the 'drop down boxes' in eOASys. As a consequence, they often selected objectives that were closest to the issues actually identified by them as needing addressing in supervision. This often led to between five and eleven objectives to be addressed at the same time. Objectives were seen as relevant in 40% of cases, focusing on achievable change in 45% and reflecting sentencing purposes in 59%. The roles and responsibilities of all workers had been defined in 46% of cases.

- (c) Offender managers in cases where unpaid work was one of several requirements in a community order demonstrated a lack of knowledge about what work the offender had been allocated to. Nor did they tend to understand the contribution that this element of the sentence could make to rehabilitation. It was rarely mentioned in sentence plans.
- (d) It was of concern that a restrictive requirement had not been considered in 45% of the cases where it had been indicated to minimise the RoH to others. An intervention that was likely to contain or reduce the RoH was identified in only 60% of relevant cases. Only 20% of the sentence plans cross referenced to the RoH management plan.
- (e) A high proportion (49%) of plans in community orders had not been completed on time. There was insufficient attention paid to sequencing and timing in over 60% of the cases in this sample although it was clear who was to deliver interventions in 65% of these cases.
- (f) It was disappointing to find that whilst offender managers had actively assessed potential barriers to effective supervision, they had not articulated them in the plan in 56% of the cases where they had been present. Only 53% of offenders appeared to have been actively involved in the planning process, e.g. through use of the self-assessment questionnaire.
- (g) As many elements of enhanced community punishment were still in place in West Midlands, e.g. employment of quality assurance managers, application of standards to placements and a post-sentence assessment interview, it was surprising to find little evidence of assessment and matching of offender to suitable unpaid work placement.

**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.*

**58%**

#### Strengths:

- (a) We encountered a high level of commitment from 75% of offender managers to their work with individual offenders. Despite the difficulties outlined in section 4, they were working positively, often with people exhibiting challenging behaviour. Arrangements were in place to prepare 75% of offenders thoroughly for interventions; in 66% of cases they had motivated and supported the offender throughout their sentence and we saw that offender managers had reinforced new skills in 65% of cases.
- (b) Where there had been activity in prison to address factors linked to offending, e.g. education and substance misuse, this had been picked up in supervision in the community in 70% of cases.
- (c) When interventions were delivered by more than one worker, we found evidence that the offender manager oversaw and coordinated the input of other workers. In 68% of such cases there was evidence of good communication between the offender manager and other workers and in 63% between all staff and the offender. We saw a good level of communication between skills for life tutors, IAG/ETE advisors and offender managers to support individual learners. In our interviews with offenders we found that residents in approved premises were the most likely to have had a positive experience in relation to these issues of communication. With those engaged on programmes the experience was more mixed. It was said to be unsatisfactory or poor by those we interviewed who were engaged in unpaid work.
- (d) Reviews had been done in all but five cases and completed on time in 70% of them.
- (e) There were only five cases in the sample that had been transferred between areas during the sentence. Most had been handled according to the national standard requirements. Seven prisoners in the custody sample had been moved during their sentence. Whilst in five cases this had not been in accordance with their sentence plan. In all but one case it had been communicated promptly to their offender manager.

#### Areas for Improvement:

- (a) The area had given priority, quite properly, to achieving national targets in relation to sentence planning from a very low base. In terms of quality, however, the delivery of only 49% of the plans scrutinised was satisfactory (the percentage scores were similar

across the different RoH classifications) so there was much still to be done.

- (b) Given that the original sentence plans were often of insufficient quality and that a review was most commonly pulled through with little, if any, actual review or updated information, it was not surprising to find that the quality of most reviews needed to improve. In only 48% could we see that work had flowed coherently from the plan and objectives and that milestones gave clear direction to the sentence in 34% of cases. Continuing ownership of the plan by the offender was not likely to take place in these circumstances but was nevertheless found in 39%. Where offenders were actively engaged in a learning activity, there was more likely to be evidence of their involvement in planning with the provider.
- (c) There had, however, been an improvement in the delivery of some elements of the sentence plan that could be seen to rectify some of the deficits in the written document. For instance, the appropriate sequencing of interventions according to the RoH and likelihood of reoffending was apparent in 60% of cases.
- (d) Whilst reviews had taken account of other plans in 61% of relevant cases, we still found that gaps in relation to checks with the police domestic violence unit or children's services and in using information from earlier supervision by YOTs.
- (e) Despite the evidence that the area had implemented offender management for relevant custody cases, we found that it had been addressed inconsistently. There had often been a poor level of liaison between the offender manager and those working in prisons to coordinate work and prepare prisoners for release. In approximately half of the licences and cases released in the custody sample was there evidence of positive, proactive and timely communication. In 38% of these cases there was no evidence of any communication.
- (f) In only 60% of cases had all sentence requirements been implemented. This was often in relation to a delay in starting programmes or because of lack of provision, for example, for alcohol misuse.

**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.*

**67%**

**Strengths:**

- (a) The approach to reviewing cases had been mixed, with some strengths. Whilst in 71% of cases a review of the RoH had been undertaken within four months of sentence or release, at the subsequent review 87% had been done on time.
- (b) Sixteen cases in the sample had been managed through MAPPA at some stage in the sentence. In all but two, the arrangements were judged to be satisfactory.
- (c) There had been 12 people recalled appropriately and effectively to prison for breach of their licence in relation to RoH issues. In eight of the cases attempts had been made to explain the recall and reengage the offender to facilitate supervision when next released.
- (d) Changes in circumstances that could have had an impact on the level of RoH posed had been anticipated, where feasible, in 63% and identified swiftly in 78% of cases. The subsequent response had been appropriate to protect the public in 73%.

**Areas for Improvement:**

- (a) Whilst there were some positive scores in this section, it cannot be said that managing the RoH posed to the public had been given high priority throughout the sentence in most cases. This was the overall judgement in 60% of the sample, which broke down as follows for the RoH categories: high 57%, medium 56% and low 73%.
- (b) The quality of planning to address the harm posed by individual offenders to people in the community had deteriorated in all categories as the cases progressed. Of most concern, we found that in only 53% of the cases where children were seen to be at risk had the ongoing planning been sufficient to protect them. Home visits had been employed to monitor children's safeguarding outcomes in only 50% of relevant cases. Gaps were also identified in relation to contact with the police and children's services.
- (c) In relation to prisoners, there was evidence of the offender manager and supervisor contributing to prison risk management processes in six out of the 14 relevant cases.
- (d) The level of home visiting to high RoH cases within 10 working days of sentence or release had not been sufficient in 73% of cases who had been released other than to approved premises. Some individuals had, however, been visited later and, positively, visits had been repeated as required in 23% of cases. However, no home visits had been carried out in six cases.

**Conclusion:**

This criterion represents an urgent priority for improvement.

