

# West Mercia Probation Area

## Business Plan 2007-08

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## **Section 1. Introduction**

West Mercia Probation Area enters the operational year 2007/08 with the maximum permissible budget carry forward from the previous year. However, in common with the other areas of the National Probation Service, the financial settlement is tighter than in previous years and the demands of our Service Level Agreement with the ROM become ever more specific.

We will have ended 2006/07 significantly above the zero line in the Weighted Scorecard (zero representing the overall achievement of targets.) Whilst our relative position in the performance table, generated by the scorecard, will be affected by the performance of other Areas, it is clear that we will have improved our absolute performance by a factor of at least 3 times.

We have attempted to balance performance as measured by the scorecard, financial prudence to create the carry forward and reaching our target on spend with the Voluntary and Community sector. Against this balance of priorities we have achieved our aims with a positive record of achieving targets, the highest proportionate spend on purchasing services in the country and a significant budget carry forward. At the same time we have maintained our reputation for innovation with the screening in December 2006 of "Growing out of Trouble", over 5 weeks on BBC 2, and with the recent announcement that Connect, the regional scheme for the Resettlement of Short Sentence Prisoners, is to be adopted as the model for a possible national scheme.

The coming year will bring a new form of assessment of Probation Areas which will provide a more holistic assessment that will include these other factors. West Mercia looks forward to this broader assessment of organisational capacity.

It is against the background of that broader assessment that the Board will need to decide whether to go for "Trust Status" should the legislation successfully complete its Parliamentary progress.

## **Section 2. Structure of Plan**

The format of this Plan is to bring together a number of sub-plans which have been developed within the organisation, not to write a Business Plan divorced from the organic development of the Service. There are, then, four key elements to the plan:

1. Achievement of targets
2. Organisational development priorities
3. Local Commissioning Strategy
4. Unpaid Work Review

### **1. Targets**

The local Probation Area is the lead provider to the Regional Offender Manager (ROM) who commissions correctional services in the West of Midlands region. After a process of consultation he has set a number of targets for the Service to meet and these form Appendix A to this plan. The first priority of the Service will be to achieve the targets as set by the commissioner.

### **2. Organisational Development Priorities**

As part of the wider Service Level Agreement we have agreed a number of development targets with the ROM and they are as follows:

- A) To subscribe to the national priority to reduce the level of remand prisoners and assist with national initiatives consistent with current resourcing.. (area)
- B) To undertake an audit of Local Area Agreements in all 4 Local authority areas of West Mercia.(area)
- C) To create a joint regional HMPS and NOMS project group to develop a mechanism to draw together Offender Needs data within the region ( eg.OASys, ODEAT, CONNECT data and available needs analysis, to inform programme priorities, service delivery, offender management and the sequencing of strategic interventions to match offender need). ( regional)
- D) To achieve full implementation of Phase 1 and 2 of the Offender Management Model, and prepare for the implementation of Phase 3.
- E) In conjunction with the Prison Service and other key partners, ensure that statutory obligations are met in respect of MAPPA arrangements. In particular consider how early identification, registration, and information sharing across agencies can develop further with a particular emphasis upon victim issues. (regional)
- F) To continue to develop ways of improving levels of commencements and compliance relating to DTTO/ DRR's (area)
- G) To act as host area to explore opportunities to roll out the CONNECT Project on a national basis. (area)

H) To continue to develop “care farms” across the rural community in the area.  
(area)

I) Through the Pathway 7 strategic steering group : to contribute towards the co-ordination of the delivery of accredited Offending Behaviour Programmes across HMPS and NPS, and where possible deliver compatible programmes. In particular to ensure that high risk offenders attend OBP’s where appropriate, to address criminogenic need.  
(regional)

J) To contribute towards a regional review of approved premises.  
( regional)

### 3. Local Commissioning Strategy

Probation Areas have been required to spend 10% of their budgets on a voluntary basis in the voluntary, community and private sectors by the end of 2007/08. The target for 2006/07 was 5% and West Mercia Probation Area was one of the few, possibly the only, Areas to meet this target. This reflects the longstanding commitment of West Mercia Probation Board to be the lead, as opposed to sole, provider and we project that we will achieve the 10% target by the end of 2008. The third priority within the Business Plan therefore is to deliver the Local Commissioning Strategy which forms Appendix B to this document.

### 4. Unpaid Work Review

Following the Thematic Review of Unpaid Work, and the changing Government expectations of what this area of service delivery is expected to provide, the Board accepted the need for a major restructuring of Unpaid Work and the most significant piece of work for the coming year within the Interventions division of West Mercia Probation Area will be to implement that review which forms Appendix C to this document. The aims of the review are to:

- a) eliminate the high level of stand-downs of offenders subject to Unpaid Work Orders;
- b) significantly increase the proportion of agency placements and reduce the direct supervision of offenders on Unpaid Work Orders by the Probation Service; and
- c) As a consequence of aim 2 above, to consolidate the direct probation operation of Unpaid Work as part of offender management and, at a time to be determined, remove it from our portfolio of interventions.

