



Ministry of
JUSTICE

National Offender
Management Service

West Mercia
Probation Trust



West Mercia Probation Trust

Community Payback Annual Report 2012



**Community
Payback**

Foreword

2012 was, in many ways, a year of "steady as you go" in relation to Community Payback. We have continued with our strategy of locating Payback as firmly as possible within the Community, which has included some exciting new developments. Willowdene Farm, who already deliver our Specified Activity Order and Adult Attendance Centre, are working in partnership with Shropshire Council to deliver a new Community Payback project which we intend to replicate across the Trust area. We have out-performed our contract with NOMS in relation to the amount of Community Payback delivered and we continue to work on reducing the cost of the work so that we enhance the value to the community through the work itself and by doing it at an ever reducing cost to the community.

"Steady as you go" is not a phrase that I use readily or complacently; it is more a mark of frustration that external constraints do not allow us to take bolder steps. In the foreword to last year's report, I noted the frustration arising from the delay and uncertainty from the slow speed of progressing the Ministry's declared intention of outsourcing Community Payback in large lots of which West Mercia would form part of one consisting of eight areas in the South West of England. We had known about this at the beginning of the previous year, but by the middle of 2012, only the London Lot had been dealt with. During 2012 we had the consultation on the Government's proposals for the Probation Service, which delayed implementation of that strategy and we are now (January/February) in a further round of consultation on new proposals. Welcome as a commitment to consult widely is, the effect on uncertainty is considerable and this has contributed to undermining confidence amongst potential partners and our income in cash and in kind from those wanting to work with us has reduced.

Having said that we have some well established partnership projects such as BID, the Business Improvement District scheme in Worcester. Resources are provided by local businesses, the scheme is co-ordinated by the council and improvements to the local environment are carried out by offenders. Our partnership with the Worcestershire Countryside Centre continues to be a success and is now into its fifth year. The partnership pays for a full time supervisor to supervise offenders carrying out improvements to Worcestershire parks, countryside and rights of way.

Finally, I want to congratulate one of our unpaid work supervisors, Stan Reeves, who won a Chief Executive's Performance Award this year. Stan has epitomised what unpaid work can be about, yes turning out the work to a high standard, but also modelling the proper use of authority, treating offenders with respect and gaining their respect to get the most out of them.

Whatever the future holds for unpaid work, which celebrates its 40th year this year, it will continue to be a core element in working with offenders to reduce their reoffending and to pay back the community for some of the damage offending causes.

David Chantler
Chief Executive

Contents

Page

OVERVIEW

- Probation Trust and Geographic Area 3
- Community Payback 3
- Unpaid offender hours 2012 3
- Projects completed 4
- Successful completion of Community Payback sentences 5
- Beneficiaries 5
- Comments from Beneficiaries 5-6

DEVELOPMENTS

- New Initiatives 6
- Service Level Agreements 7-8
- Working with Criminal Justice Partners 8
- Working with other Organisations 9
- Joint work with Education, Training and Employment 9

ACHIEVEMENTS 10

Overview

West Mercia Probation Trust and Geographic Area

West Mercia Probation Trust is one of the 35 Probation Trusts in England and Wales. We cover Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and Worcestershire. The area is 2868 square miles and has a population of approximately 1.19 million. Whilst West Mercia is predominantly rural, it also contains some densely populated urban areas and many market towns. The area shares borders with the West Midlands conurbation on the east and some of the wildest parts of Wales on the west.

Our Local Delivery Unit structure matches the four areas we cover. We have main offices in Hereford, Kidderminster, Redditch, Shrewsbury, Telford and Worcester.

Each year we supervise around 3500 adult offenders in the community. We employ over 350 staff.

Community Payback

Community Payback is a punishment which requires offenders sentenced to Unpaid Work to pay back the community for the crimes they have committed. They have to carry out demanding work as a sentence from the courts for between 40-300 hours. If they are in full-time work or education they must give up one day at weekends to do Community Payback. Unemployed offenders may have to work for up to three days a week.

Unpaid Offender Hours 2012

The number of offender hours worked in the community in 2012 was 140,817. This gives a value to the community of £871,657.23 (based on the current minimum wage of £6.19 for over 21 year olds).

