

MINUTES OF THE GWENT PROBATION BOARD MEETING

HELD ON 24TH NOVEMBER 2005 AT 2.00PM

AT THE YMCA, MENDALGIEF ROAD, NEWPORT

Present: Councillor J McIlwee (Chair)
Mr B Barr, Mrs J Coates, Mr R Doxey, Mr J Harray,
Mrs R Passmore, Mr S Smith,

Officers Present: Mr A Blease (Assistant Chief Officer), Miss M Caple (Board
Administrative Officer), Mr C J Langdon (Secretary/Assistant Chief
Officer), Mrs C Seymour (Acting Assistant Chief Officer)

Preliminary Matters:

1. Drug Testing Presentation

The Board contributed to an open forum, with members of the public present, which included a presentation from Gail Reed, Team Manager, on the work of the Drug Rehabilitation Team, and a talk from an offender currently serving a two year Order on the effects of drugs and crime in his life.

This was followed by a question and answer session between the public, the offender, the Board, the Team Manager and Senior Management Team.

The Chair thanked Ms Reed and the offender for their presentation and talk.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Mrs J Morgan, Judge D Morris, Mr P Walters, Mr H Williams, Mrs J Steven (Treasurer) and Mr A Gotley (Assistant Chief Officer).

3. Declarations of Interest

Mrs Passmore declared an interest under Item 5(i) – Communications Committee meeting minutes, as a former employee of Quadrant.

4. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 27th October 2005 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

Arising from the minutes:

- Mr Langdon advised that the tenders for the Home Computing Initiative had been sent out to potential suppliers, with a deadline date of 5th December 2005.

- Mr Langdon advised that the issue of designated days was likely to be addressed via the Pay and Reward Scheme.
- In response to a question from Mrs Passmore, Mr Langdon advised that further advice regarding the Budget Exchange Scheme was awaited from the NPD. If transfer of funding was not available, Mr Langdon advised that further contingency planning would be required in consultation with the Treasurer and Auditors.
- The Board noted that the Task and Finish Group to consider the 'Restructuring Probation to Reduce Re-offending' consultation document had been changed to a Development Day to be held at 2.00pm on Monday 28th November 2005, at Probation Head Office.

5. **Committees**

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

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|------|----------------|---|-------------------------------|
| (i) | Communications | : | 13 th October 2005 |
| (ii) | Communications | : | 2 nd November 2005 |

Arising from the minutes:

Mr Barr advised of the Committee's disappointment with Quadrant's representation at its last meeting and the Chief Officer suggested discussing this issue further at the Committee's next meeting in December.

6. **Future Programme of Development Days**

The Board identified the following topics for future development days:

- Training for new Board members
- Ensuring Board is fit for purpose
- Committee structure

The Board agreed that each Committee should review the possible subject matter of future development days at their next meeting.

7. **Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 2.00pm on Thursday 22nd December 2005 at Probation Head Office.

Strategic Matters:

8. **National and Local Probation Developments**

• **Quadrant**

The Chief Officer reported that during the last month, Quadrant's involvement continued on the following fronts, with some positive outcomes:

- Supporting the planning and delivery of the staff conference
- Assisting with publicity for the November Community Based Board meeting
- Providing advice in relation to the Community Punishment/Unpaid Work Visibility Campaign (in accordance with PC 66/2005) and focussing on the Argus campaign to secure public involvement in the selection and delivery of projects

- **Argus Campaign**

The Chief Officer, Carolyn Seymour (Acting ACO) and Mike King (Team Manager Community Punishment/Unpaid Work), confirmed arrangements against the content of PC 66/2005, which requires all Areas “to ensure that, from November 2005, delivery of compulsory unpaid work takes into account the need to promote visibility”.

The Argus has been particularly supportive of this piece of work and recently launched a public vote to select local projects to be undertaken by Community Punishment offenders. The final selection would be made by members of the Criminal Justice Board.

Members commented on the positive stories, linked to this initiative, which were published in the paper during the week.

