



**NATIONAL
PROBATION
SERVICE**



National Probation Service for England and Wales

Annual Report 2007-2008

FOREWORD



I am delighted to introduce the National Probation Service's annual report for 2007-8. This has been a challenging year, so it is gratifying to be able to report some solid achievements.

The number of targets Probation was set increased from 11 to 16. Eleven were met or exceeded.

The increased expectations were against a background of continuing change. In May the Home Office, of which the National Probation Directorate was a part, was split into two, taking courts, prisons and probation into a new Ministry of Justice. We welcomed this move.

Towards the end of this year, the government took the decision to merge prisons and probation to form a new National Offender Management Service Agency, with Phil Wheatley, Director General of HM Prison Service, as the agency chief executive.

I would like to highlight and enlarge upon some of our achievements

- It is well known that finding and sustaining employment can be significant in turning offenders away from crime. During the year 16,823 offenders under our supervision found a job and kept it for at least four weeks, exceeding the target by 27%.
- It is equally well known that drug misuse plays a considerable role in offending. This year, more offenders than ever started a Drug Treatment and Testing Order or a Drug Rehabilitation Requirement and the number of successful completions exceeded last year by 5%.
- An estimated 6 million hours of unpaid work were performed, benefiting communities across the whole of England and Wales.

It is important that the many unpaid work projects we complete are those which are most needed by local communities. That is why we brand these projects Community Payback. In 2007/8 we invited some of the country's mayors to nominate or sponsor an unpaid work project. Mayors in 36 of the 42 probation areas responded, involving 63 different projects.

Re-offending rates continue to fall as a result of our determination to pursue those activities which we believe are most likely to curb re-offending. The latest government figures show a 13% drop in re-offending by people on community sentences.

This means fewer offenders returning to crime, and safer neighbourhoods as a result.

This annual report is an important conclusion to our annual cycle of work. It assesses the efforts and achievements of some 21,000 staff. I commend it to you and I look forwards to the challenges of the year ahead.

Roger Hill
Director, National Probation Service

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Performance Against Targets

Summary of Performance against National Targets 2007/08

The table below shows how the NPS performed against its targets during 2007/08. Out of the 16 national targets, 11 (69%) were met or exceeded for the year, namely the timeliness of OASys assessments for Tier 4 and for PPO cases, unpaid work completions, sustained employment, all three accredited programme targets, Drug Rehabilitation Requirements (DRR) retention, victim contact, pre-sentence report timeliness and ethnic monitoring of offenders.

One target was narrowly missed: the successful completion of orders and licences.

The remaining four targets were missed, i.e. OASys timeliness for Tiers 1, 2 and 3, the two targets on end-to-end enforcement and sickness absence.

Timeliness of OASys Assessments for Tier 4 and Prolific & other Priority Offenders (PPOs)

Timely assessments using the OASys system are crucial to ensuring the public are protected from offenders who are prolific or who pose a high risk of serious harm. For the second year in succession, the NPS exceeded these targets, achieving the standards in 96% of cases for both Tier 4 and PPOs.

Timeliness of OASys Assessments for Tiers 1, 2 and 3 (excluding PPOs)

This was a new target for 2007/08. Assessments were completed on time in 69% of cases against a target of 90%. Data on this indicator did not become available until half-way through the year. It is expected that improvements will begin to show during 2008/09.

End-to-end enforcement of Community Penalty Breaches

Both parts of this joint CJS target were missed in 2007/08.

Against the target to resolve breaches in an average of 35 days or fewer, an outcome of 43 days was achieved. This is a moderate improvement on the 45 days achieved in 2006/07. The average days target will be dropped in 2008/09 as it is adversely affected by the resolution of long-running cases.

Fifty-four percent of cases were resolved within 25 days compared to a target of 60%. This, however is an improvement on the 48% achieved in 2006/07 against the then target of 50%.

The target incorporates both the Probation Service National Standard of initiating breach action within 10 working days and the HM Court Service KPI for warrant execution. In 2007/08 the NPS met its Standard in 95% of cases.

Successful Completion of Orders and Licences

Sixty-eight percent of orders and licences were successfully completed in 2007/08 compared to a target of 70%. This contrasts with the 74% achieved for 2006/07.

