

MINUTES OF THE GWENT PROBATION BOARD MEETING

HELD ON 25 AUGUST 2005

AT PROBATION HEAD OFFICE

Present: Councillor J McIlwee [Acting Chair]
Mr B Barr, Mrs J Coates, Mr R Doxey, Mr J Harray,
Mrs J Morgan, Judge David Morris, Mrs R Passmore
Mr P Walters, Mr H Williams

Officers Present: Mrs J Steven [Treasurer], Mr C J Langdon
[Secretary/Assistant Chief Officer], Mr A Gotley [Assistant
Chief Officer], Mr A Blease [Assistant Chief Officer],
Ms S Holland [PA]

Preliminary Matters:

1. APOLOGIES:

Apologies were received from Mr S Smith, Mrs C Seymour and Miss M Caple

In the absence of the Acting Chair, Mr Howard Williams chaired the first part of the meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mrs Passmore declared an interest that she had previously been employed as a consultant for Quadrant [paragraph 6 of Board minutes dated 28 July 2005 refer].

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 July 2005 were agreed as a true record, subject to the inclusion under paragraph 13 [Home Computing Initiative] of the sentence "Mr Barr reiterated his concern at the failure to implement the scheme which was regarded by many organisations as a major staff benefit". The Minutes were amended and signed by the Chair.

Arising from the minutes:

Mrs Coates confirmed that a meeting had been arranged with Quadrant between herself, Mr Brian Barr and Mike King, Team Manager for CP, on 6 September 2005.

4. COMMITTEES

The minutes of the following Committees were considered and approved by the Board:

i.	Human Resources & Diversity	:	14 July 2005
ii.	Communications	:	18 July 2005
iii.	Audit	:	28 July 2005

Arising from the minutes:

- Audit Committee

The Board endorsed the Audit Committee's appreciation of the work of Mr Neil Jones and the finance team in the successful completion of the 2004/05 Accounts.

5. NOMINATED CHARITY SCHEME

Mr Gotley presented to the Board details of the nominated charity scheme organised by the staff of the Gwent Probation Area. During 2004/05 the Area had raised £4,423 for St. Anne's Hospice. The nominated charity for 2005/06 is Hospice of the Valleys and Mr Gotley gave details of a number of forthcoming events being organised to raise money for the charity.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 2:00 p.m. on Thursday 29 September 2005 at Probation Head Office.

Statutory Matters

7. AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICE THEMATIC REPORT

The Secretary presented details of HM Inspector of Probation's report on the National Probation Service's work on offender accommodation. The Board requested an action plan from the Chief Officer to ensure that each of the recommendations detailed in the report are addressed.

Strategic Matters

8. NATIONAL AND LOCAL PROBATION DEVELOPMENTS

The Chief Officer gave an update on local and national developments which included:-

- Guidance had been issued by the NPD on how Areas should manage the “boundary” with ROMs’ offices so as to achieve an effective business relationship at the same time as promoting the competitive edge of the NPS as a “provider of choice”.
- Confirmation from the Director of Probation that the NPD will fund the whole of the costs for the rest of the 2005/06 financial year for the additional Regional Manager for Wales. Thereafter regions will be expected to contribute an amount [not yet specified] to the additional resources via a pooling of Area funding.
- Details of a meeting between the Chair and Chief Officer with the Director of Management Services for Wales.
- It is looking increasingly likely that the “split” between offender management and interventions will be less extreme than earlier forecasts suggested, although the Government’s commitment to the Offender Management Model is unlikely to change and most practitioners and managers agree that, in terms of common sense and cost effectiveness, it holds great potential as a framework for working with individual offenders and reducing crime.

9. HOME COMPUTER INITIATIVE [HCI]

Mr Walters presented his report on the Home Computer Initiative and, in particular, the experiences of Monmouthshire County Council in implementing their scheme. Mrs Steven, Treasurer, agreed to report progress on the potential to implement the HCI scheme for the Gwent Probation Area to the September Board meeting. Members were hopeful of a positive response to the HCI introduction with an agreed timetable being agreed for its implementation.