**Interventions SLA - Service Specification**

**2007/2008**

Note. The metrics indicated in the National Target column will be included within the NOMS business plan for 2007/08 and reported on the NOMS website and to the NOMS board

- Service Delivery Targets**

Metric Description	Notes (Please see Guidance and Technical Note for full definition)	Domain Ref.	Nat. Target	Target
Number of completions of unpaid work requirements	<p>To ensure that appropriate levels of unpaid work are delivered as part of punitive requirements of a sentence (but not to increase the amount of unpaid work completed).                      A successful completion, "Expired Normal" is when the number of hours specified by the court has been completed.                      The minimum hours that can be ordered are 40 hours and the maximum is 300 hours</p>	DoJ15		828
To maintain at below [x]% the proportion of unpaid work offender days which are lost because of stand-downs - either on the day or notified in advance	<p>To reduce the number of planned days of unpaid work not carried out by offenders because they are 'stood down' due to the area being unable to provide the appropriate resources to manage the offenders at work.                      A successful completion, "Expired Normal" is when the number of hours specified by the court has been completed.                      The minimum hours that can be ordered are 40 hours and the maximum is 300 hours.</p> <p>A stand down is when an offender is instructed in advance not to report for work, or when ready and willing offenders are sent home after reporting for work due to operational difficulties in the probation area (e.g. insufficient supervisor coverage, lack of transport, or work availability).</p>	DoJ13		8%

Metric Description	Notes (Please see Guidance and Technical Note for full definition)	Domain Ref.	Nat. Target	Target
% of (Unpaid Work) hours worked as a proportion of Unpaid Work hours ordered by the court	To maintain credibility of unpaid work with the courts and the public. An aggregated comparison (using different data sources) of unpaid work hours completed versus number of hours specified in the work requirement by the court	DoJ16		70%
[x] offenders start a Drug Rehabilitation Requirement (DRR) or Drug Treatment and Testing Order (DTTO)	To enable the monitoring of the numbers of offenders that <b>start</b> drug treatment (note this only applies to DTTO/DRR cases). <b>DRR:</b> These are given to offenders committing an offence post April 2005 when the Criminal Justice Act 2003 came into force. <b>DTTO:</b> These are given to offenders committing an offence prior to April 2005 when the Criminal Justice Act 2003 came into force	R&S7		290
[x]% of offenders are retained in DRR/DTTO for 12 weeks	To enable the monitoring of the numbers of offenders that are retained in drug treatment (note this only applies to DTTO/DRR cases). % of those, with a termination report, who are retained for 12 weeks.	R&S6	Region Min 75%	75%
[x] number of accredited offending behaviour programmes completed by offenders	To ensure that the provision of these programmes is monitored in order to meet assessed offender need and risk	R&S13		290
[x] number of accredited sex offender treatment programmes completed by offenders	To monitor the provision of SOTPs is appropriate to meet offender need and risk	R&S18		25
[x] number of accredited programmes for domestic violence completed by offenders	To monitor the provision of healthy relationship programmes is appropriate to meet offender need and risk	R&S20		30
* [x] offenders under supervision sustain employment for 4 weeks	To ensure that attention is focused on achieving sustainable employment during supervision. Supervision is the authority exercised by the National Probation Service (NPS) over an offender for a period of time determined by a court or releasing authority, during which the offender is required to report to or be monitored by supervising authorities, and includes any condition, qualification, special condition or requirement imposed on the offender at the time of the offender's release to the community or during the period of	R&S2		270

Metric Description	Notes (Please see Guidance and Technical Note for full definition)	Domain Ref.	Nat. Target	Target
	<p>supervision in the community.</p> <p>Employment refers to full-time employment for 16 hours per week or more</p>			

- Management information**

Metric Description	Notes	Domain Ref.
[x]% of completions of unpaid work requirements	To ensure that minimum standards/targets are set for delivery of unpaid work requirements. The minimum hours that can be ordered are 40 hours and the maximum is 300 hours.	DoJ17
* Number of offenders who complete DTTO / DRR	To enable the monitoring of the numbers of offenders that complete drug treatment (note this only applies to DTTO/DRR cases).	R&S8
The number of offenders who start an Alcohol Treatment Requirement (ATR) (as part of their sentence requirements)	To ensure that alcohol treatment requirements given as part of the sentence are delivered. ATR can be included as a requirement by the court, whether or not the court considered alcohol use to be linked to offenders offending behaviour.	R&S27
The number of offenders who complete an Alcohol Treatment Requirement (ATR) (as part of their sentence requirements)	To ensure that alcohol treatment requirements given as part of the sentence are completed. Also to monitor levels of attrition. ATR can be included as a requirement by the court, whether or not the court considered alcohol use to be linked to offenders offending behaviour.	R&S28

Metric Description	Notes	Domain Ref.
* Number of alcohol treatment programmes completed (as part of sentence requirements)	To monitor the completion rate of alcohol related programmes during licence/order including drink-drive programmes	R&S31
The proportion of offenders where educational need is met as part of sentence plan delivery	To improve the identification of offenders' educational needs and to increase the proportion of offenders that gain educational achievements to meet identified needs. "Identified needs" refers to the offenders criminogenic need, i.e. is education an area linked to their offending behaviour.	R&S29
The proportion of offenders that enter employment	To focus on those who enter some form of employment whilst on supervision. These offenders may find it difficult to maintain continuous employment for 4 weeks	R&S24

- **Supporting delivery where other providers have the primary responsibility for delivery**

Through the joint working arrangements probation is expected to facilitate the delivery of the following objectives. Data will be provided to support these metrics. Commissioners and Probation are expected to discuss performance by partner bodies on a regular basis and identify any causes for concern. It will be the responsibility of local partnership boards and tripartite meetings between Commissioner, Probation and the partner body to ensure delivery.