Analysis of changes in the probation caseload suggests that increases in the proportion of Suspended Sentence Orders and orders with multiple requirements have played a significant role in the fall in completion rates.

Unpaid Work Completions

Offenders completed a total of 55,771 unpaid work requirements during the year, 21% above target. This equates to an estimated 6 million hours of benefit to the community.

Sustained Employment

Sustained employment can play a significant role in turning offenders away from re-offending. During 2007/08 a total of 16,823 offenders supervised by the NPS gained employment and sustained it for at least four weeks during the year, exceeding the target by 27%.

Accredited Programme Completions

The NPS has met its targets for accredited programme completions for the fourth successive year. The 2007/08 targets were achieved despite a slow start to the year, particularly for sex offender treatment programmes. By year-end, offenders had completed a total of 1,360 sex offender treatment programmes (5% above target), 2,560 domestic violence programmes (23% above target) and 14,531 other accredited programmes (4% above target).

DRR Retention

This target was new for 2007/08. Across England & Wales 85% of offenders on Drug Treatment and Testing Orders (DTTOs) or DRRs were retained for at least 12 weeks.

There were 16,607 starts of DTTOs and DRRs in 2007/08, higher than in any previous year and 6,253 successful completions, an increase of 5% over 2006/07.

Victim Contact

For the period April to December 2007, the latest for which data are available, 96% of victims of serious sexual or violent offences were contacted by the NPS within eight weeks, compared to the target of 85%. This is the fifth successive year in which this target has been met.

Pre-Sentence Reports

95% of pre-sentence reports were completed to the timescale agreed with the court, compared to the target of 90%.

Sickness Absence

The average days' sickness absence for NPS staff in 2007/08 was 12.1 days, compared to a target of 9 days. This is a slight decline compared to 12.0 days recorded in 2006/07.

Completeness of Ethnic Monitoring Data

Ethnic monitoring data on offenders across England & Wales was 98% complete at the end of 2007/08 compared to the target of 95%.

National Probation Service for England and Wales 2007/08

KEY

Met or exceeded	Near Miss	Not met
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National Performance Indicators

Reducing Re-Offending

Percentage of OASys assessments completed or updated within appropriate timescales (5 days following sentence or release on licence for all PPO cases)

Protecting the Public

Percentage of OASys assessments (assessment, screening & full risk of harm analysis and sentence plan) completed or updated within 5 days following sentence or release on licence for all Tier 4 risk of harm cases (excluding PPOs).

Offender Management

Percentage of OASys assessments (assessment, screening &, if appropriate, full risk of harm analysis and sentence plan) completed or updated within 15 days following sentence or release on licence for all Tier 1, 2 & 3 cases (excluding PPOs)

Delivery of Justice

Average working days from the relevant unacceptable failure to comply to resolution of the case; and percentage of breaches of community penalties resolved within 25 working days of the relevant unacceptable failure to comply (CJS measure).

Percentage of orders and licences successfully completed

Number of completions of unpaid work requirements

Rehabilitation & Support

Number of offenders under supervision who achieve and sustain employment for 4 weeks

Number of accredited offending behaviour programmes completed by offenders (excluding sex offender treatment and domestic violence programmes)

Number of accredited sex offender treatment programmes completed by offenders

Number of accredited programmes for domestic violence completed by offenders

Percentage of offenders are retained in DRR/DTTO for 12 weeks

Reassurance & Confidence

Percentage of victims to be contacted within eight weeks of an offender receiving 12 months or more for a serious sexual or violent offence

Supporting the courts

Percentage of Pre-Sentence Reports (PSRs) are completed to agreed timescales

Resource Use Strategy

Days lost due to sickness not to exceed 9 days per annum

Percentage of race and ethnic monitoring data on staff and offenders returned on time using correct classification

April 2007 - March 2008

Status	Performance	Target	% Achieved
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	96%	90%	
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	96%	90%	
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	69%	90%	
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	43	35	
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	54%	60%	
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	68%	70%	
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	55771	46300	120%
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	16823	13200	127%
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	14531	13940	104%
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	1360	1300	105%
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	2560	2079	123%
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	85%	75%	
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	96%	85%	
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	95%	90%	
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	12.1	9	
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	98%	95%	
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Please note:

Victim contact is reported on the latest data period available, April - December 2007.