**2.3 General Criterion: VICTIMS*****Consistent attention is given to issues concerning victims.*****68%****Strengths:**

- (a) There were 32 statutory victim contact cases in the sample. In just over 80% of these there was evidence that liaison with the victim had taken place as required and that they had been offered information about the criminal justice process.
- (b) There were victims in 18 cases who had taken up the offer of further contact. In all but two, victims had had the opportunity of commenting on and being informed about release conditions. Four, however, had not been informed in a timely fashion of the impending release of the prisoner.
- (c) The victims interviewed by us were very positive about the contribution that the area's VLOs had made to their understanding of the criminal justice processes and to their feelings about being safe.

**Areas for Improvement:**

- (a) There were 72 cases where there were concerns for the safety of the victim(s) of the offences related to the current sentence or concerns about the safety of others. In 46 or 64% of these there was evidence of a high priority being given to their safety through the inclusion and implementation of restrictive requirements in an order or licence. From the prison setting, victim safety was seen to have been promoted in only five out of the eight relevant cases.
- (b) It was disappointing to find that despite investment in a workbook for offender managers to use with offenders to address victim awareness, attempts to do this work were found in only 53% of cases. Where we did find the workbook being employed, particularly in small group sessions, it was being used effectively.

**Conclusion:**

This criterion represents a 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.***

**76%**

**Strengths:**

- (a) We found evidence that offenders had been offered a timely induction at the start of sentence or release on licence in 90% of cases.
- (b) The frequency of appointments conformed to the national standard in 84% of the sample overall. The proportion where we thought the level of contact had been appropriate to facilitate the requirements of the sentence was 75%; this often meant contact had been at a higher level than the minimum prescribed. For example, offenders undertaking accredited programmes should have been seen by their offender manager at a frequency that sustained motivation and reinforced learning. However, some had not been seen at all during the life of the programme. In 32% of relevant cases, we thought that contact ought to have been more frequent to meet the RoH considerations.
- (c) There were 20 cases that were currently being managed within one of the area's seven PPO schemes. All but two were experiencing enhanced levels of contact and/or a level of reporting that supported the elements of the scheme. We saw positive examples of high levels of multi-agency collaboration to both monitor offenders and to provide access to relevant services. Some were successfully engaged in a number of these at one time, e.g. OSAP, cognitive skills booster and skills for life supported by the drugs agency and monitored by police and probation.
- (d) Attendance had been monitored appropriately in 93% of community cases. There had been effective liaison with providers monitoring of electronic curfews in 13 of the 17 relevant cases. We also saw evidence of effective action to improve compliance in 87% of cases where this had been necessary.
- (e) Judgements about the acceptability of reasons for absence were consistent and appropriate in 90% of cases. Where breach action had been necessary, it had been instigated within the required timescale in 80% of cases and completed in 73%.
- (f) Case recording was well organised overall with clear and timely records of contact. A number of cases would benefit from the log being fuller. However, it is recognised that everything that had been achieved was despite the IT system, which had a daily negative impact on the ability of staff to do their job. Apart from the very slow running of the system (we experienced that 20 to 40 minutes to effect any movement of the cursor was common at several points in each day) we saw evidence of where staff had completed

documents, including sentence plans, only to have most of them disappear.

**Areas for Improvement:**

- (a) There had been insufficient levels of liaison between the offender manager and offender in 57% of cases during the custodial element of sentences. This was not likely to promote effective subsequent offender management in the community.
- (b) The frequency of unpaid work sessions had conformed to the national standard in 63% of cases. The reasons for this were not wholly clear as we did not find significant evidence of stand-downs for lack of supervisors. One of the reasons appeared to be the practice of instructing offenders to work on Mondays and not changing the instruction when there was a bank holiday in the week. We were also given examples of where offenders had been assessed at one office and had to report elsewhere for other elements of the order and where problems with communication had led to delays in instructions being issued. In only 56% of cases were placements felt to be suitably matched to offenders. We interviewed offenders who complained that they had been asked what skills they had and what kinds of work they preferred only to be allocated to unskilled work in a charity shop or a large painting job. Offenders in one group complained that they did not know from week to week what work they would be undertaking; they did whatever was available on the day with no attempt made to match their individual skills. 69% of work placements were found to be suitably demanding and 79% of the placements were seen as being beneficial to the community.

**Conclusion:**

This criterion represents a priority for improvement.

**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.*

**69%**

**Strengths:**

- (a) Sufficient work and resources had been directed at community reintegration issues in 78% of cases. The area had invested in training volunteers to act as mentors to support learning in accredited programmes as well as skills for life sessions and job clubs.
- (b) There were five DRR cases in the sample; in all of these the offender manager had prepared reports and attended review hearings as required.

- (c) Whilst immediate action had been taken in only half of the relevant cases, we saw evidence that the majority of offenders had been assisted to preserve positive community links whilst in prison.
- (d) There were nine cases in the sample where offenders had been resident in approved premises for at least six weeks. We heard evidence from staff and residents about the development of an enhanced constructive regime in the seven approved premises in the area and read examples in the sample. Gaining skills with a view to employment was an important feature. The women's premises in particular had a very well developed programme, which was compulsory for those not in employment or education in the community. We had some concerns about the content of the programme in one, however, where the compulsory teaching of a foreign language was hard to justify.

**Areas for Improvement:**

- (a) In 62% of cases offenders had been engaged in constructive interventions that challenged them to accept responsibility for their offending behaviour and its consequences.
- (b) There was a good level of well planned teaching available that was supported by providers and in-house ETE staff. However, in only 66% of those cases where a skills for life need had been identified were arrangements made to refer offenders to appropriate provision.
- (c) In the 47 cases where there was an accredited programme requirement, the programme had started as intended in only 57%. Provision and waiting times varied from district to district. For example, in one, the OSAP was currently for illegal substance misuse only, so there was nowhere for those with an alcohol need to be referred to for a programme. This district was also restricting the use of IDAP to Tier 4 cases.

**Conclusion:**

This criterion represents a priority for improvement.

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

**84%**

**Strengths:**

- (a) The majority of licences included additional requirements. In around 90% these had been judged to be proportionate and necessary to manage the RoH and likelihood of reoffending. They had been fully monitored in 78% of cases.
- (b) Approved premises were being used effectively in every case to contain and manage offenders posing a high RoH.

- (c) Where PPOs had an illegal drug problem linked to their offending, there was an additional condition added to their licence on release for prison.

**Area for Improvement:**

- (a) Despite the positive approach to the use of licence conditions to manage offenders, in 30% of cases we were not satisfied that every action had been taken to minimise the RoH.

**Conclusion:**

Performance against this criterion was good.

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

**66%**

**Strengths:**

- (a) Arrangements for interventions took account of offenders diversity needs in 72% of cases. The area made frequent use of interpreters. Where these diversity needs had related to physical disability, they had been addressed in 75% of cases. Literacy and numeracy had been addressed in 70% of cases and where dyslexia had been identified as a learning need to providers, it had been well catered for. We also saw attention to offenders who had a disability and for whom special arrangements had to be made at the office. In a few cases offenders suffering from anxiety had been attended to promptly on arrival at the office to avoid panic.
- (b) Potential barriers to the successful completion of a period of residence in approved premises had been identified in relation to seven of the nine residents in the sample. All had been addressed satisfactorily. Specific concerns included diet and the need for room for prayer.
- (c) There was evidence on file that 89% of offenders had been clearly informed that discriminatory behaviour would not be tolerated. We checked this out with those we interviewed and they all confirmed that they were clear about the approach adopted.