Metric Description	Notes	Domain Ref.
The proportion of offenders that obtain educational achievements	To monitor the delivery of educational achievements of offenders under supervision. Educational achievements are measured through awards given to offenders including basic skills awards and key work skills Education programmes must enable prisoners to achieve nationally accredited qualifications in key and basic skills up to level 2, which will enhance their employability on release.	R&S23

## Offender Management SLA - Service Specification

### 2007/2008

Note. The metrics indicated in the National Target column will be included within the NOMS business plan for 2007/08 and reported on the NOMS website and to the NOMS board

- **Service Delivery Targets**

Metric Description	Notes (Please see Guidance and Technical Note for full definition)	Domain ref.	Nat. Target	Target
<p>* [x]% of Pre Sentence Reports (PSRs) are completed as below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FDRs within timescales agreed by LCJB</li> <li>• SDRs (not remanded in custody) within timescales agreed by LCJB</li> <li>• SDRs when remanded in custody within timescales agreed by LCJB</li> <li>• SDRs requested by Commissioning Court within timescales agreed by LCJB</li> </ul>	<p>To focus on monitoring PSR timeliness. A completed PSR is a report that has been signed and dated by the author and is ready for presentation to the court. The date that the report is required is set by the court. Timescale refers to the timescale required <b>by the court</b>.</p>	DoJ8		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 90%</li> <li>• 90%</li> <li>• 90%</li> <li>• 90%</li> </ul>
<p>Achieve an average of 35 working days from the relevant unacceptable failure to comply to resolution of the case; and to resolve 60% of breaches of community penalties within 25 working days of the relevant unacceptable failure to comply. (CJS measure)</p>	<p>To ensure that non-compliance with the order/licence is identified and appropriate enforcement action delivered across criminal justice agencies</p>	DoJ6		<p>35 days 60% in 25 days</p>

Metric Description	Notes (Please see Guidance and Technical Note for full definition)	Domain ref.	Nat. Target	Target
<p>* Initiation of breach proceedings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For Tier 1 and 2 cases within [x] working days of the relevant unacceptable failure to comply in at least [x]% of cases</li> <li>• For Tier 3 and 4 cases within [x] working days of the relevant unacceptable failure to comply in at least [x]% of cases</li> </ul>	<p>As a contribution to the CJS measure, probation undertake to initiate breach action within 10 working days in 90% of cases</p>	DoJ5		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 90% in 10 days</li> <li>• 90% in 4 days</li> </ul>
<p>[X]% of orders and licences successfully completed</p>	<p>To assess compliance of the cases that have terminated. , This is one of a number of compliance measures. Successful completions include order / period expired, specified number of hours completed, terminated early for good progress. Unsuccessful are those that are revoked for failure to comply with requirements, revoked following imposition of custody for a further offence, order expired – breach outstanding, revoked for a further offence (non custodial) terminated because of conviction of an offence, warrant for arrest remained unexecuted 12 months after issue, variation of sentence to full time. Further offence is one which occurs after the start of the order/licence. The measure relates to orders and licences rather than offenders, and therefore a re-sentence counts as unsuccessful completion of the first order given.</p>	DoJ9	Region Min 70%	70%
<p>The percentage of arranged appointments which the offender attends in the first 26 weeks of the order or licence to be no fewer than [X]%</p>	<p>To ensure that offenders maintain their appointments enabling continuity across the monitoring and support processes that are central to reducing re-offending. Arranged appointments are those meetings which have been arranged and defined in the sentence plan to take place between the offender and the offender manager.</p>	DoJ1	Region Min 85%	85%
<p>The percentage of cases that reach the six month stage without requiring breach action to be no</p>	<p>To focus on minimising the proportion of cases that involves a breach within six months. Breach is commencement of action to bring an allegation that an offender</p>	DoJ4	Region Min 70%	70%

Metric Description	Notes (Please see Guidance and Technical Note for full definition)	Domain ref.	Nat. Target	Target
fewer than [X]%	has failed to comply with the requirements of an order or licence before the court. Number of cases that do not require breach action for orders or licences which commenced within a 6 month period.			
[X]% of victims to be contacted within eight weeks of an offender receiving 12 months or more for a serious sexual or violent offence	To focus on delivering minimum standards of customer care following serious sexual or violent offences. This is a joint target with LCJB's. Not all eligible victims are necessarily contacted. Victims can opt out.	R&C1	Region Min 85%	85%
[x]% of offenders living in settled and suitable accommodation at the end of their order or licence (broken down by type of settled accommodation)	The purpose of this metric is to identify which types of accommodation offenders are living in at the end of their order or licence to support the reduction in levels of re-offending	R&S16		<b>80%</b>
* At least [x]% of OASys assessments must be completed or updated within the appropriate timescales (X days following sentence or release on licence for all <b>Tier 4</b> cases (excluding PPOs). An assessment should comprise of the Risk of Reconviction (Sec 1-13), Risk of Serious Harm Screening and, if necessary Risk of Serious Harm Full Analysis & Risk Management Plan and Sentence Plan).	To focus on improving the timeliness of the OASys assessments for all Tier 4 and high and very high risk of harm cases. The measure ensures all appropriate elements of OASys are completed. Where possible timeliness data will be broken down by whether the assessment is at start of sentence, review or transfer & termination.	PP1	Region Min 90% in 5 days	90% in 5 days
* At least [x]% of OASys assessments must be completed or updated within the appropriate timescales (X days following sentence or release on licence for all <b>Tier 1 (where appropriate), Tier 2 and Tier 3</b> cases (excluding PPO cases). An	To focus on improving the timeliness of the OASys assessments for all Tier 1 (where appropriate), Tier 2 and Tier 3 cases. The measure ensures all appropriate elements of OASys are completed. Where possible timeliness data will be broken down by whether the assessment is at start of sentence, review or transfer & termination.	OM1	90% in 15 days	90% in 15 days