	2010	2011	2012
Offender hours worked in the community	173,010	151,750	140,817
Value to community at minimum wage (based on current minimum wage)	£ 1,025,949.30	£ 922,640.00	£ 871,657.23

Of the 140,817 hours worked offenders carried out 23,565 hours in individual placements - 70,980 on work parties and 46,272 on other projects ('other' are placements where the number of workers may vary, sometimes only one, other times more than one).

The total figure of 140,817 can be broken down into the number of hours worked at each main location, as follows:-

Herefordshire:	16,849
Kidderminster:	16,823
Redditch:	20,738
Shropshire:	29,547
Telford:	24,179
Worcester:	32,681

Projects Completed

During the year 285 Community Payback projects were completed by offenders.

The work was carried out by work parties or by individuals in specific placements. Projects combine punishment and hard work for the offenders and some offer a chance to learn new skills.

Offenders carried out demanding work in their local communities such as:- street clean-ups, ground clearance and landscaping, painting and decorating community facilities, graffiti removal, canal restoration, recycling, litter picking and work for local charities. Some local examples follow:-

Hanwood Waterside Park in Shrewsbury

Offenders worked for several months at Hanwood Waterside Park helping to restore the land in the grounds of the village hall that had become neglected, overgrown and almost inaccessible. The project was undertaken as a result of a grant from Open Spaces Big Lottery Fund. The work carried out opened up new opportunities for sport, recreation and cultural activities and the new 408m pathway provides access all round the site to enable everyone to enjoy the park. Celebrations were held in June to mark the opening of the park and there was unanimous praise for the work that had been carried out.

Special Celebrations in 2012

2012 was the year of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the Olympics and this brought along with it requests for projects to be carried out in preparation for the celebrations. For example, work was carried out in readiness for Jubilee Celebrations at the Millennium Green in Kidderminster and Hanwood Waterside Park in Shrewsbury. In Worcester work parties spruced up the city centre and helped prepare for the Queen's Jubilee visit and for the Olympic torch relay.

Help with Floods

2012 was one of the wettest years on record and some areas of West Mercia suffered with flooding. The wet weather can also present problems when trying to find suitable projects for Community Payback work. In Kidderminster, Wyre Forest District Council provided an undercover area and 20 tonnes of sand. During rainy periods offenders made sandbags which were loaded onto pallets ready for immediate delivery to flood areas.

Successful Completion of Community Payback Sentences

The number of successful completions of Community Payback sentences this year was 1,050 giving us a completion rate of 75.6%.

	2010	2011	2012
Number of successful completions	1301	1189	1050
Successful completion rate	% 80	% 76	% 75.6

Beneficiaries

Over 220 beneficiaries have benefited from Community Payback work this year. Offenders have helped to improve community environments, make people feel safer in the places they live and undertake work that would not otherwise be done.

Beneficiaries include:- community centres, local authorities, parish councils, churches, the National Trust, hospitals, housing associations, sports clubs, schools, animal sanctuaries, local charities and nature reserves.

We have received a huge amount of positive feedback, comments and letters of thanks from grateful beneficiaries. Here is a small selection from around the area.

Comments from Beneficiaries

Herefordshire – Ledbury in Bloom

"I would like to express my thanks for the hard work you and your offenders undertook in Ledbury. I have received very positive comments and thanks from Ledbury in Bloom and the local community. Your help is very much appreciated and I hope that we will be able to deliver more projects for Herefordshire".

Kidderminster – Churchill & Blakedown Millennium Green Trust

"Thank you for all the extremely valuable work you organised on the Millennium Green utilising people serving Community Orders. The work has ensured that the Green and surrounding areas continue to provide an attractive oasis of open space which is enjoyed on a regular basis by local residents. We particularly appreciated the extra work that was undertaken in preparation for the Diamond Jubilee Celebrations".

Redditch – Redditch Cricket, Hockey and Rugby Football Club

“Thank you and your colleagues for the excellent work your teams do for us. They always arrive punctually and are extremely well supervised. The teams carry out a range of tasks for us from simple jobs to skilled repair and ground maintenance. Where we would be without their assistance is anyone’s guess. Today was a typical example where the group worked well all day with all individuals carrying out their tasks conscientiously”.