**Area for Improvement:**

- (a) The West Midlands area benefited from a rich and diverse population that was reflected amongst its staff group and caseload. There was, therefore, a reduced likelihood of black or minority offenders being placed as singletons in a group setting. However, there were 19 cases in the sample who had been placed as minority offenders in a mixed setting. There was no evidence that 12 of them had been asked and given their consent to this. Where consent had been sought, measures had been put in place to support the individual in all seven cases. During our meetings with offenders, we found one

woman in an unpaid work group who said that, whilst she did not mind being the lone female, she had not been consulted.

**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.*

60%

##### Strengths:

- (a) We saw evidence that the public had been better protected across a range of measures during supervision through the active management of cases. In 26 cases there had been an increase in restrictive measures applied and, in ten, a decrease in response to changes in circumstances that could have an impact on levels of RoH. We also saw changes in MAPPA levels in four cases and five children had had their names added to the child protection register. These examples were evidence of a good level of oversight and responsiveness to change.
- (b) There were some benefits to the community as a result of some of the sentences served. In 79% of the unpaid work cases the work was seen to have benefited the community. In 28% there had been a reduction in offending and a reduced potential threat to victims in 21%. The majority of cases (73%) had not been either cautioned or convicted of an offence during the period.
- (c) eOASys had been rescored in 69% of cases with 39% demonstrating an improvement over the original score. 49% of the sample had shown some level of progress in relation to the first factor linked to their offending; thinking and behaviour and then illegal drug misuse had been the most frequent of these.
- (d) Those offenders who did persist with the opportunities for learning had made good progress in literacy and numeracy programmes. In classes visited there was a high level of skills for life awards in one, and of achieving the driving theory test in another. However, there was a high level of attrition from others, which suggested that there had been insufficient attention paid to preparation and motivation.
- (e) Achievement of sentencing outcomes was mixed. The objective of punishment applied across the whole sample and was seen to have been achieved in 84%. The control objective applied to Tier 4 cases had been achieved in 75%. Offenders had been successfully helped in 57% of cases. Change was always the hardest objective to achieve and we found evidence of initial success in 30% of Tier 3 and 4 cases. Whilst we saw no indication at all in 46% of cases, we did find some signs of a change in attitude in 42% of cases and in elements of behaviour in 37%. We did find some positive examples in the sample where offender managers continued to work positively with offenders whose offending was serious and repeated, but who had not been amenable to change at that time.
- (f) We found that almost all cases had been allocated resources consistent with their RoH and likelihood of reoffending. In all but

two PPO cases resources allocated had been consistent with their status. In 73% of cases resources were found to have been used efficiently to achieve the planned outcomes.

**Areas for Improvement:**

- (a) It was of concern that in 14 of the 34 cases where domestic abuse had been identified as an element of RoH, the offender manager did not know whether there had been any calls to the police domestic violence unit. These were not necessarily cases where the current index offence was of domestic violence but where it was still a live issue.
- (b) The offender had demonstrated a level of increased victim awareness in 39% of cases.
- (c) There was room for improvement in the numbers of offenders complying with the requirements of their order or licence as we found that this was satisfactory in only 66% of cases.
- (d) There had been insufficient use of the 20% of unpaid work hours available for ETE activity, which meant that opportunities had been missed to develop skills both in the classroom and through placements.

**Conclusion:**

This criterion represents a priority for improvement.

**3.2 General Criterion: SUSTAINABILITY OF PROGRESS**

*Results are capable of being sustained between different phases of a sentence and beyond the end of supervision.*

**62%**

**Strengths:**

- (a) There was a good level of continuity in offender management with a presumption that PSR authors would continue to supervise any resulting case. As a result, 79% of cases had had only one or two offender managers.
- (b) 80% of offenders had been made aware of community-based organisations that could assist with long-term needs, e.g. substance misuse agencies. Overall, offender managers had given full attention to addressing criminogenic factors in 75% of cases.
- (c) In our discussions with offenders on unpaid work projects, in approved premises and during visits to ETE providers, we were made aware of a number who had achieved successful outcomes; some had taken advantage of educational activities appropriate to their level of attainment whilst others had participated in one of a number of job clubs and were now in employment.

**Areas for Improvement:**

- (a) Structured sentence planning was seen to have been given a high priority in just 42% of cases in the sample.
- (b) Sufficient action had been taken to consolidate offender learning and reinforce new skills in only 51% of cases.

**Conclusion:**

This criterion represents a priority for improvement.

## 4. LEADERSHIP AND STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

### 4.1 General Criterion: LEADERSHIP AND PLANNING

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

**Satisfactorily met**

#### Strengths:

- (a) This inspection was undertaken against a background of the West Midlands area being subject to 'Directed Improvement' under the auspices of NOMS because of underperformance. In February 2007, NOMS had identified that it had, "*significant issues of concern in relation to leadership, HR, service delivery and finance, all of which suggest an underlying weakness in organisational capability.*" The status was still in place in June 2008 at the time of the inspection although the NOMS PIU was monitoring performance by that stage rather than having direct input. A new director of operations had been in post since August 2007, shortly before the former chief officer went on extended sick leave; she retired at the end of March 2008. An interim chief officer had been appointed in February 2008 and this appointment was made permanent in April 2008. All but three members of the Board, including the Chair, retired at the end of the last year; the new Chair was one of the three remaining members. In our inspection we found that the changes implemented at the top were clearly having an impact throughout the organisation.
- (b) In November 2007 a 'Solutions Programme' was launched by the area and was intended to address all of the identified problems potentially standing in the way of the area gaining trust status in 2010. This was a three-year plan to improve performance at all levels; it was firmly embedded in the Business Plan for 2008/2009 and was, in effect, the trust development plan for the area. Leading up to this the AET had worked with board members acting as a general purposes committee to develop a programme that set out to change West Midlands Probation Area culture. It established clear lines of accountability from Board to operations for activities to get performance right. Clear expectations of behaviour and leadership from managers and staff were established. The programme was launched in nine simultaneous meetings to all staff in work, i.e. over 1200, with arrangements made to catch up with those away from work. It was delivered by ACOs and DMs with board member support using a standard script to ensure consistency. The impact of various aspects of the programme was considered during the inspection and is reported on in this section.