Metric Description	Notes (Please see Guidance and Technical Note for full definition)	Domain ref.	Nat. Target	Target
assessment should comprise of the Risk of Reconviction (Sec 1-13), Risk of Serious Harm Screening and, if necessary Risk of Serious Harm Full Analysis & Risk Management Plan and Sentence Plan).				
* At least [x]% of OASys assessments must be completed or updated within the appropriate timescales (X days following sentence or release on licence for all <b>PPO</b> cases. An assessment should comprise of the Risk of Reconviction (Sec 1-13), Risk of Serious Harm Screening and, if necessary Risk of Serious Harm Full Analysis & Risk Management Plan and Sentence Plan).	To focus on improving the timeliness of the OASys assessments for PPO cases. The measure ensures all appropriate elements of OASys are completed. Where possible timeliness data will be broken down by whether the assessment is at start of sentence, review or transfer & termination.	RR2	90% in 5 days	90% in 5 days
* To achieve the '07/08 minimum sub-contracting target of [x]%	To encourage greater partnership working between community providers and partner agencies (public and private sector) in order to tackle the various aspects of offender rehabilitation and support. This is detailed on page 19 of NOMS "Improving Prison and Probation Services: Public Value Partnerships"	RUS1	10%	10%
* Number of referrals to LSC (in the community)	To improve the levels of referrals to LSC to support the educational needs of the offender.	R&S12		871
X% OASys assessments must be completed or updated within the appropriate timescales (8 weeks for those entering custody with a	To monitor the timeliness of each key component of the OASys process. This measure is included in the OM SLA to cover those offenders in custody who are covered by Offender Management in Custody, for whom the standards relating to a custodial setting will apply.	OM2	90%	90%

Metric Description	Notes (Please see Guidance and Technical Note for full definition)	Domain ref.	Nat. Target	Target
<p>release/tariff date of less than 2 yrs, 16 weeks for those entering custody with a release/tariff date of more than 2 years. An assessment should comprise of the Risk of Reconviction (Sec 1-13), Risk of Serious Harm Screening and, if necessary, Risk of Serious Harm Full Analysis &amp; Risk Management Plan and Sentence Plan.)</p>				

- **Management information**

Metric Description	Notes	Domain
<p>Number of MAPPA offenders broken down by MAPPA level (in particular level 2 and level 3), violent and other sex offenders and other offenders</p>	<p>To include MAPPA results within the suite of management information metrics</p>	<p>PP6</p>

Metric Description	Notes	Domain
Number of "formal contacts" between offenders on the probation caseload and the police/courts within a three month period	<p>To provide timely, local management information on the rate at which offenders re-offend in order to provide a snapshot view of effectiveness of the offender management process.</p> <p>A formal contact with police / courts is when the offender is arrested, reported, charged or summoned.</p> <p>This measure currently refers to a one month cohort including the entire caseload.</p>	OM7
Number of Offender Manager changes per sentence (broken down by sentence length, type and by tier)	<p>To identify number of changes in offender managers, and where the number of changes seem too large, to enable further investigation to identify how many "illegitimate" changes were made and the reasons for these changes. Note, legitimate changes should not be discouraged.</p> <p>Change in an offender manager is when there is discontinuity of the offender manager, and can be measured by looking at assessments are carried out by more than one person.</p>	OM6
Delivery against sentence plan outcomes	<p>Uses OASys data to focus on the requirement for sentence plans to deliver against needs by addressing specific criminogenic needs which are most likely to reduce re-offending. Identifies level of provision to address needs and how resources are prioritised both regionally and locally.</p> <p>A sentence plan outcome relates to interventions delivered against identified needs. Identified needs are criminogenic needs (also identified across the seven pathways as identified in the reducing re-offending action plan)</p> <p>Where need has been identified within the sentence plan, delivery against this can be concluded as achieved or otherwise.</p>	OM9
Pre Sentence Reports (PSRs) are completed to appropriate quality	<p>The key objective is to improve the quality of the PSR reports.</p> <p>This will monitor quality at completion of PSR i.e. a report that has been signed and dated by the author and ready for presentation to the court</p>	DoJ14
Average number of acceptable offender absences	<p>To ensure cases are not deemed compliant through a large number of absences being recorded as acceptable.</p>	DoJ18

Metric Description	Notes	Domain
The number of nil reports submitted as a proportion of all PSRs	To reduce the number of nil reports. Where “nil report” refers to offender not having been seen/interviewed by PSR author by required deadline for the PSR.	DoJ19
The number of deaths in approved premises	To monitor the number of deaths in approved premises and the causes of death. The measure refers to the death of an offender whilst registered to approved premises (rather than a death on the premises itself).	SDR7
* The proportion of PPOs on licence for a trigger offence who have a drug-testing condition inserted in their licence	To incorporate the government commitment to concentrate on high-crime offenders who misuse drugs. This mirrors the performance targets for the DRR - essentially it is aiming at same group but focusing on different time frame	R&S33
* OASys assessments must be produced to the appropriate quality for all Tier 4 cases (excluding PPO cases). An assessment should comprise of the Risk of Reconviction (Sec 1-13), Risk of Serious Harm Screening and, if necessary Risk of Serious Harm Full Analysis & Risk Management Plan and Sentence Plan.	To focus on improving the quality of the OASys assessments for all Tier 4 and high and very high risk of harm cases. The measure ensures all appropriate elements of OASys are completed. Where possible quality data will be broken down by whether the assessment is at start of sentence, review or transfer & termination.	PP4