Shropshire – Greenfields Bowling Club

“On behalf of the Club members I would like to thank the men and women who helped clean the front of the club and access down to the club which had become very overgrown. They made an excellent job and made the site look so much better. The work they did was completed on a very cold and frosty day. Our thanks, once again, to all concerned”.

Telford & Wrekin – A Parochial Church Council

“We would like to pass on our thanks and gratitude for the wonderful and hard work that has been put into the up-keep of our church yard over the past year. The comments that have been received from the people who have loved ones in the church yard, have been nothing but full of praise for your supervisors and the politeness of the workers”.

Worcester – A Local Resident

“It was very nice to walk the Worcestershire Way over the last two days and to see some splendid work done in the countryside by offenders as part of their community order. Congratulations on achieving constructive results in this way”.

Developments

New Initiatives

During the year our Business Development Team has continued to negotiate with local bodies and councils to develop income generating partnership arrangements and cost neutral schemes.

- We have completed a pilot with North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership which has resulted in paid work with Friends of Springfield Park.
- We have agreed a Service Level Agreement with Festival Housing to provide 12 days of Community Payback during winter 2012/13.
- Telford and Wrekin are looking to increase their Service Level Agreement with us to include additional work parties, individual placements and work experience opportunities for participants.
- Following a successful pilot the Canal Trust (British Waterways) has agreed a Service Level Agreement for one day per week in Kidderminster maintaining canal towpaths. This will provide evidence to support additional activity next year across Kidderminster, Stourport and Worcester.

Service Level Agreements

We have a number of Service Level Agreements (SLA) in place. Arrangements vary with each council and may involve them funding a probation Community Payback supervisor or provision of a council employee to assist with supervision for work we do for that council.

- Worcester City Council funds a Community Payback supervisor for 120 hours each month to supervise Community Payback work carried out for the council.
- Telford & Wrekin Council funds a Community Payback supervisor for two days a week to supervise Community Payback work carried out for the council. This SLA also includes a co-location arrangement for Community Payback stores which has a cost neutral effect.
- We have a contract with Worcester Business Improvement District (BID). BID funds a Community Payback Supervisor who takes a work party out every Sunday to make improvements to the city centre.
- We have a partnership arrangement with Telford and Wrekin Housing Trust which is a cost neutral model. Probation has trained a member of the Housing Trust's staff to act as a supervisor. The supervisor supervises a work party of offenders carrying out work on their housing estates.
- We have a cost neutral partnership arrangement with Shropshire County Council where members of their staff act as supervisors. The supervisors supervise a work party carrying out community based work.
- We have a joint funded project with Worcestershire Countryside Service and Worcester Community Safety Partnership whereby we share the cost of a full-time supervisor. The supervisor supervises a work party of offenders for five days a week carrying out work for the Countryside Service.

Worcestershire Countryside Service

Our partnership with Worcestershire Countryside Service and Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership is now into its fifth year.

The project carries out improvements to Worcestershire parks, countryside and rights of way that may not otherwise get done. A work party of up to six offenders is supervised by a full time supervisor who is paid for by the partnership.

This year offenders have been clearing the Severn Way, the Royal Hunters Way and the Pershore and Eckington Circular. They have installed hundreds of steps, many gates, styles and bridges and carried out surfacing work to paths. They have also planted trees and hedges, removed rubbish, installed picnic benches and improved drainage at sites across the county.

'Pay as you go' scheme

A Community Payback 'pay as you go' scheme has been set up in partnership with Worcestershire County Council for its Parishes. There are nearly 200 Parishes in Worcestershire and the scheme enables them to request a day's work in their area and pay an agreed sum of money for the work. Work may include clearing rubbish, footpath clearance, painting parish halls and clearing gullies. Telford and Wrekin Council have replicated this model in their area.

Emergency response team

A Community Payback emergency response team has been set up to help out with emergencies such as heavy snowfall, flooding, storms or major fires when significant clean ups are required. This is co-ordinated through Worcestershire County Council's 'Silver Committee'. The council forms part of a multi-agency response team including Police, Fire, Ambulance, NHS and Environment agency that would respond in these types of emergencies. The Community Payback team acts as a useful resource for the Council to draw upon and those partners within Worcestershire who have Service Level Agreements with the Trust pool their Community Payback resources for this activity.