- (c) We were impressed by the strength of the relationship between the new Board and AET and the cohesive approach and commitment to improvement. This was not a complacent relationship, however; it was clear that the Board, whilst actively involved, was holding senior managers to account. The new Board consisted of people from a variety of walks of life with a wealth of expertise – as did the AET. Progress against the solutions programme was reported regularly to the Board with risk issues and issues for the Board identified against each of the objectives. A comprehensive set of measures to ensure continuing communication about the progress of the programme and staff feedback was in place; these included regular newsletters, individual staff accountability sessions, a staff suggestion scheme, focus groups of middle managers and a further meeting for all staff in May 2008.
- (d) There was a comprehensive approach to effective liaison with sentencers and justices clerks which was led at magistrates' court level by the DM. Liaison was characterised by regular business meetings between the DMs and the clerks and meetings with probation staff chaired by magistrates. These focused on disseminating information about the probation service and also identifying training needs for magistrates. We heard evidence that liaison between the probation area and magistrates' courts was generally characterised by an open, honest relationship. Several issues were being progressed jointly through the LCJB, e.g. expedited breach. An example of significant progress in the last year was cited by the courts as an end to the problem of the area being unable to produce reports in all cases when requested. The liaison judge was an active board member and instrumental in working with the area to drive improvements in court matters across all criminal courts, e.g. in support of a seminar on addressing dangerousness in court reports, which had been attended by a representative from every team in the area. In addition, there was regular involvement at area level of senior managers with clerks, bench chairs and District Judges to address current and new issues. Liaison in relation to sentencing outcomes was underway (4.3.c) but it was too soon to assess the success of these measures.
- (e) The West Midlands area had a positive history of partnership and interagency work. We read evidence of how this had been promoted and heard from strategic partners that the managers in the probation area, although spread relatively thinly across seven districts, were able to contribute positively to local authority and other partnerships. DMs took a lead role in their locality with ACO involvement at an area level where appropriate. Board members were representing the area at local Strategic Partnership Board level and working closely with DMs to develop measures to contribute to local area agreements. The area was represented appropriately by DMs in safeguarding boards and played an active part in their development. As an example of effectiveness, we heard evidence from strategic partners about developments through Supporting People in several districts. DMs sat on each commissioning board and chaired one of

them. Operational groups were attended by SPOs. In Dudley, an agreement had been reached to make a number of furnished tenancies available for released prisoners; in several districts there were schemes to provide floating support to offenders posing a high RoH to the public.

Relationships in Birmingham city were more complex than in other districts. The ACO for Birmingham chaired the Drug Treatment and Offender Management core priority group of the Birmingham Community Safety Partnership. This was a multi-layered partnership where the ACO represented the probation area at a strategic level and other managers were involved at local levels across a variety of subjects.

- (f) There was an effective strategic approach to public protection that had resulted in an overlapping approach to MAPPAs, PPOs and gangs. The probation service was involved at all levels. An ACO acted as chair of the MAPPAs SMB. An example of progress had been a focus on thresholds for MAPPAs; as a consequence, registration was now at a reduced level. We did not encounter any cases in our fieldwork that suggested that this approach was inappropriate. Each district had a PPO scheme; as there were 20 PPOs in the file reading sample we were able to see, on the whole, positive examples of the multi-agency premium service delivered to prevent reoffending.

Several districts in the area, primarily, but not exclusively, within Birmingham, had been experiencing challenges to public safety related to a gang culture and the use of weapons and guns in particular. As understanding and experience grew, there had developed another multi-layered approach where MAPPAs, PPO management and gang member management came together. In cases dealt with under these arrangements PPO status was less likely to be drug related but potentially more dangerous to the public. This was also supported by what had developed as a practitioner-led guns and gangs unit to manage offenders and, where appropriate, to operate a mediation service; it was about to be established as a formal multi-agency team.

At a regional level, the area had worked productively with the three other probation areas and the prison service within the reducing reoffending action plan. Addressing the accommodation needs of offenders had been a priority, including developing the approved premises estate on a regional basis, as had working with sex offenders.

- (g) There was an equality and diversity unit which, when fully staffed, comprised of part of an ACO's time plus three officers and an administrator. Its work was reported regularly to a Board sub-committee. Whilst some absences had had an impact on the unit's capacity to achieve its work schedule over the last two years, it was easy to see how consideration of diversity was built into strategic planning and implementation. We also saw examples of how unit staff worked alongside managers and staff in districts to assist in improving responses to local issues.

- (h) Under the auspices of the LCJB, the area shared responsibility with other agencies for consulting communities about criminal justice matters. In 2007, a member of the probation equality and diversity team participated in planning focus groups for black and minority ethnic groups to have a say about aspects of the LCJB's work. There was also evidence of the area participating in activities with minority ethnic and faith communities to promote the work of the service through unpaid work projects, as an example, and during events to mark the annual Black History month.
- (i) We asked the staff that we interviewed individually and in meetings how they viewed their managers. 69% of those interviewed individually said that they thought that managers demonstrated a professional managerial approach. 67% thought that they modelled positive leadership behaviour. When we asked these questions in meetings, the responses were positive overall. Strategic partners were all positive about the managers that they had had dealings with.
- (j) Internal audit was used productively to identify potential improvements in current key issues, e.g. in attendance management and IT systems. There had also been a comprehensive review of SFOs that had led to improvements in practice and in internal procedures for reporting. Following a critical review of SFOs in the previous year by the IDM as part of the Directed Measures programme, the director of operations took responsibility for oversight of all SFO reviews. In this way, where the management of these cases had been unsatisfactory, areas for improvement were identified and remedial action taken. In addition, the role of the Board's SFO Panel was strengthened, taking responsibility for signing off the resulting action plans when completed. These procedures were viewed as satisfactory by both internal audit and the PIU.

**Area for Improvement:**

- (a) There was limited collection of user feedback to inform planning. An exception was that during 2007 a satisfaction survey of residents in their approved premises was undertaken with the intention that this would become routine. Managers were expected to identify at least one action to address areas identified for improvement.

**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**

**Summary of results for West Midlands from the NOMS Integrated Probation Performance Framework (IPPF): April-March 2008**

IPPF domain	
Public Protection	Passable
Offender Management	Passable
Interventions	Passable
Operational Capability, Resource Use and Strategy	Good

<b>Area score</b>	Passable
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Detailed results for each metric making up the above domains are at Appendix 1.

**Strengths:**

- (a) It was clear that, at least since the autumn of 2007, achieving national, regional and local targets had become the area's first priority. The solutions programme itself had a number of key targets built in. The most important thrust, however, was to make achievement of targets the business of everyone. This was achieved by implementing a new system for accountability. Previously there had been a vacuum between policy development, at the top of the organisation, and frontline delivery. Managers and staff at all levels had attempted to take responsibility for aspects of policy or operation, but without consistently being held to account, and with no expectation of support from above.

At the time of the inspection, managers and staff appeared to be doing what was required of them. The director of operations was driving performance on behalf of the Board and AET; he was very visible around the area and staff were made aware of what the current priority was. He had adopted a 'back to basics' approach to get the building blocks of good practice in place. The 'can do' culture would take time to develop. Results from our case assessments suggested that the approach had been successful, e.g. around the completion and timeliness of assessments. Staff for whom it was new complained about being target driven, but the director of operations was careful to publicise good practice and to issue praise. The next stage would be to get the quality into the consistent completion of processes that would not require such a direct approach from the top of the organisation.

