



WEST MERCIA

## Press Release

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For immediate release

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### **Award for team offering employment advice to offenders**

A team of probation workers that help offenders get into employment and training won the prestigious High Sheriffs' award for the significant contribution they have made over the last year.

The Step into Employment Team (STEPS) was presented the award at the annual West Mercia Probation staff conference in June by the High Sheriff of Shropshire, Mrs Anne Gee.

The STEP team offers training and employment advice to offenders on community orders. The team was formed in April 2006 and have achieved remarkable results. Almost 1000 people have enrolled on their courses and over 750 have completed. Around 60 offenders have gained employment as a direct result of STEPS.

Commendation was given, in particular, to a scheme set up by STEPS with Shropshire Fire Service working with offenders to train as retained fire officers.

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

“The scheme with the Fire Service touches so many bases in terms of what we are trying to do, turning offenders skills to good rather than delinquent use, ‘paying back’ and engaging offenders in a form of community work that will long outlast their involvement with us”.

Sally Edwards, Offender Learning & Skills Manager, who heads up the team said,  
“Winning this Award symbolises the hard work and commitment from every team member. The recognition of the valuable contribution that the STEP team has made to West Mercia Probation Trust and more importantly, it's beneficiaries, is very rewarding”.

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**NOTES FOR EDITORS**

Photo of STEPS team receiving the award from the High Sheriff is attached.

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