



Press Release

For immediate release

16 August 2010

Farewell to Helen Allen

Shropshire woman, Helen Allen, has retired from her Assistant Chief Officer role after nearly 30 years in probation. Staff at West Mercia Probation said a fond farewell to Helen at a special tea party held to mark her retirement.

Helen joined probation in 1981 as a Community Service Officer in Manchester. She trained as a Probation Officer and qualified in 1984. She became a Senior Probation Officer in 1991 and District Manager in 1998. In 2001 she was successful in securing a post as Assistant Chief Officer with Shropshire Probation Service which meant a move to Shropshire. Soon after Shropshire merged with Hereford & Worcester to become West Mercia Probation Area.

Since West Mercia Probation's formation Helen has seen many changes and she has had responsibility for a range of functions, which have changed as the service constantly changes. Most recently she has been Head of Service in Worcestershire, our largest Local Delivery Unit. A role which she has clearly enjoyed in getting back to the core of the job.

For now Helen will be enjoying her retirement at her home in Clee Hill, South Shropshire, but she is already considering Sri Lanka, Cambodia and, a little closer to home, France as options.

David Chantler, Chief Executive of West Mercia Probation Trust, presented her with flowers and a gift. He said, "*Helen is always ready to see the doughnut and not the hole, always supportive, but not uncritical. She brings integrity, on which this service depends, but also insight and great personal kindness, which I have seen exercised to the benefit of many people in West Mercia*".

Helen thanked all the people she had worked with over the years and reflected on the highs and lows of her ten years at West Mercia. She said, "*I have really valued my work over the last 30 years, particularly the last ten in West Mercia and my last six months have been hugely enjoyable leading Worcestershire at the start of this new phase of probation. There are challenging times ahead for probation and I wish you all well and may the wind blow behind you*".

ENDS

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PHOTO: A photo of Helen Allen and the Chief Officer, David Chantler is available on request.