Working with Criminal Justice Partners

We work with the police and other organisations through local Community Safety Partnerships, which have generated a number of Community Payback projects that contribute to community safety. Projects include rubbish removal, overgrowth clearance and restoring parks and communal facilities in high vandalism areas.

Suggest a Project in Wyre Forest

We joined forces with Wyre Forest Community Safety Partnership, Wyre Forest Community Housing Group and Wyre Forest District Council to offer local community groups a team of community payback workers to carry out projects that would benefit the community. Residents in some areas of Stourport and Kidderminster were invited to suggest a project that, ideally, could be sustained in the future for the community to enjoy.

The scheme was advertised locally and suggestions for projects were identified around the area. Work got underway at the beginning of October with all projects completed by mid-November. Work included clearing overgrown areas and footpaths, trimming hedges, litter removal and painting fencing. This made local areas much safer and more attractive for residents to enjoy.

Working with the Landscapes and Countryside Team

We have worked in partnership with Bromsgrove and Redditch Landscapes and Countryside Team on projects identified by the local Community Safety Partnership. The work has included restoring pathways, overgrowth clearance, coppicing and litter clearance to make community areas safer.

Community Payback staff regularly receive suggestions from Partners and Communities Together (PACT) meetings, organised by the police, where they can pick up on issues in communities that may be addressed with Community Payback work.

Partners and Communities Together (PACT)

In Kidderminster, work parties have been carrying out targeted litter picks during the year in areas that have been suggested at local PACT meetings.

Sentencers are kept regularly informed about Community Payback projects in their areas at their Probation forums held three times a year. Magistrates are offered the opportunity of visiting Community Payback projects in their area to observe the work in action – an opportunity that is regularly taken up.

Working with other Organisations

We also work with a whole host of other organisations carrying out Community Payback work, such as community centres, schools, colleges, charitable organisations and churches. Some are one-off jobs and others have more permanent arrangements. Here are some examples from around the area:-

- Offenders helped out at water stations at the Ironbridge half marathon in April with nearly 600 runners taking part
- Work with the National Trust such as maintaining pathways and clearance takes place across the area for example at Dudmaston, Hanbury Hall and Brockhampton.
- Offenders work at Wharf Meadow Animal Sanctuary maintaining the site and helping out with the animals
- We continue to work with numerous churches around the area, maintaining their graveyards and carrying out other work
- South Shropshire Furniture is a social enterprise we work with. We fund one of their employees to supervise a work party of offenders one day a week to help out at their scheme. Offenders are involved in collecting and delivering furniture, recycling and restoration.
- Willowdene Farm piloted a piece of work with NOMS and the Trust looking into how sentencers use Community Payback for those offenders on Drug Rehabilitation Requirements. Following this pilot we are working with Willowdene to develop further Community Payback opportunities.

Some of our work comes directly from the general public via a Community Payback nomination process. Anyone can access our website and nominate a project in their local area, provided it meets with the criteria listed. Nominations can be made on our website at www.westmerciaprobation.org.uk on the Community Payback page.

Joint work with Education, Training and Employment

Unemployed offenders sentenced to Community Payback are assessed for employment, training and education needs at the induction stage. During the course of undertaking Community Payback a maximum of 20 per cent of an offenders hours may contribute to the achievement of specific training or education. This may be assessment of their work as they carry out specific Community Payback tasks or referral to other provisions such as college courses, specific training or job search workshops.

Training carried out during the year included basic IT, numeracy and literacy training. In addition, a number of offenders undertook a health and safety qualification.

Achievements

During 2012 West Mercia Probation Trust's Community Payback provision achieved:-

- 140,817 offender hours worked in the community
- Communities benefited from unpaid work to the value of £871,657.23 (based on the current minimum wage)
- 285 Community Payback projects were completed
- 226 beneficiaries benefited from Community Payback work
- 1,050 offenders successfully completed Community Payback sentences
- 75.6% successful completion rate of Community Payback sentences

Contact:

Jackie Bell
West Mercia Probation Trust
90 Mill Street
Kidderminster
DY11 6XA

01562 748375

head.office@west-mercia.probation.gsi.gov.uk

www.westmerciaprobation.org.uk