Metric Description	Notes	Domain
<p>* OASys assessments must be completed to the required quality for all Tier 1 (where appropriate), Tier 2 and Tier 3 cases (excluding PPOs). An assessment should comprise of the Risk of Reconviction (Sec 1-13), Risk of Serious Harm Screening and, if necessary Risk of Serious Harm Full Analysis &amp; Risk Management Plan and Sentence Plan.</p>	<p>To focus on improving the quality of the OASys assessments for all Tier 1 (where appropriate), Tier 2 and Tier 3 cases. The measure ensures all appropriate elements of OASys are completed. Where possible quality data will be broken down by whether the assessment is at start of sentence, review or transfer &amp; termination.</p>	<p>OM4</p>
<p>* OASys assessments must be completed to the required quality following sentence or release on licence for all PPO cases. An assessment should comprise of the Risk of Reconviction (Sec 1-13), Risk of Serious Harm Screening and, if necessary Risk of Serious Harm Full Analysis &amp; Risk Management Plan and Sentence Plan.</p>	<p>To focus on improving the quality of the OASys assessments for all PPO cases. The measure ensures all appropriate elements of OASys are completed. Where possible quality data will be broken down by whether the assessment is at start of sentence, review or transfer &amp; termination.</p>	<p>RR3</p>

Metric Description	Notes	Domain
Change in OASys score	To assess aggregate change in OASys score (up or down) between most recent assessment and previous assessment and between start and end of sentence (broken down by criminogenic needs).	OM8

## Joined up Offender Management in a Fractured World

### West Mercia Probation Area Commissioning Plan 2006-08

**“Offenders’ lives are often fragmented. School failure, unemployment and lack of suitable accommodation are often characteristic of their lives; this places a solemn responsibility on us to ensure that the services we offer are coherent, consistent and seamless at the point of use.”**

David Chantler  
Chief Officer  
West Mercia Probation Area.

## **West Mercia Probation Area Commissioning Strategy 2006**

### **Section 1. Background**

The 2000 legislation, which became operative in April 2001 with the establishment of the Probation Boards, envisaged that Boards would provide services for their areas on the basis of a more mixed economy than had been provided for under the previous arrangements. Although Probation Committees had often had a proud record of partnership working it had, in some cases, been despite the legislation rather than because of it.

As part of this move it removed the supervision of offenders from the individual named officer and moved it to the Board; it also removed the prohibition on committees trading and co-operating with each other to provide services. This was a belated recognition of trends that had already been developing, for instance the formation of the training consortia.

Consistent with these developments, the requirement that committees spend 7% of their budget on provision from the voluntary and private sectors was removed, on the assumption that value for money considerations would drive the Boards, freed of the old limitation towards a more mixed economy of provision.

The removal of the 7% target also coincided with the move towards directing resources for offender services through more mainstream provision, so as to avoid stigmatised services and to work against the development of silos in service provision. So, funding for offender accommodation now came through the Supporting People arrangements, for drugs provision through the National Treatment Agency by way of the Drug Action Teams and most recently, offender education and basic skills training through the LSC and OLASS. In these ways what would, under the rules applying at the time of the 7% target, have constituted part of the probation budget have been top sliced for these purposes and now fall outside of probation.

The budget against which the new 5% and 10% budgets are calculated includes those nationally agreed contracts for Accommodation, I.T. and Facilities Management, which are outside of our control and which, despite being contracted out, do not count towards the targets.

### **Section 2. Vision and Aims**

West Mercia Probation Area has embraced the freedoms in the post-2001 arrangements as opportunities to provide value for money and deliver innovative solutions to the challenges of reducing offending and protecting the public.

**Best Practice example**  
**Acclaim : The Area-wide Persistent Offender Programme**

We have fully endorsed the Local Criminal Justice Board's "premium service" approach to prioritising persistent offenders (PPOs.) The Chief Officer is the LCJB lead on PPOs and in developing our strand of this work we have created "Acclaim" with our voluntary sector partners, Youth Support Services (YSS). This provides a consistent "wrap around" service for those offenders who commit the most offences, utilising YSS's skills in recruiting, training and deploying volunteers as mentors to provide the extra support that this group of offenders require to get them, successfully, through their period of supervision.

Acclaim represents a strategic partnership in action to achieve the targets of the LCJB, a practice partnership with the voluntary sector, utilising their skills to enhance probation work, and a rooting of our service in the community utilising volunteers drawn from the community.

Our approach has been to develop a culture of "contracting in", (see Criminal Justice Matters Issue 57 dated Autumn 2004 "Contracting In/ Contracting out" article David Chantler). The Probation Board takes responsibility for co-ordinating provision, whoever provides it, to ensure that the offender experiences a coherent service and that the "seamless service" promised by Offender Management is not undermined by a fragmentation amongst providers which would create gaps through which offenders would inevitably slip. We know from other settings, health and education for instance, how easily service users can get lost at organisational interfaces. Our aim is differentiation without fragmentation.

Our theme and offer to the Regional Offender Manager (ROM), as our commissioner, is: - "West Mercia Probation: joined up Offender Management in a fractured World".