- (b) All staff had access to the electronic management information system on the intranet, which could display data from area down to individual offender manager levels. We checked and were assured

that staff did use it; they had to, in order to ensure that they were aware of, and addressed, current targets displayed on their own 'to do' list.

- (c) At regional level there were a number of examples of positive collaboration to improve performance, e.g. on the quality of parole assessment reports. An exercise was coordinated by the IDM in 2007 with participation by ACOs from each area and HMI Probation to assess the quality of reports against an agreed checklist. Good practice examples were then promoted using internal systems. The work was further developed in the area in line with new central guidance in 2008, and an internal quality assurance system established involving line managers. Work on standards in approved premises was also well developed regionally with an emphasis on the provision of an enhanced regime and of managing RoH; we saw examples of its effectiveness in case assessments and in visits to approved premises.
- (d) Where targets were not being met, there was a detailed plan for improvement; in these cases the director of operations visited underperforming units either to discuss and find solutions or to reinforce expectations.

#### **Areas for Improvement:**

- (a) The functioning of the operational IT system was seriously undermining the area's attempts to improve performance. Whatever the origin of the problem (the West Midlands case record was unique), once established, a solution seemed to have been slow in emerging and was not within the area's control. The performance of the system deteriorated significantly in December 2007, and at times, prevented staff from working. It is not possible to exaggerate the frustration experienced by staff. Disappointed that they would not be able to adopt c-NOMIS, which had been suggested as a solution, the area agreed to migrate its case records to Delius, a recognised case recording system. This was planned for September and all staff had been trained. However, without a resolution of the IT function currently blighting the areas system, the migration was not likely to be wholly successful. The solution was in the hands of the NOMS offender information services unit.
- (b) Performance against national targets in the West Midlands area had been poor over a number of years. In 2007/2008, it had improved in a number of key areas in response to the new focus on targets. At the end of the year, as indicated above, their performance was 'passable' overall. Over half of the targets had been achieved or exceeded by the year end with clear evidence of improvement in others. Strengths included programmes completions and aspects of compliance. Areas for improvement currently proving most difficult to achieve were the shared end-to-end enforcement targets and staff sickness, which will be addressed in 4.4.
- (c) Whilst it was positive to see that central equality and diversity unit resources were deployed to ensure that there was consideration of

diversity in operational policy development, this was not yet routinely supported by data. There were plans, not yet realised, to break down performance information by race, gender, disability etc.

**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.*

**Partly met**

**Strengths:**

- (a) Prior to an announcement of extra funding for probation areas early in 2008, the West Midlands area had been projecting a deficit budget for 2008/2009. It had established a board budget working group charged with delivering a budget recovery plan. Substantial savings were effected by a thorough review of all options with actions taken in relation to implementing double-waking night cover in approved premises, generating income from unpaid work and disposing of some property, amongst other issues.
- (b) Resources were made available by the PIU to support the 'Excellence in Supporting Sentencing Project' in the Birmingham Magistrates' court. This was intended to reduce the volume of SDRs by increasing the use of FDRs and oral reports. The probation area had worked in close cooperation with the court and sentencers to improve administrative systems, give the responsibility to probation officers to decide which type of report was necessary (a 'triage' system) and ensure that sufficient staff were available to deliver what was agreed. To achieve this, the area was in the process of recruiting and training PSOs to prepare FDRs. Results to date showed that SDRs had decreased by 17% by April 2008 with a steady increase in oral reports.  
  
Further improvements, this time in preparation for breach, had resulted in less demands on both court and probation time during the year. Both initiatives had been welcomed by the courts.
- (c) Acknowledging that resources available for staffing had been inadequate to ensure that targets could be met, demand management and workload management had been made the central planks of the solutions programme. Measures to influence demand included a gate keeping system to ensure that community orders were only proposed in relation to offenders who needed that intervention in line with national guidelines. Where a community order was proposed, it was targeted appropriately, e.g. at the shorter DRR, rather than the intensive version. Sentencers had also been made aware of this emphasis through the various opportunities for liaison.
- (d) There was an investment in promoting diversity at all levels. SPOs told us that it was a positive step to have members of the equalities and diversity unit linked to their districts. Communication and advice

about issues was a two-way process as unit members were kept up to date with changes in the field. Each office had a diversity log that they were meant to use to identify positive experiences at work, as well as areas for improvement and take them to team meetings. We did see one example of the log being used that detailed what action had been taken to support both staff and offenders with particular needs. We were told, however, that it was to be 'relaunched' as it had not been fully utilised.

- (e) We were made aware of a number of examples of where the area had obtained funding in addition to their core budget to expand their resources for offender management. These included a number of contributions to PPO work, as well as the courts project mentioned above. The area had undertaken research into the circumstances surrounding offenders being sentenced to short periods in custody and were planning a response around targeted court reports and proposals for supervision. They had also recently successfully bid to manage a pilot project with the police on an integrated offender management programme.

#### **Areas for Improvement:**

- (a) There was an acknowledgement in 2007 that staffing resources between OMUs needed to be rebalanced. During the inspection, we were made aware of a significant amount of staff movement, both out of the service and also within it, which threatened to leave some units severely under strength. In addition, no cover was provided for sickness absence, regardless of the length of time. The area had rightly insisted that all cases should be allocated so, whilst it did use its workload management tool, there was inevitably an imbalance in caseloads around the area. In order to retain offender managers within the target workload, cases in one office that we came across were reviewed at the 16-week stage and could then be transferred from a PO nominally to an SPO, with monthly appointments with a PSO for monitoring purposes only. This could not be a satisfactory arrangement in terms of a quality service although it did ensure a minimum level of oversight.

Teams were coping differently with the shortfall in resources. Some were responding more positively than others, which inevitably had an impact on morale. We found that the offender management model of PO/PSO and case administrator was embedded better in some teams than in others. This was a structure that was better able to cope with fluctuations in workload. In other teams, cases were seen by the duty officer only in times of sickness; where this lasted for many weeks, it was impossible to respond to the needs of the offender. We saw several such cases in the sample.

- (b) The SPO to PO/PSO ratio was also out of balance in some units, particularly in Birmingham. The planned ratio was 1:11. It was meant to be made up of one SPO managing both grades of staff and a caseload of all tiers. Where staff were working in 'pods' in OMUs, probation officers would be working closely with PSOs and, in effect, supervising their day-to-day practice. In some offices, recognising

the imbalance, the area had employed senior practitioners to manage PSOs. In theory, they also gave professional advice to the POs in the team. However, as they tended to supervise approximately 11 staff over two sites, this was not a viable practicality. This also meant that SPOs had direct responsibility for Tier 3 and 4 cases only, i.e. those requiring the greatest level of input and most likely to include high RoH cases. One SPO we met was responsible for POs and a caseload of approximately 600 Tier 3 and 4 cases – plus the indirect responsibility for several hundred more managed by the PSOs in the team. This was not defensible.

- (c) The workload management formula gave a clear priority to high RoH and other Tier 4 cases. However, as section 2.2 illustrates, this did not always mean that work in high RoH cases was therefore given a satisfactory level of attention. PPO cases were more likely to receive the 'premium' service.
- (d) Whilst ETE PSOs were assigned to districts, they had other responsibilities that left them with insufficient time to develop their work. They were, therefore, often unable to provide the guidance to offenders and offender managers that could direct them to appropriate learning opportunities.