Performance Matters

10. PERFORMANCE AND EXCEPTION REPORT 2005/06

The Chief Officer reported on the current position regarding the performance targets for 2005/06

Priority	Objective	05/06 Annual Target	05/06 Projected Performance	July 2005 Profiled Target	Actual Performance to July 2005*
High Risk Offenders	Timeliness of risk of harm assessments, risk management plans and OASys sentence plans on high risk offenders	90%	>90%	90%	50% [2/4 cases]
Prolific Offenders	Timeliness of risk of harm assessments and OASys sentence plans on prolific and other	90%	>90%	90%	100%

Priority	Objective	05/06 Annual Target	05/06 Projected Performance	July 2005 Profiled Target	Actual Performance to July 2005*
Timeliness of Court Reports	Reports to the court provided within the timescale required by the court	90%	>90%	90%	97%
Enforcement	Proportion of cases breached within 10 days	90%	>90%	90%	Comm Order = 92% Licence = 100% Aggregate = 92%
Offender Compliance	Proportion of cases with no 2 nd /3 rd unacceptable failure plus orders allowed to continue	85%	>85%	85%	Community Order = 88% Licence = 91% Aggregate = 90%
Contact Levels	NS appointments arranged	90%	>90%	90%	Available 15/10/05
	NS appointments attended	70%	>70%	70%	Available 15/10/05
ECP/Unpaid Work	ECP/Unpaid work completions	661	540 [82%]	220	212 [96%]
Basic Skills	Basic skills starts	529	420 [79%]	127	247 [194%]
	Basic skills awards	132	288 [218%]	32	53 [166%]
DTTO/DRR	DTTO/DRR completions	66	72 [136%]	22	18 [82%]
	DTTO/DRR commencements	212	60 [28%]	71	60 [68%]
Accredited Programmes	Accredited programme completions	198	186 [94%]	77	69 [90%]
Race & Ethnicity	Timely and correctly classified race and ethnic data on staff & offenders	95%	>95%	95%	Available 14/10/05
Staff Sickness	Staff sickness not to exceed an average of 9 days/annum	9 days/annum	>11.2 days	9 days	14 days

* Actual Performance is a locally produced figure [subject to change], % calculated using NPD Profiled Targets

The Chief Officer reported that she had, in the last few days, received the National Probation Service Performance Report 17 and Weighted Scorecard for the first quarter of 2005/06. Gwent had moved up the weighted score card "league table" from position 30 at the end of 2004/05 to position 25 at the end of the first quarter of the 2005/06 year. Unfortunately the performance against target and performance against average had resulted in a small drop to minus 6 below the mean average. Mrs Coates expressed her confidence that performance would continue to improve with a further improvement in the second quarter.

The Chief Officer confirmed that a copy of the performance report and her analysis report to all staff would be presented to the September Board meeting.

Judge Morris suggested that it might be helpful, both in terms of reinforcing sentencers' knowledge of DRR provision and of supporting improvements in Area performance, if Probation staff were to make a presentation to Crown Court Judges on current developments. Mrs Coates expressed her appreciation of what she felt to be a very useful proposal and welcomed Judge Morris' offer to raise the idea with colleagues on the judiciary. Judge Morris indicated that the likely venue for any presentation would be Cardiff, rather than Newport, something which Mrs Coates stated would be wholly agreeable.

Mr Jim McIlwee attended the meeting at 2:45 p.m. and chaired the remaining part of the meeting.

11. STAFF ATTITUDE SURVEY OF THE GWENT PROBATION AREA FOR 2005

Mr Gotley gave an update report on the Staff Attitude Survey completed by ACAS in May 2005 which had previously been considered by the Human Resources & Diversity Committee. Whilst the return rate of 36.4% was disappointing based on the 2004 survey, the information will be used to develop an agreed action plan with unions and management in taking forward the issues raised.

Confidential Matters

- 12.** The Board agreed, in accordance with Regulation 8[4] of the Local Probation Boards' [Miscellaneous Provisions] Regulations 2001, to meet in private to discuss the following item.

13. SUBSTANCE MISUSE FURTHER TENDER

The Board considered the report of the Contracts Committee and Chief Officer and approved the decision to offer a 3 year rolling programme to Kaleidoscope [with Drugaid acting as their sub-contractors] based on their tender dated 22 July 2005.

14. STAFFING APPOINTMENTS

The Board approved the five appointments made since its July meeting.

The meeting terminated at 3:15 p.m.