West Mercia places the contracting-in of services from other providers at the heart of its work, not simply at the periphery. So, to refer to the example of Acclaim, we have a programme for some of our highest priority offenders illustrating the model in action, not an optional extra.

### Best Practice example

#### Connect: resettlement services for short sentence prisoners

Our early engagement with contracting in services has enabled us to develop innovative approaches to working with offenders. Short sentence prisoners have long been denied a statutory service from probation, in line with central government priorities. And yet this group includes offenders who have received sentences because of their persistence, and those for whom strong cases would have been made for community supervision but who the courts judged had to experience custody.

Through accessing European Social Funds (ESF) and as part of a partnership with the other three probation areas in the region and the regional prison service, we have created Connect which offers pre-release and post release phases of work built around employability, but delivering a more comprehensive resettlement service, including its own offender accommodation service CARS (Connect Accommodation Referral Service).

A common thread running through our provision is again that YSS provide the volunteer mentors to work with the released prisoner in the community (and in Staffordshire and Warwickshire, with SOVA covering West Midlands). Again this is a truly strategic partnership bringing probation and prisons together to ensure that some of the most likely to fail offenders do not fall between the institutional gap between our two services.

We have also had the opportunity to use our links with the voluntary sector to develop innovative programmes to meet gaps in statutory provision. Connect is an example of this but it is also an example of our ability to develop "contracting in" in such a way as to provide consistency across the service, i.e. because YSS provide our mentors both in Acclaim and in Connect.

We would contrast this to a model of contracting out that would see the service cut up between a number of alternative providers. We place a value on the continuity provided by a trusted preferred provider, without simply replacing a public sector monopoly with a private one. We are challenged to think about how we conceive of the service; for instance structuring the contract around an activity opens up the possibility that those unifying functions that we have in Acclaim and Connect could be lost. In future we would need to offer a contract for "Mentoring Services", which is a unifying model, not a potentially divisive one.

**Best Practice Example**  
**Regional Sex Offender Unit**

West Mercia found itself unable to sustain the infrastructure to maintain as consistent a level of service as would be necessary to meet the needs of courts in the sentencing of sex offenders. Issues of numbers, the speciality of the work, training needs etc. all made the local provision of this capacity for an important but comparatively small number of offenders very difficult for West Mercia and was leading to some very inflexible staffing models and to the creation of unacceptable waiting lists. Across the four Probation Areas the response has been to form a Regional Sex Offender Unit, bringing together the experience, expertise and resources of all four regional probation areas (plus provision for those parts of Wales that have, historically, looked to West Mercia).

This has eliminated waiting lists and enabled the provision of best practice across the region on a consistent and comprehensive basis.

The sex offender unit illustrates that in developing a Commissioning Strategy many of the principles of achieving best value and optimising the utilisation of uncommon skills will, on occasion, lead us to develop horizontal links to others in the public sector probation service, which is not to argue that there cannot be further developments based on this regional collaboration that would involve other partners. One of the characteristics of developing a regional solution in this case is that the offending is not particularly community based, i.e. it reflects more the pathology of the individual and the need to maintain the sustainable centre of excellence outweighs any argument for very local services. Indeed in this case the offender may be restricted in the extent to which he can be part of his home community by the very nature of his offending. We need to reflect in this strategy the imperative to provide a service at the most sensible level of organisation, balancing financial and service delivery pressures and delivering consistency, viability and sustainability.

Where the infrastructure to develop partnership does not exist West Mercia is committed, as lead provider, to develop capacity building and in particular innovative solutions based on this capacity. To assist with this we have sponsored the development of the West Mercia Probation Care Trust. The Care Trust is a charitable company, the aim of which is to develop provision in the community to enable work with offenders to be undertaken. Establishing the Trust was a recognition that even as "lead provider" the priority of the probation service locally would be on service delivery but that the need to develop capacity remained.

**Best Practice Example**  
**West Mercia Probation Care Trust developing "Growing out of Crime"**

When a local resident came forward with a proposal to work with persistent local offenders on a constructive programme which involved utilising his knowledge of horticulture and previous experience of using this approach with a different user group, the Care Trust provided a charitable governance structure to oversee the project and, through individual members of the trust, help and expertise in getting the project off the ground. This particular project features in a series of documentaries (and accompanying book) broadcast on BBC 2 in December 2006, under the title "Growing out of Trouble"

## **Summary of Vision and Aims**

West Mercia Probation Board is committed to further developing its role as lead provider and to creating arrangements for service delivery with partners from the voluntary, statutory and private sectors that provide best value and are based on the following principles:

- They add to the coherence of the service at the point of delivery
- They support the priorities of the area
- They meet the needs of local communities
- They run across the structure of the area service, integrating it, not splitting it by function
- They relate to other local structures and priorities, e.g. Local Area Agreements ( LAAs)
- They are able to deliver to NOMS Offender Management and diversity standards
- Where appropriate they enhance West Mercia's ability to develop innovative solutions
- They enhance, rather than undermine, West Mercia's aspirations for Trust status.

As an area service led by a local board of local people we are in a privileged position to put together the best portfolio of services to meet local needs. We will build on our knowledge of offender need as disclosed through our ongoing work and in particular, through OASys (Offender Assessment System), we will build on our knowledge of local communities and our links with other local authorities and criminal justice agencies, for instance through the Local Criminal Justice Board and the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships.

We will identify our well established and robust liaison arrangements with Courts through the bench-wide local "Forums" and the area-wide "Steering Group" as real strengths and will continue to work to maintain both so that we are informed directly by sentencer priorities and to ensure that the commissioner (ROM) is fully aware of what they need him to require of us.