**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) It was acknowledged that the area had been poorly served by its HR structures in the past. Rectifying this problem was another key element of the solutions programme. In the last few months a better HR management structure had been introduced; structural and procedural changes and recruitment were underway.
- (b) The area was in the process of rebalancing the profile of its workforce to prioritise the needs of offender management. Where possible, PO posts were being moved out of specialisms into OMUs. There had been a traditional approach to PO/PSO role boundaries until very recently. It had been agreed that PSOs would now be trained as offender managers rather than just as supervisors. A recruitment round had just been completed with 50 new PSOs about to start work in courts and fieldwork teams. This was to be supported by an appropriate training programme that could lead to NVQ level 3 in community justice. Questions that were outstanding were about the capacity to release these staff for training and to assess the NVQs.
- (c) We found a positive approach to training amongst the majority of staff and managers. 72% of those interviewed individually said that

their training and developmental needs were met. Most people in meetings also agreed with this statement. The area did not confine itself to mandatory training; whilst its plan did reflect the needs of the business to develop, e.g. in response to changes and to areas requiring improvement, it also reflected individual needs identified during the appraisal process. Staff were able to select training from a menu and apply to attend; they did not always feel able to attend, however, due to the demands of their workload.

We were impressed by the approach to skilling middle managers to do their jobs better. There was a regular programme of seminars that SPOs were organising themselves led by prominent academics and leaders. This was in addition to work being undertaken regionally.

- (d) One of the main changes identified in the solutions programme was that staff needed to understand that they were accountable for their behaviour and work – and to whom. Whilst the line management structures appeared to be typical of a large probation area, there had been a blurring of responsibility for performance at senior level in a previous unsuccessful attempt to control performance. This had led to confusion and inconsistency.

At one level, the solution to this was simple: every single member of the organisation had to have an 'accountability discussion' with their manager in the month following the launch of the solutions programme and another one in June 2008 to address their responsibility in relation to the key issues facing the area, e.g. attendance at work and enforcement.

The managers that we met were all supportive of the solutions programme and were happy to carry out this requirement. We also met staff from many grades and types of work whose response was mixed. Some were pleased that the chief officers were getting a grip of poor performance. Others were less enthusiastic because they were already working as hard as they could and did not take time off; they wanted an acknowledgement of their contribution rather than the broad-brush approach. All were now waiting for the next stages of development.

- (e) Whilst there had been some issues that had proved to be sticking points between management and the trades unions, e.g. the introduction of double-waking night cover in approved premises, these had been resolved. Relationships were said to be good overall and we saw no evidence of them preventing the necessary changes.
- (f) In interviews, 85% of staff reported that they had formal supervision at least six-weekly and 62% said on a monthly basis. 77% said that the quality was satisfactory; this included 21% who said it was excellent. In discussions, those who thought it unsatisfactory or poor often complained that their manager discussed targets only with them and was not able to support them by quality case discussion. 82% of relevant staff confirmed that they had had an appraisal written in the last year. We encountered some confusion amongst PSOs whose work was supervised by POs in their

OMU but whose line manager was an SPO who supervised them once every three months.

- (g) There was evidence that the area was operating with full regard to equalities legislation. Whilst there was still work to do, e.g. in relation to some buildings and compliance with disability legislation, the structures and resources were in place to achieve compliance.

**Area for Improvement:**

- (a) The high level of sickness absence remained a significant problem for the area. It was still around an average of 14 days per employee per year, significantly higher than both the national average and the target figure. A new and comprehensive strategy to tackle this was presented to the Board in March 2008. It addressed the issue from the perspective of the need to improve the area's HR procedures and support for individuals and managers. However, it also recognised that middle and senior managers skills and practices needed to be improved. There was a recognition that the reasons for such high levels were not yet clear and that there needed to be a differential approach to long- and short-term absences.

The HR unit was said to be 'silted up' in dealing with outstanding sickness absence problems but also due to the grievance culture that had been allowed to develop in the area. Both were, in part, the result of poor management up and down the line. Middle managers often did not have the confidence or ability to deal with issues presented to them, so avoided tackling them altogether or passed them up to their manager or to HR. The converse of this was the lack of support offered to those who had tackled either poor performance or problems with attendance and found that after holding to procedures, the area had let them down. We were told that having experienced this once, SPOs were reluctant to go through it again.

Currently, whilst some procedures had changed and some training for middle managers had taken place, staff seemed to feel that there was little evidence that anything had yet improved on the ground. We thought that the new strategy was thorough and could have the desired impact; it required a culture change as well as adherence to procedures and would take time.

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

**Partly met**

**Strengths:**

- (a) Examples of success were routinely collected and used to demonstrate what offenders and the probation area could achieve. These were most often in relation to unpaid work, skills for life and other educational provision and residents in approved premises.

- (b) A significant piece of research had been undertaken in 2008 to establish what impact the probation area could have on the numbers of offenders being sentenced to short custodial sentences. It had primarily focused on reports for courts in such cases, as well as cases sentenced without a report. The outcome was a decision to work to address sentencer confidence in the community penalties available and to increase the proportion of SDRs in cases where custody was likely.
- (c) There were clear systems for monitoring and performance improvement reported to a Board sub-committee. These focused in particular on interventions and the information presented was used to inform practice. As an example, in 2007, a report was presented to the Board that examined the rate of attrition in community orders with a DRR for black and minority ethnic offenders and for women. It concluded that improvements needed to be made at the assessment stage and set out measures for addressing this.
- (d) Extensive use was made of internal audits of practice, both to address national target areas and to drive up performance generally. The quality improvement manager routinely worked with other staff to audit or to assess the quality of aspects of work. We saw examples of this in relation to national standards including home visiting in high RoH cases and SFOs. The resulting action plan to improve performance, as well as examples of good practice, e.g. of parole assessment reports, would be added to the intranet and drawn to the attention of relevant staff.
- (e) During the last year, the area had carried out a detailed self-assessment using the review of 30 SFOs. They used the findings as the basis for issuing guidance about reviewing OASys and RoH in response to changes in circumstances. The exercise was to be repeated on a six-monthly basis.

**Areas for Improvement:**

- (a) The area did not routinely collect the views of service users to inform improvements to service delivery. An exception was a survey carried out in approved premises that sought to identify the views of residents soon after arrival and again after three months. This was intended to lead to improvements by following up at least one issue raised at each of the premises. Nor did it routinely monitor aspects of offender management as opposed to interventions for successful outcomes.
- (b) Systems for monitoring the quality of offender learning and skills development were not fully in place. The area was therefore unable to analyse the achievement of different offenders within different types of provision to assess their efficacy.