The ethnic monitoring data is exclusive of staff.

IPPF+ (Integrated Probation Performance Framework plus) contains the NOMS Performance Management Group's (PMG) 2007/08 end-of-year assessment for the 42 probation areas in England & Wales.

The IPPF+ '07/08 full-year assessments has graded five probation areas as Outstanding, 23 as Good, 13 as Passable and only one as a Poor performing area. There has been steady improvement compared with IPPF Lite (06/07) with six areas improving by two grades and 14 improving by one grade. Four areas have dropped a grade and one has dropped two grades, leaving 17 (40%) of areas staying on the same grade.

National Snapshot		Q4	07/08			
I P P F		Public Protection	Offender Management	Interventions	Op. Capability Resource Use & Strategy	Year to Date Overall Score
National Performance		Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green
Regional Performance						
East Midlands	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green
East of England	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
London	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Red
North East	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
North West	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
South East	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
South West	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Wales	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
West of Midlands	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Yorkshire & Humberside	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Area Performance						
Avon & Somerset	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Bedfordshire	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Cambridgeshire	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Cheshire	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
County Durham	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Cumbria	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Derbyshire	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Devon & Cornwall	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Dorset	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Dyfed Powys	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Essex	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Gloucestershire	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Greater Manchester	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Gwent	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Hampshire	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Hertfordshire	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Humberside	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Kent	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Lancashire	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Leicestershire	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Lincolnshire	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
London	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Red
Merseyside	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Norfolk	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
North Wales	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
North Yorkshire	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Northamptonshire	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Northumbria	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Nottinghamshire	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
South Wales	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
South Yorkshire	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Staffordshire	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Suffolk	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Surrey	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Sussex	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Teesside	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Thames Valley	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Warwickshire	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
West Mercia	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
West Midlands	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
West Yorkshire	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Wiltshire	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green

Click National, Regional or Area Performance above (blue boxes) to show detail

* Durham, Northumbria & West Midlands yet to receive OMI Risk of Harm scores

Performance Key			
Green	Outstanding	Green	Good
Yellow	Passable	Red	Poor

Innovations and Achievements

Offender Management

In 2005/06 offender management (OM) was implemented for offenders on community orders and licences. In November 2006 it was extended to determinate sentence prisoners serving twelve months or more who are Prolific and other Priority Offenders (PPOs) or who are assessed as posing a high or very high risk of serious harm and in January 2008 it was extended to Indeterminate Sentence for Public Protection (IPP) cases, which included a revision of parole procedures for all indeterminate sentenced prisoners.

A Strategic Review of Offender Management was published in January 2008, which recommended some changes to the application of the OM model. These recommendations will be taken forward as part of a Strategic Review Action Plan. One of the actions is to assess the scope for a further roll-out of OM in custody. This will be announced during the summer of 2008.

Courts

The criminal justice project to deliver simple, speedy, summary justice (CJSSS) is now fully operational in all magistrates' courts. This has been a substantial undertaking. Probation areas have been key partners in local implementation boards and have developed innovative ways of delivering services to the courts. A significant contribution has been the increased numbers of Oral and Fast Delivery Reports that probation areas are now producing, allowing more cases to be sentenced on the day.

OASys

This year three further eOASys releases have built upon the achievement of connectivity between prison and probation. The system was adapted in Release 4.2.2 so that it now offers better support to end-to-end Offender Management and facilitates communication between the two organisations. Further enhancements have also been introduced, notably the updating of OGRS, the actuarial risk predictor, to incorporate recent research findings.

Major releases have been supported by briefing materials for assessors, ensuring that IT development is linked with practice improvement.

The OASys national reporting system was introduced in May 2008, having been previously piloted in four probation areas. This is now available for area information staff to make use of reports produced from OASys data in order to evidence local performance.

The OASys Strategic Review took place between February and April 2008. A number of consultation events took place for prison and probation staff as well as other stakeholders and there were individual consultations with NAPO and both inspectorates. The report on the review is to be published imminently and will make a number of recommendations in relation to the current OASys system, the planned replacement for existing OASys, as well as quality and training.