We seek not just to be the provider of choice to the ROM but the lead provider that can be relied upon to source and to co-ordinate the finest expertise in a coherent whole around the core which we will provide as an accountable public service of the highest standard.

## **Section 3. Current Position**

West Mercia Probation Area received a grant from the NPD of £12.5 million in 2006-07. Of that, £0.7 million is budgeted to be spent through contracting-in services from other suppliers.

This represents 6.3% of our resource budget against a central target of 5%. In practice this is a higher proportion of our discretionary cash budget given the top slicing that takes place at NPD level.

A list of our current contracts is appended to this document at Appendix A.

Our strong starting point in meeting the target set by NOMS/NPD reflects our early commitment to developing a mixed economy. We have therefore been working on this for at least the past 5 years, developing existing funding streams and bidding for work specified by other commissioners so as to create an overall portfolio of provision. The net effect is a range of services that whilst not always provided directly by West Mercia Probation Area is co-ordinated and given coherence by us. An example of this opportunity would be the identification of the need for web-based education rather than exclusively college based provision because of the logistical problems posed by the geography of West Mercia. This led us to successfully bid for the “Learn Direct” e-learning contract which we now hold.

Because we are positioned in the centre of this network of provision and funding streams, we are more vulnerable to fluctuations in support and development than a more conventionally organised Probation Area. This is a necessary risk inherent in deciding to spend a greater percentage of core budget in contracting services than simply deciding to “make” everything in-house. We would look towards the ROM to reflect the costs of managing this risk as part of negotiations over the SLAs, particularly that for Interventions.

#### **Section 4. Organisation of Commissioning Structure**

From its inception in April 2001 West Mercia has maintained a commissioning capacity but this has not had a fixed structure, either in the organisation of the staff involved nor in the form of account to the Board. As the Government’s intentions have become clearer, most particularly through the publication of the document “Public Value Partnerships”, it has been possible to consolidate West Mercia’s arrangements.

The Board has now formed a Contracts and Business Development Committee which will advise the development of the Commissioning Strategy and monitor the progress against the NOMS/NPD target.

In Spring 2007 responsibility for implementation will pass from the Head of Interventions to the new post of Head of Business Development, who will work with the Contracts and Business Development Committee. This post will also service the Performance Committee and the key organising principle of this post will be to challenge the Heads of Interventions and of Offender Management as to the most appropriate form of service delivery to adopt in order to achieve the performance priorities of the Board as represented by the Performance Committee.

Simplified Organisation Structure West Mercia Probation Area





<b>Review</b>	Committee to review plan at half way stage, i.e. March 2008 in light of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Legislation</li> <li>▪ Regional Commissioning Plans</li> <li>▪ Resources</li> <li>▪ Progress on Trust Status</li> </ul>	By April 2008
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This plan is designed to achieve the Government's required 10% spend in the VCS by the end of 2007-08 but to do so in the context of longer term developments, the need to provide services that are fit for purpose, provide value for money and fit into the portfolio of services that we will seek to develop as "lead provider". Whilst assuming the current Management of Offenders Bill will become an Act, it has to be recognised that we cannot pre-empt Parliamentary decisions and that the final shape of the Act is still unclear.

## **Section 6. Commissioning Plan 2007-08**

This section deals with our direct commissioning of services and does not include those services provided through Joint Commissioning or Co-commissioning, which are dealt with in subsequent sections.

Consistent with our aims and values we intend to utilise our commissioning activity to provide consistent themes throughout our work in the coming year.

Following a review we will seek to maintain the input into PPO programmes from the voluntary sector, although as a non cash linked and non WSC element of performance we will seek to persuade the ROM that this is added value from West Mercia and should be funded from the 102% budget that he has asked us to bid for, alongside a costing for the 100% budget that has been indicated to us by NOMS. Indeed if we were to be funded at the alternative 98% of indicative budget, this would have to be an area for savings.

We will seek to roll forward the existing contracts in support of Connect until October 2007 based on the bridging finance provided by the NPD. During this period we will assess the likelihood of further funding becoming available and seek to place contracts in the voluntary sector that are at least as significant as those currently funded through Connect.

We will look to consolidate the provision of Mentoring contracts to cover a range of work rather than run separate contracts for, for instance, ACCLAIM and Connect but this will require agreement with our regional partners as not all of the work is for West Mercia exclusively.

Following the review of Unpaid work due to be taken to the January Board meeting we will set targets for the proportion of Unpaid Work supervision to be undertaken by community agencies. Where possible we will co-ordinate this initiative with the regional Unpaid Work pathfinder.

We will consider the options for contracting offender transport if it appears that this can assist with the logistical challenges of the geography of West Mercia and in particular levels of attrition in Accredited Programmes.

We will actively work to extend the provision of "Growing out of Crime"/Care Farm initiatives following the Herefordshire pilot. However, at the time of writing the financing model for this activity has not been settled and it may be that it is developed outside the probation budget, say through the Care Trust. This is an example of where a central target may be little more than a measure of the chosen accounting treatment.

These will form our main strategic initiatives and, subject to normal periodic reviews, we intend to maintain our smaller contracts with local providers which are often specific to the needs of different areas within West Mercia.

Towards the end of the year we will review our community outreach capacity and the Board will form a view of how this is best provided, i.e. from the service out to the community or into the service from community based organisations.