## 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) There was a comprehensive commissioning and partnership strategy. There was evidence that this was kept under review, as were the services commissioned; contracts specified a three-monthly review period. The area had recently agreed new contracts with external providers for three accredited programmes, one let jointly with Warwickshire Probation Area. The ROM had reported that, overall, the partnership areas reviewed this year were well controlled.
- (b) DMs were responsible for commissioning in their local areas as the district corresponded to the unit of delivery in most instances. They were supported by three commissioning managers employed by the area, with expertise in this field. Together they worked collaboratively within commissioning arrangements to secure services for offenders, e.g. in relation to substance misuse and housing under the auspices of DATs, PCTs and Supporting People. We heard about a number of successful outcomes from this work from strategic partners and came across examples in case assessments. It was clear that the area was sufficiently well established as a partner to secure proportionate services for offenders where resources were available.
- (c) There was an established history of successful partnership work within the region to enhance the quality of interventions. The regional sex offender unit was managed by the area on behalf of the region and also had an SLA to provide places on its programme for offenders in a Welsh area. This provision had been evaluated nationally and it was found that there had been a significant reduction in reconviction amongst those undertaking the sex offender programme as against those who had not. The unit provided a range of direct work with offenders, as well as an advice service for a church in the region. In partnership with the NSPCC it also provided a service to assist the partners of sex offenders to recognise risk factors. A consultancy service for offender managers was another service element in relation to those offenders considered unsuitable for the group work programme including males under the age of 21 and females.
- (d) We heard in our meetings that the area had a positive relationship with prisons in the area. They seconded staff to two prisons and were in discussions with a third about providing group work for prisoners. The four areas in the region had funded a full-time regional manager post to oversee the implementation of the offender management model across custodial and community supervision. There was also a part-time project manager seconded by the prison area. We saw testament from NOMS that this had been successful.

- (e) There was some provision in the area commissioned for specific minority groups. One, Anawim, was a third sector partnership that supported women. It was used to support women who might otherwise not have the confidence to participate in and complete their unpaid work hours. They also hosted the delivery of the Women's (accredited) Programme. We read several cases in the sample that had been supported by Prison Link, run by a church-based third sector organisation. It trained and supported mentors to go into prisons and support black and minority ethnic prisoners and their families during sentence and through into the community on release. We saw examples of where this work had made a positive difference.

**Areas for Improvement:**

- (a) Whilst there were good examples of service delivery through partnership across the area, there were also gaps. Mental health needs, for example, were well catered for in Sandwell but the service had been withdrawn by the providers from some districts in Birmingham. Services to address alcohol problems, along with housing for offenders, were the gaps most often mentioned by staff, yet there were good examples of provision in both in some districts.
- (b) There was room for improvement in the area's approach to commissioning services for offender learning. They needed to make better use of the data available about services that were effective to build up the range of provision available. For instance, whilst the area invested significantly in the provision of an interpreter service, there was insufficient and patchy provision of ESOL to assist offenders to make progress. Few employers in the area had committed to employing offenders; there was a regional approach in partnership with Jobcentre Plus, but it was too soon to judge how effective this would be.
- (c) The lack of evidence of the user perspective also had an impact on the area's ability to ensure that services commissioned took their views into account.

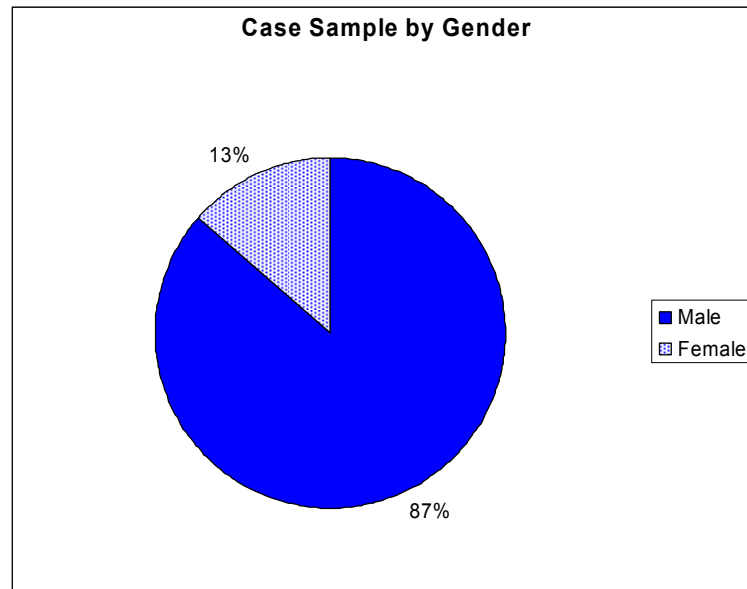
# APPENDIX 1 Integrated Probation Performance Framework: April-September 2007

IPPF + Q4										IPPF Area Score										West Midlands									
IPPF Domain Score:					IPPF Domain Score:					IPPF Domain Score:					IPPF Domain Score:					IPPF Domain Score:									
Public Protection	Actual	Target / Milestone	National	Previous Year - Q4	IPPF Grade	Offender Management	Actual	Target / Milestone	National	Previous Year - Q4	IPPF Grade	Interventions	Actual	Target / Milestone	National	Previous Year - Q4	IPPF Grade	Operational Capability, Resource Use & Strategy	Actual	Target / Milestone	National	Previous Year - Q4	IPPF Grade						
NS Public Protection	83%	90%	88%	64%	2	NS Offender Management	82%	90%	82%	70%	3	NS Interventions	64%	90%	66%	52%	1	Sickness Absence	14.8	9.0	12.1	14.5	1						
Tier 4 OASys Assess	96%	90%	96%	n/a	3	Enforcement (Within 10 Days)	88%	90%	95%	91%	1	Upaid Work Completions	3384	2681	5771	3021	4	Ethnic Monitoring	###	95%	96%	99%	4						
PPO OASys Assess	95%	90%	96%	n/a	3	% Arranged Appointments Attended	87%	85%	87%	82%	3	Accredited Programme Completions	1027	930	14631	1221	4	Budget Variance	54750	54734	856776	53471	4						
Tier 1, 2 & 3 OASys Assess	58%	90%	69%	n/a	1	Cases Reaching 6m Without Requiring Breach Action	75%	70%	72%	73%	3	Sex Offender Treatment Programme Completions	110	109	1360	120	4	Capability Assessment Framework	2	4	n/a	n/a	2						
Victim Contact	96%	85%	96%	94%	3	Court Report Timeliness	97%	90%	95%	n/a	3	Domestic Violence Programme Completions	55	25	2560	19	4												
Approved Premises	27.1	30.0	26.4	n/a	3	Referrals to LSC	4232	3197	66298	4245	4	DTTO/DRR Starts	982	840	16607	1063	4												
Management Information					Management Information					Management Information					Management Information														
Reduce Re-offending	Actual	Predicted	Difference	Significant?	IPPF Grade	Offenders Manager Changes	0.7	n/a	1.0	n/a	4	% Completions Of Unpaid Work	69%	n/a	68%	72%	3												
	8.5%	10.1%	-1.6%	Better	4	Average Acceptable Absences	2.7	n/a	2.6	3.0	2	OBP Attrition	39%	n/a	31%	34%	1												
Management Information					Management Information					Management Information					Management Information														
Outstanding Performance					Outstanding Performance					Outstanding Performance					Outstanding Performance														
Good Performance					Good Performance					Good Performance					Good Performance														
Passable Performance					Passable Performance					Passable Performance					Passable Performance														
Poor Performance					Poor Performance					Poor Performance					Poor Performance														

