



# Press Release

**Embargoed until 00.01, 25 November 2008**

---

## **Probation praised for ‘hard work and consistent attention to managing the risk of harm’**

A report published today by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Probation shows West Mercia Probation Trust is carrying out some quality work with offenders.

The Offender Management Inspection took place in September this year. A key focus was on how probation managed a representative sample of 110 cases from most categories of orders and licences.

Andrew Bridges, HM Chief Inspector of Probation, said,

“We saw some quality work being done by committed practitioners in relation to the monitoring of restrictive requirements, liaison with sentencers, attention to diversity and compliance issues in delivery of services”.

Inspectors found that, despite significant challenges due to financial constraints, the Trust, even though in its infancy, showed clear signs of being the innovative body its new identity demanded.

They also commented on how enthusiastically staff had embraced a new electronic case recording system and were already realising its benefits.

David Chantler, Chief Executive of West Mercia Probation Trust said,

“The Trust is in its first year. We are very pleased with the high level of engagement with the Inspectors from sentencers, offenders and partner agencies, all of which indicated the high profile we have established with our key stakeholders”.

“Whilst pleased with the report there is always room for improvement and we will be developing our future plans with this inspection in mind”.

The Inspectorate surveyed the offenders being supervised and over a third responded. This was a very high response rate for this sort of exercise and over 90% said that they thought more about their offending behaviour as a result of working with probation and nearly 80% had increased awareness of victims' issues. Over 75% thought that they would be less likely to reoffend as a result. One offender commented ‘probation as a whole has made me alter my whole way of thinking’.

James Kelly, Trust Board Chair said,

“The Trust takes seriously its responsibilities with regard to the protection of the public and welcomes the constructive comments within the report. These will help to achieve an ever improving performance in our work relating to the management of risk of harm. It was encouraging to hear that the Inspectors considered that work in this area reflected ‘hard work and consistent attention to this critical aspect’”.

The report will be presented to the Trust Board at the next Board meeting on 26 November. The Inspectorate identified many examples of good practice and has stated that a follow-up report is not required.

ENDS

#### **Notes for Editors**

- The full report will be available, following embargo, on the Inspectorates website at [inspectorates.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmiprobation](https://www.inspectorates.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmiprobation)
- There are six examples in the report of case studies illustrating good practice, which we are happy to discuss. One example is shown overleaf.

**Comprehensive attention to victim issues – OMI criterion: 2.3**

A case of a high risk of harm offender, who had seriously injured the victim, demonstrated good work by the Victim Liaison Officer, Offender Manager and progress by the offender. Through the use of home visits the Victim Liaison Officer had ensured that the victim was fully involved at all stages of the sentence and able to express his wishes in respect of release conditions. Victim safety issues were addressed at home detention curfew, release on temporary licence and post-release stages through the use of curfew and non-contact licence conditions. Following release, the offender completed work on victim awareness and this was evidenced on the case file.

**Contact:-**

If you require any further information or comment please contact:-

Jackie Bell

West Mercia Probation Area

90 Mill Street

Kidderminster DY11 6XA

Tel: 01562 748375 ext 1907

Mob: 07976 590132

[jackie.bell@west-mercia.probation.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:jackie.bell@west-mercia.probation.gsi.gov.uk)