Accredited Offending Behaviour Programmes

The overall target for accredited programme completions in 2007-8 was 17,319, broken down into 13,940 general programmes, 1,300 sex offender treatment programmes and 2,079 domestic violence programmes. The NPS surpassed all targets for programme completions again in the period April 2007 to March 2008. There were 14,520 general offending behaviour programme completions, 104% of target, and 1,358 sex offender treatment programme completions, also 104% above target. For domestic violence perpetrator programmes the target of 2,079 was significantly exceeded by 25% with a final total of 2,560 completions.

Only one region failed to achieve its programme completion targets and most probation areas achieved their local targets agreed with Regional Offender Managers. However, the number of programme requirements made by the courts continued to expand, especially for domestic violence programmes, and this has led to lengthening periods before programmes can commence in some areas. To address this areas have increased the number of public protection programmes scheduled at the expense of general offending and drink impaired driver programmes.

The Interventions and Substance Abuse Unit (ISAU) has continued to assist probation areas in improving performance. Where possible increased flexibility has been introduced into delivery schedules to make the most of existing resources.

ISAU is reviewing targeting strategies and considering the possibility of introducing a shorter domestic violence programme for lower risk perpetrators to meet demand. But it is important that the integrity of programme is maintained through referral to the Correctional Service Accreditation Panel.

No new programmes were introduced to the accredited portfolio in 2007-08. A new general offending behaviour programme was piloted in Yorkshire and Humberside. This programme will eventually replace Think First and Enhanced Thinking Skills (ETS) in prison and the community, becoming the single national general programme. COVAID, a programme for offenders who are violent when drunk, was fully accredited and introduced into several probation areas.

Substance Misuse

The Drug Rehabilitation Requirement (DRR) continues to offer courts an intensive and effective vehicle for tackling the drug misuse and offending of many of the most serious and persistent drug misusing offenders. The number of DRRs and Drug Treatment and Testing Orders (DTTOs), which DRRs gradually replaced for adult offenders from April 2005, increased again from 15,798 in 2006/7 to 16,607 in 2007/8, well above the 15,301 commencement target. In addition, 85% of offenders were retained on the DRR/DTTO for at least 12 weeks, which is the minimum treatment period reported by the National Treatment Agency as having some impact on drug use and offending, significantly exceeding the 75% 12-week retention target.

While there was no completion target set for 2007/08, we have monitored performance against a shadow target of 5,000 over the last year (07/08). There has been a continuing rise in the number of completions from 5,939 in 2006/7 to 6,253 (43% completion rate) in 2007/8, exceeding the shadow target profile by 124%. The increasing numbers of offenders who complete DRRs is testimony to the good work done by the Probation Service.

There also continues to be a very high concordance rate (of well over 90%) between proposals made by probation at the pre-sentence stage and sentences given by the courts. The expansion of provision and use by sentencers of the DRR indicates sentencers have confidence in this aspect of the community order. Building upon this success, the Ministry of Justice has committed within the new Government Drug Strategy, *Drugs: protecting families and communities*, to delivering an extra 1,000 DRRs in 2008/9 (up from 15,301 to 16,301).

Drug testing of prolific and other priority offenders (PPOs) was introduced in April 2005 to increase the flow of relevant offenders into treatment. Funding of £1.8m was made available to probation areas to facilitate this. PPOs are those offenders who are targeted by local crime and disorder reduction partnerships, through the police, probation and others, because they commit a disproportionate amount of crime. Data from OASys indicates that 56% of PPOs are current drug misusers. For 36 per cent, obtaining drugs is a major occupation. Almost all the sample for the Home Office national evaluation of the PPO programme had used drugs. Legal provision allows for testing of offenders who have committed a 'trigger offence' – one of a range of acquisitive and class A drugs offences. Monitoring information for 2007/8 indicates that nearly 900 drug-testing conditions were made. Where offenders test positive repeatedly for heroin or cocaine, one in five is returned to prison; the overwhelming majority are involved in drug treatment to break the cycle of offending and prison

Significant progress was made during 2007/8 in taking forward NOMS commitments under Priority Action 7 of the Government's National Alcohol Strategy, *Safe. Sensible. Social.*, published in June 2007. This work strengthened existing service delivery across correctional services and supported key aims and objectives of the NPS Alcohol Strategy, *Working with Alcohol Misusing Offenders - a strategy for delivery*.