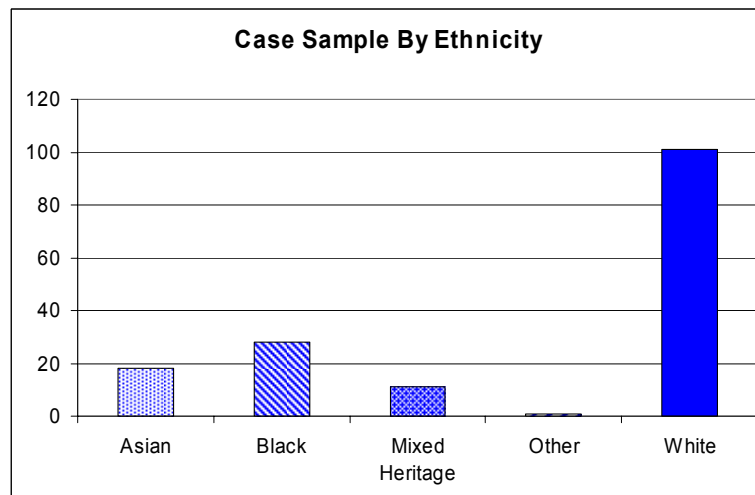
IPPF is the performance framework operated by NOMS. Under this, for each probation area, a score is assigned for each of four 'domains' as indicated, based on results for the metrics specified. Using these scores, an overall score for the probation area is also assigned.

## APPENDIX 2 Contextual information

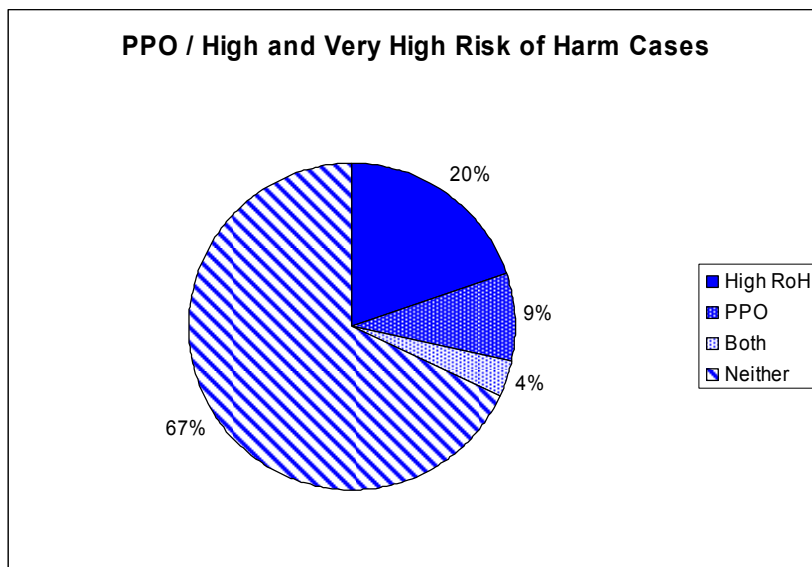
The chosen sample takes into consideration the number of female offenders in the area. A representative number is then included in the sample of cases.



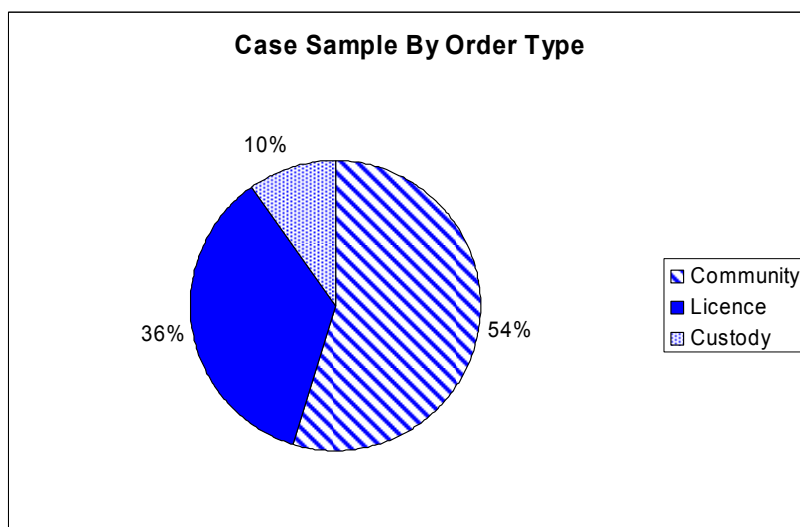
The chosen sample takes into consideration the number of black and minority ethnic offenders in the area. A representative number is then included in the sample of cases.



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



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



## Caseload at end of December 2007

Total caseload	19,679
<i>% White</i>	66.3%
<i>% Minority ethnic*</i>	33.7%
<i>% Male</i>	89.1%
<i>% Female</i>	10.9%
Number of cases subject to MAPPA:	
Level 1	2,502
Level 2	435
Level 3	32
Number of PPO cases	770
* Excluding cases for which ethnicity information is not available.	

There were seven PPO schemes in the area, each of which has a local definition that is based on current crime trends.

**Total revenue budget in 2007/2008:** £79.111m

**Total revenue budget in 2008/2009:** £79.788m.

**Approved premises:**

- Bilston – capacity 15
- Carpenter House – capacity 20
- Crowley House – capacity 20
- Elliott House – capacity 20
- Stonnall Road – capacity 12
- Sycamore Lodge – capacity 32
- Welford House – capacity 19

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **Inspection model, methodology and publication arrangements**

#### **Model**

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

#### **Methodology**

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

#### **Publication arrangements**

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

## APPENDIX 4

### Scoring approach

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

**<http://www.inspectorates.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 Delivering the sentence plan
- 2.2 Protecting the public by minimising risk of harm
- 2.3 Victims
- 2.4 Ensuring containment and promoting compliance (Punish)
- 2.5 Constructive interventions (Help and Change)
- 2.6 Restrictive interventions (Control)
- 2.7 Diversity issues

#### Section 3: Achievement and monitoring of outcomes

- 3.1 Achievement of initial outcomes
- 3.2 Sustainability of progress

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

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

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

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

#### Section 4: Leadership and strategic management

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

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

## **APPENDIX 5**

### **Role of HMI Probation**

#### **Statement of Purpose**

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

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

#### **Code of Practice**

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

- working in an honest, professional, fair and polite way
- reporting and publishing inspection findings and recommendations for improvement in good time and to a good standard
- promoting race equality and wider attention to diversity in all aspects of its work, including within its own employment practices and organisational processes
- minimise the amount of extra work arising for Probation Areas or Youth Offending Teams [those inspected] as a result of the inspection process.

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

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