- **Regional Managers’ Role**

The confusion around the designated responsibilities of Ian Fox and Ged Bates, are now resolved and their titles agreed as:

- Ged Bates – Regional Manager (Wales)
- Ian Fox – National Development Manager (Wales)

- **TPO Cohort 9**

A total of 15 new TPO recruits for Cohort 9 have been agreed, for a start date of September 2006. This represents the maximum available to Gwent on the basis of the NPD’s allocation formula.

It looks likely that the 2006-2008 TPO recruits will be the last, or penultimate, cohort to undertake the Diploma in Probation Studies but there are no clear messages on NOMS’ plans beyond that date to train up practitioner recruits.

- **NOMS Chief Executive Appointment**

Helen Edwards (ex Director of NACRO and, more recently, Director General of Communities Group), has been appointed Interim Chief Executive of NOMS with effect from 14th November 2005.

- **Police Restructure**

Gwent Police continues to evaluate options for its own future and an all-Wales team, led by Paul Webb, Deputy Chief Constable for South Wales, has considered a long list of possibilities. Following consultation with a number of stakeholders, including the Probation Service, Local Authorities, the Welsh Assembly Government and Victim Support, the alternatives have been distilled down to three:

- A single Service for Wales.
- The merger of North Wales with Dyfed-Powys and South Wales with Gwent.
- No change.

Although a number of Police areas have tabled the “no change” option, the Home Secretary has made it clear that this would be a position of last resort and only used for Police Services which are assessed as strategically “viable”. Gwent definitely does not fit this criteria and some sort of merger seems to be inevitable, with the most likely outcome being an all Wales Service. Any decision on Police Areas is likely to have implications for the Probation Service in Wales, given the close affiliation with the Police, the Government’s emphasis on co-terminosity and the current regional theme.

Performance Matters:

9. Performance, Exception and OASys Reports

The Chief Officer reported on the performance for 2005/06:

Priority	Objective	05/06 Annual Target	05/06 Projected Performance	October 2005 Profiled Target	Actual Performance to October 2005*
High Risk Offenders	Timeliness of risk of harm assessments, risk management plans and OASys sentence plans on high risk offenders	90%	>90%	90%	80%
Prolific Offenders	Timeliness of risk of harm assessments and OASys sentence plans on prolific and other priority offenders	90%	>90%	90%	100%
Timeliness of Court Reports	Reports to the court provided within the time-scale required by the court	90%	>90%	90%	97%
Enforcement	Proportion of cases breached within 10 days	90%	>90%	90%	CommOrder=90% Licence=100% Aggregate=90%
Offender Compliance	Proportion of cases with no 2 nd /3 rd unacceptable failure plus orders allowed to continue	85%	>85%	85%	CommOrder=76% Licence=91% Aggregate=78%
Contact Levels	NS appointments arranged	90%	>90%	90%	Currently unavailable
	NS appointments attended	70%	>70%	70%	
ECP/Unpaid Work	ECP/Unpaid work completions	661	>100%	386	390 (101%)
Basic Skills	Basic skills starts	529	>100%	238	491 (206%)
	Basic skills awards	132	>100%	61	86 (141%)
DTTO/DRR	DTTO/DRR completions	66	>80%	38	31 (82%)
	DTTO/DRR commencements	212	>80%	123	113 (92%)
Accredited Programmes	Accredited programme completions	198	>90%	122	116 (95%)
Race & Ethnicity	Timely and correctly classified race and ethnic data on staff and offenders	95%	>95%	95%	National figure 94% for Jan-Mar 05

Staff sickness	Staff sickness not to exceed an average of 9 days/annum	9 days/annum	<11.2 days	9 days	13.1 days
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* Actual Performance is a locally produced figure (subject to change); % calculated using NPD Profiled Targets

The Chief Officer reported that she had received Performance Report 18 for the first half of 2005/06 which highlighted that Gwent had moved up the league table from position 25 to 14. Members congratulated the Chief Officer and her staff on the improvements and rise up the league table.