An alcohol information pack for offenders under probation supervision, developed jointly with Alcohol Concern and mp consultancy, was published in February 2008. The pack provides offender managers with clear guidance and tools to identify offenders with alcohol-related needs, deliver brief interventions to individuals with lower level alcohol problems but who do not require clinical treatment, and offer support and onward referral to those who may need more intensive intervention. It also complements a similar pack for offenders in custody, which is presently being updated.

Learning points and practical guidance from seven projects which NOMS funded in 2006/7 to help to identify, develop and spread best practice amongst probation areas were disseminated across NPS at the beginning of March 2008. Projects included the development of a targeting matrix for alcohol provision; training packages linked to relevant Drugs and Alcohol National Occupational Standards (DANOS) competences, and a practice manual to support roll-out of an approved liaison model for working with Alcoholics Anonymous. NOMS provided further funding to six of these projects in 2007/8 for follow-up work and will make second stage outputs available across NPS in 2008/9.

Towards the end of the year, work began on a research study conducted by the Institute for Criminal Policy Research, King's College London, to assess the effectiveness of probation work with alcohol-misusing offenders with evidence-based practice. Findings from the study, which is due to report in Summer 2008, will add significantly to our knowledge of how the NPS works with alcohol-misusing offenders and inform the development of revised alcohol interventions guidance due in 2008/9.

In addition to these priority actions in the National Alcohol Strategy, 5,145 Alcohol Treatment Requirements (ATRs) were made across England and Wales in 2007/8 (a 49% increase on 2006/7). The number of ATRs, which are targeted at those offenders who are alcohol dependent and require

intensive, specialist treatment, has risen year on year since their introduction in 2005 despite a lack of alcohol treatment in many parts of the country. The introduction of an ATR completion target into the NOMS Performance Metrics for 2008/9 will have the effect of further driving up ATR commencements and completions nationally.

Finally, NPS has participated in the screening and intervention programme for sensible drinking (SIPS), a two-year research project funded by the Department of Health that will examine which alcohol screening tools and brief interventions are most effective in primary health care, accident and emergency and criminal justice settings. Following successful pilots in Darlington and Wandsworth during 2007/8, the criminal justice study will get underway shortly at probation offices in Hampshire, London and the North East. Findings will inform the development of a toolkit of validated screening and brief intervention packages appropriate to the various settings, including probation, and support more effective delivery, staff training and professional development.

Unpaid Work

Unpaid work continues to be one of the most frequently used requirements of community and suspended sentence orders. The completion target for 2007-08 was reduced to 46,300 from 50,000 with the intention of focusing resources away from lower risk offenders. Nevertheless the unpaid work completion target has been exceeded by 17%, reflecting the continued popularity of the sentence with judges and magistrates.

Unpaid work has continued to be promoted as Community Payback. The Snapshot of Unpaid Work conducted during March 2007 showed that there had been a 12% increase in the number of work projects 'badged' with the Community Payback logo, compared to 2006. As noted in last year's Annual Report, the Mayors' Community Payback initiative was launched towards the end of 2006. This continued during 2007-08 and a total of 68 Community Payback projects sponsored by mayors were either planned, commenced or completed during the course of the year. These projects have generated significant positive local publicity and a number will be ongoing during 2008-09 as the initiative has been expanded to include newly-selected mayors.

Probation Circular 16/2007 invited providers of unpaid work to evaluate their provision against a range of quality indicators. All 42 probation areas participated in the exercise. The majority of areas rated themselves as good and the overwhelming impression which emerged from the self assessment exercise was of probation areas undertaking a scrupulous evaluation of unpaid work. Many areas also produced comprehensive actions plans to address areas identified for improvement. The self assessment exercise will be repeated during 2008-09.

A further Community Payback initiative was launched in June 2007. Planet Payback is intended to promote Community Payback projects which have a strong environmental component, such as recycling or the development of green spaces. NOMS also agreed to sponsor the Butler Trust Community Payback Environmental award for three years from 2008, as part of this initiative.

During the course of the year a number of Parliamentary questions and some adverse publicity resulted from days lost as a result of offenders being stood down or instructed in advance not to report for work. Work has been done to identify good practice and management information which will assist areas to reduce stand downs to a minimum. This work will be ongoing during 2008. Additionally, monitoring

procedures have been revised to obtain an improved picture of probation areas' performance in relation to days lost for operational reasons.