It is recognised that the Government's paper "Public Value Partnerships" identified victim contact work as a high priority for contracting out. This Area remains to be convinced that communicating about Offender Management decisions to vulnerable groups is best done through a third party. We should clearly accept responsibility for those decisions and be seen to do so and not risk confusion

by using a third party to handle such communication. Contracting out Victim Contact work does not form part of our plan in the coming year.

## APPENDIX 1

Name of Organisation	Private or VCS	Length of Contract	Contract End Date	Amount of Contract £
Ethnic Access Link	VCS	12	31-Mar-07	4,000
Worcester HomeStart	VCS	12	31-Mar-07	1,100
Worcs Rape & Sexual Abuse	VCS	12	31-Mar-07	3,300
Axis Councelling	VCS	12	31-Mar-07	2,100
Telford & Wrekin Interpretation	VCS	12	31-Mar-07	1,600
Asha Centre	VCS	12	31-Mar-07	8,500
Worcs Community Alcohol Team	VCS	12	31-Mar-07	30,000
Impact	VCS	12	31-Mar-07	21,500
Drug & Alcohol Hereford	VCS	12	31-Mar-07	-
Geese Theatre	VCS	12	31-Mar-07	3,300
Forensic Psychology	Private	12	31-Mar-07	17,700
County Training	VCS	27	30-Jun-08	16,000
Distributed Learning	Private	27	30-Jun-08	-
Worcs Housing & Benefit	VCS	27	30-Jun-08	35,000
Telford & Wrekin CAB	VCS	27	30-Jun-08	37,500
Telford Women's Centre	VCS	12	31-Mar-07	10,000
WRVS	VCS	12	31-Mar-07	5,000
Prince's Trust	VCS	12	31-Mar-07	10,000
Kidderminster Women's Centre	VCS	12	31-Mar-07	5,000
Redditch Women's Centre	VCS	12	31-Mar-07	5,000
Youth Support Services	VCS	18	31-Mar-07	184,570
Youth Support Services	VCS	24	31-Mar-07	60,000
Telford Drive	VCS	12	31-Mar-07	8,000
Oldington & Foley Community	VCS	12	31-Mar-07	16,000
Geese Theatre	VCS	12	31-Mar-07	2,330
Youth Support Services	VCS	27	30-Jun-08	35,000
Youth Support Services	VCS	12	31-Mar-07	13,000
Telford Women's Centre	VCS	21	30-Jun-08	41,000
Asha Centre	VCS	12	31-Mar-07	3,000
County Training	VCS	12	31-Mar-07	30,000
T B A	VCS			6,200
CP Bounty Projects	VCS	12	31-Mar-07	11,600
Asha Centre	VCS	12	31-Mar-07	5,000
Asha Centre	VCS	12	31-Mar-07	4,000
3 Cubed	Private	12	31-Mar-07	15,000
Full House (FRS) Ltd	VCS	12	31-Mar-07	4,000
Worcester Race Equality Council	VCS	17	31-Mar-07	12,000
Various Barristers	Private			29,000
Various Contractors	Private			92,000
Asha Centre	VCS	5	31-Mar-07	2,300
Safeguarding Children Boards x 4	VCS	12	31-Mar-07	16,000
				806,600

David Chantler

Revised January 2007

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**JANUARY 2007**

**WEST MERCIA PROBATION**

**REVIEW OF UNPAID WORK**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In July 2006 a paper was submitted via the Chief Officer Group to the Probation Board following a review of Unpaid Work in West Mercia.

In October 2006 a consultation paper was submitted for consideration to relevant stakeholders.

This paper is a summary of recommendations on the way forward following that consultation. It also takes account of a paper published by the Home Office entitled, *'Improving Prison and Probation Services: Public Value Partnerships' (August 2006)*; the publication of a the new *'Manual on the Delivery of Unpaid Work' published October 2006*; attendance at the national UPW Conference and NPS national conference; liaison between West Mercia CDRP's and the Local Criminal Justice Board; discussions and decision at Business Planning Chief Officer Group.

### **SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS ON WAY FORWARD**

1. To reduce management of UPW from present 6 Managers to 4.6 posts including the creation of a new post of 'Partnerships Development Manager.' (Estimated staff savings of £50,000).
2. To merge existing UPW Units from 6 to 3 across West Mercia providing greater responsibility for Managers in order to improve consistency of working and co-ordination of resources.
3. Consistent with the Board's local Commissioning Strategy, to enter into partnerships with external providers to provide dedicated UPW supervisors to be used on locally nominated projects on an ongoing basis.
4. Savings as above to be used to initially joint fund resources and stimulate initiatives organised and contracted via the Partnerships Manager; in the longer term, finance from beneficiary bodies to be sought and invested in the programme.
5. West Mercia Probation would continue to recruit, induct, train and quality assure both staff and external schemes to ensure both safety and performance standards.
6. To differentiate the role of Community Punishment Officer and Supervisor and recruit separately in order to ensure Supervisors are recruited externally as required with requisite skills in order to provide resilience and quality of skills.
7. To continue to employ a limited number of 'Casual Supervisor' staff on a wide geographical base to supplement contracted staff and reduce standowns of offenders.
8. Quality Assurance to remain an integral and essential feature of responsibility split between Unit Managers, Partnerships Manager and Health and Safety Officer.

9. Role of Procurement Officer to remain centralised specialist function in UPW.
10. 'Special measures' and project being introduced in respect of South Worcestershire UPW Unit to deal with issues surrounding lack of throughput, excess caseload and standown of offenders.
11. Timescales – aim to introduce infrastructure by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007.