Accredited Programmes – Mrs Seymour reported that the Team Manager of the Unit was continuing to monitor the situation very closely and predicted that targets would be met.

Sickness Absence – In response to a question from Mr Harrhy, the Chief Officer reported that although Mr Langdon and Mr Coombes have lead responsibility for the drafting of the strategy and policy, all management staff are accountable for the Area reaching the target of 9 days per annum.

10. **Meeting in Private**

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 items.

11. **New Capital Projects**

- Newport

Mr Langdon reported that a site had been identified in the Newport area but the Regional Property Manager had been experiencing difficulties in taking forward the project.

The new offices would provide accommodation for up to 140 staff, together with interview, groupwork and training rooms. However, the available land size had recently been reduced causing further difficulties in developing the site. The projected date for moving in to the new offices was currently January 2007.

As a result of the continuing building and staffing issues at 19/20 Gold Tops the Chief Officer agreed to a sum of up to £20,000 being used for improvement work and this was endorsed by the Board.

The Chair emphasised the need for the Area to voice its concerns regarding this situation and in particular the apparent lack of progress over several years. The Board agreed to the suggestion made by Mr Langdon to invite the Regional Property Manager to the January Board meeting if no further progress was reported during the following weeks.

- Caerphilly

Mr Langdon reported that the proposed site at Caerphilly had been demolished and work on the new building had commenced. A lease agreement had still to be signed between the NPD and developers.

The new office would provide accommodation for up to 80 staff, together with interview, groupwork and training rooms. Working plans have been prepared and the Area is currently in discussion with Colliers on the internal layout and design. The projected date for moving in to the new offices was currently September 2006.

12. **Human Resources, Diversity & Training Committee Minutes**

The Board considered the minutes of the Human Resources, Diversity & Training Committee meeting held on 9th November 2005.

Mr Langdon reported on the proposal from the Unison representative (at the JNCC meeting) for the Case Administrator post and the Interventions Case Administrator post to be placed on salary points 67-75.

The Board considered and discussed in-depth the pay scales for Probation Service Officers, Treatment Managers and Case Administrators, and ratified the original recommendations of the Human Resources, Diversity & Training Committee as follows:

1. To increase the PSO pay scale to salary points 89 – 103 of the NNC for the Probation Service pay scale with all existing PSO staff receiving a two increment increase to their salary backdated to 1st April 2005.
2. To increase the Treatment Managers (PSO) pay scale to salary points 109 – 121 of the NNC for the Probation Service pay scale with the two individuals receiving a two increment increase to their salary backdated to 1st April 2005.
3. To create a new Case Administrator post and an Interventions Case Administrator post on salary points 63 – 72 of the NNC for the Probation Service pay scale, which will initially be offered to existing Clerical Officer staff through an appropriate selection process. Any successful internal candidate from the current clerical grade to receive a minimum two increment increase to their salary with effect from their appointment to the new post.
4. The grades of the above posts to be determined as an interim measure, with gradings of all staff in the Gwent Probation Area to be finalised once the job evaluation and pay and reward exercises have been completed.
5. That no further regrading applications would be considered until the national job evaluation and pay and reward exercises were completed.

13. **Staffing Appointments**

The Board approved the four appointments made since its October meeting.

14. **Correspondence**

The Board received the following correspondence for information:

- (i) Inventory of probation circulars and reports received since October
- (ii) NOMS: Partial Regulatory Impact Assessment – Restructuring Probation to Reduce Re-offending
- (iii) Offender Management Newsletter (Edition 8 – October 2005)
- (iv) NOMS Update (Issue 7 – November 2005)
- (v) PBA: E-Bulletins (Issues 17 and 18 – November 2005)
- (vi) PBA: PBA/NPD Meeting (October 2005)
- (vii) CJS in Brief (Issue 6 – November 2005)
- (viii) Just Women (Issue 1 – Winter 2005)
- (ix) HMIP: Inspection Findings 04/05 – Effective Supervision Inspection: Aggregate Results for the 29 Probation Areas Inspected in 2003/04 and 2004/05

The meeting terminated at 4.45pm