Revised unpaid work training materials were developed during 2007 to complement the Manual on the Delivery of Unpaid Work, which was issued in November 2006. The snapshot survey of unpaid work projects was also repeated for the third time during March 2008.

Offender Learning

A total of 68,117 offenders were referred to learning and skills provision during 2007-08. This is 13% above the 60,418 referrals achieved in the previous year.

Offender referrals to provision have continued to increase each year and the numbers reported for 2007-08 are the highest achieved to date.

Employment and Skills

Developing on last year's performance, targets this year prioritised sustained employment (four weeks). The target for this was set at 13,200. This target was exceeded, with 16,823 sustained employment outcomes being recorded, 127% of the target. In addition a total of 22,006 offenders were recorded as securing employment.

Probation areas have continued to demonstrate a commitment to improving employment and skills interventions and opportunities. Two regions, West of Midlands and East of England, were selected to act as test beds to trial initiatives set out in the cross-government approach to Reducing Re-offending Through Skills and Employment: Next Steps. Test bed activity will continue into 2009 with lessons learned being disseminated widely.

Over the past two years 15 Probation Areas were involved in delivering PS Plus, a £29m part ESF-funded partnership between Probation and Prisons. The project focussed on improving the employability of 28,000 offenders through individually-tailored packages of support. Each area developed its own project model providing comprehensive assessment, personal plan, advice, guidance and referral to appropriate provision. The approach was holistic, with financial, accommodation and motivational advice/support provided alongside more practical help with accessing the job market. The results of the project together with case studies are the subject of report PS Plus – Changing Lives: Reducing Crime.

The ESF-funded Engage project provided 13 Probation Areas with the opportunity to develop and test vocational accreditation opportunities within unpaid work and general offending behaviour programmes. The accreditation focussed on the type of work skills often cited by employers as those they look for in prospective employees. The evaluation of this project notes a number of interesting findings:

- Offenders valued the opportunity to acquire nationally-recognised qualifications
- Increased levels of motivation amongst both offenders and probation staff
- Increased levels of participation
- Reduced levels of attrition
- Improved levels of compliance

Such approaches in embedding formal learning and accreditation opportunities into criminal justice interventions need to be considered when planning future learning and skills provision. All probation areas and prisons have benefited from the arrangements for education and skills provided through the Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS).

Probation Change Programme to Probation Trusts Programme

2007-08 has seen the Probation Change Programme develop into the Probation Trusts Programme. This process of evolution reflects the strategic priority associated with the creation of Probation Trusts as the next stage of organisational change originally started in early 2007.

Probation Change Programme

The strategic objective of the PCP, as outlined in Programme Definition Document, was as follows;

'The Probation Change Programme is concerned with delivering probation bodies that will be fit for purpose in the commissioning and contestability environment. This outcome will be achieved through the establishment of Probation Trusts.....

.....Probation Trusts must be strong providers in the market; otherwise the Government's aim for a range of effective and efficient providers to deliver services to offenders that will protect the public and reduce re-offending to deliver the PSA targets for a 10% reduction in re-offending by 2010 will be threatened.'

The PCP supported the successful delivery of the Offender Management Act 2007 and the managed transition process of the first wave of Probation Trusts. The Act allows the dissolution of local Probation Boards and the establishment of Probation Trusts as the public sector providers. This change allows the Secretary of State to contract also with the private and third sectors for the delivery of probation services.

The first six Probation Trusts were created on 1 April 2008 (Dyfed Powys, South Wales, West Mercia, Merseyside, Leicestershire & Rutland and Humberside). These Trusts are taking part in a learning year during 2008-09 to inform the development of Trust arrangements.

The Government has made clear that it expects the remaining 36 local Probation Boards to be dissolved by April 2010. A second wave is expected to take place in April 2009 and the final wave in April 2010.

Probation Trusts Programme

The task of the Probation Trusts Programme is now to take the strategic objective of delivering Probation Trusts through to fruition. To deliver this task four strategic projects, managed within the programme, have been initiated:

- NPS Structure
- Transition Management - Boards to Trusts
- Parliamentary and Legal
- Engagement and Training

In addition to the four projects managed within the PTP, two other interdependent projects managed outside of the programme will work in close association with the programme team and report to the PTP programme board. These projects are:

- Trust Contracts (managed by NOMS Commercials and Competitions Unit)
- Trust Selection (managed by NOMS Performance Improvement Unit)

The successful establishment of Probation Trusts, operating within the new NPS Structure, is the key strategic objective of the Programme; this will be delivered by the NPS structure and Boards to Trusts transition projects which will work in tandem.

The Programme's aims go beyond the creation of the new organisations; the supportive activity of co-creation, learning and capability development is scoped to provide the knowledge and potential to sustain Trusts as strong lead providers, who have the means to identify and take action to realise efficiency savings, and can operate as exceptional local commissioners.

Risk of Harm

Effective Management of Risk

Managing effectively the risk of harm presented by the offenders under our supervision lies at the very heart of the job we do and the service we provide to the public. Recognising that it is impossible to deliver a risk-free environment when offenders are being managed in the community, we nonetheless must take all reasonable steps to assess offenders' risk of harm accurately, taking into account all sources of information, and then supervise them in line with the risk management plans we have drawn up.

The centre aims to help offender managers assess and manage risk effectively by producing useful guidance and disseminating best practice. We recognise that further work is needed on clarifying definitions and risk of harm levels, and two workshops with a wide range of stakeholders have been run. Our intention is to issue guidance with realistic case examples in 2008/09.

Two new courses have been developed. Managing Indeterminate Sentences and Risk (MISaR) is the first course designed for staff in both the prison and probation services, aimed at enabling participants to understand and fulfil their roles in relation to managing the increasing number of indeterminate sentenced prisoners. The Introduction to Risk Assessment and Management (IRAM) course provides Prison Service staff with a fundamental understanding of these processes and their contribution to them.

Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)

Of course, risk management is not a job that we do alone. Within the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), we work closely with colleagues from the prison and police services, particularly the latter, to assess and manage the risk of harm presented by offenders with a history of serious sexual and violent offending. We also work with a number of other agencies which all co-operate with us in our united aim of managing risk effectively.

In October, the Public Protection Unit issued revised MAPPA guidance. Building on the proposals of the Review of the Protection of Children from Sex Offenders and taking into account research findings and developments in practice, the guidance gives detailed advice on the co-ordination of MAPPA functions. This includes guidance on how MAPP meetings are planned, managed and recorded. It also introduced performance standards and key performance indicators to enable the work of MAPPA to be monitored. In addition, the guidance provided information on how ViSOR will support MAPPA and clarified the role of lay advisers. It also requires MAPPA responsible authorities to consider whether it is necessary to disclose an offender's offences to third parties and provides advice on when disclosure might take place.

The sixth MAPPA annual reports were published in September 2007. The number of offenders managed at MAPPA Levels 2 and 3 in 2006/07 was 15,291, up from 13,688 in 2005/06. Of those managed at levels 2 and 3, 82, or just over 0.5%, were charged with a serious further offence.

The Violent and Sex Offenders' Register (ViSOR)

One of the most significant developments in 2007/08 was the roll-out of ViSOR to all probation areas. This has been accompanied by roll-out to prisons. ViSOR is a secure database that allows the probation, police and prison services to share information about known violent and sexual offenders. The sharing of information will, in turn, strengthen risk assessments and risk management plans.

Approved Premises

Approved premises remain a vital risk management resource. They provide supervised accommodation for high risk of harm offenders on release into the community, and approved premises staff work closely with offender managers and MAPPA partners to monitor offenders' compliance with their licence conditions. Approved premises staff are also trained in risk assessment and risk management.

Sex Offenders

The Public Protection Unit worked closely with the Violent Crime Unit in the Home Office on the Review of the Protection of Children from Sex Offenders, which was published in June 2007. The review contained a number of important recommendations designed to improve the supervision of child sex offenders in the community. The recommendations that fell to the National Offender Management Service have now been implemented.

To further improve the assessment and monitoring of sex offenders, we are piloting a stable and acute risk assessment tool. This is currently being piloted by a number of probation areas and the police. We are also working with key partners to develop a NOMS strategy for working with sex offenders which will cover the assessment, treatment and management of sex offenders in the community and in custody.

