

40 Years of Community Payback

This year we celebrate 40 years of Community Payback. A scheme that makes offenders carry out compulsory unpaid work to pay back their communities for the crimes they have committed.

Community Payback was introduced in 1972. Its aim was to deprive offenders of their leisure time, rather than their liberty as they carried out manual work for the benefit of the community.

There have been many changes to the scheme since it started out, not least, its name. From Community Service, to Community Punishment, Unpaid Work and finally the name Community Payback was introduced in 2005, which encouraged communities to become actively involved in the nomination of projects for offenders to carry out. In 2008 orange high visibility jackets were introduced to

ensure the work was more visible in communities.

Over the years, hundreds of thousands of offenders have worked literally millions of hours picking up litter, clearing brambles, painting fences and scrubbing off graffiti to make their communities a better place to live.

In West Mercia over 150,000 hours of Community Payback are completed every year by offenders. This equates to just short of a million pounds of free labour provided to local communities as offenders pay back for the crimes they have committed.



Suggest a Project Wyre Forest

Wyre Forest Community Safety Partnership joined forces with West Mercia Probation Trust to offer local groups a team of Community Payback workers to carry out projects that would benefit the community.

Residents or community groups in some areas of Stourport and Kidderminster were invited to suggest a project for their area. Ideally something that could be sustained in the future for the community to enjoy.

Projects were identified at St Oswald's School, Springfield Park, Betty Dawes Hill and the Walshes Community Centre. Work got underway at the beginning of October with all projects completed by mid-November. Up to 11 offenders and a supervisor worked on each project and a total of six days were spent carrying out the work.

Work included clearing overgrown areas and footpaths, trimming hedges, litter removal and painting fencing. This made local areas safer and more attractive for residents to enjoy.

Stanford Reeves, West Mercia Probation Trust, supervised the work teams, he said: "The work the offenders were doing was very visible and right in the heart of local communities. The quick turnaround on each project meant that residents could see a positive end result in a very short space of time".



West Mercia Probation Trust  **proactive**
 News from West Mercia Probation Trust
 Issue 14, Winter 2012

What a Year for West Mercia

A truly exceptional year! Whatever the findings of the Probation Review may bring for the future, this year has been the one in which so much of what we have been trying to do in West Mercia came together.

This 'proactive' aims to draw the various threads together in an end of year report.

Inspections
We have had two major external scrutiny's of our work. Firstly, the Offender Management Inspection (OMI 2), carried out by her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation. We emerged as one

of the very best performing Trusts in the country, scoring strongly across the board. Secondly, the NOMS Operational Audit of Accredited Programmes, which included general offending behaviour programmes and specific programmes for drink impaired driving and domestic abuse, which was similarly positive.

Performance
These successes have fed into our on-going quarterly performance assessments that are now regularly 'Green Four Star' - Ministry of Justice speak for 'outstanding'. All in all 2012 has been the best year ever for performance. With a budget of around £16 million a year

for a population of 1.2 million, that's a lot of performance for £13.30 a head per year.

Partnerships
Our partnership strategy, praised by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, as an exemplar of 'intelligent commissioning' has moved into higher gear this year. Including the establishment of a new Social Enterprise at Willowdene, offering almost 100 Specified Activity Requirements to the courts. Take up and successful completion have both been very encouraging during this first year and early information about reduced re-offending is equally positive.

Pictured above: Dinham Bridge, from Shropshire & Telford TSB/Mike Hayward Collection

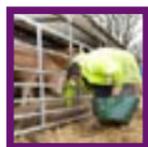


Suggest a Project
If you have a suggestion for a project you would like to have carried out in your community please visit the Community Payback section of our website and complete the form. Please note projects must meet certain criteria which are outlined on the website: www.westmerciaprobation.org.uk

Contact Us:
If you have any comments or suggestions for future editions, please contact Jackie Bell, PR Officer, 01562 748375 ext 1907, or jackie.bell@west-mercia.probation.gsi.gov.uk



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What a Year continued.....

Adult Attendance Centres

We have become the first Trust to commission, ourselves, Adult Attendance Centres, giving the courts a new punitive option for offenders. The centres are being run by our strategic partner, YSS. An excellent demonstration of West Mercia working with community organisations to find community solutions to community problems.

Willowdene Farm

At Willowdene we have advanced plans in place to introduce a residential project for women that we are confident can cut the use of custody for women by at least 50%, improving the lot of those women and their families and saving the tax payer the unnecessary cost of prison.

Community Interest Company

This year has also seen the launch of Clarent Commerce, a Community Interest Company (CIC), in which nine Trusts are developing a co-operative approach to procurement, alongside private sector partner, Excalibur Procurement Services. We have worked with Excalibur for some years now and their expertise has been invaluable in developing our partnership model, but now with nine trusts working together we have the clout that comes with size in procurement without conceding the commissioning function that remains with each Trust.

Youth Justice

Working co-operatively also underpins the exciting developments in Youth Justice. On 1 October, the two former Youth Offending Teams in the area merged to become the West Mercia Youth Offending Service with day-

to-day responsibility being passed to probation. In turn this will allow us to develop and improve the services that we offer to young people as they become adults.

AIM Partnership

Although we have developed localism as being the hallmark of probation in West Mercia, we are not myopic, and currently host 'AIM' a European Social Fund project that stimulates innovative ways of working across the West Midlands and creating links with a number of European countries. It has also brought us the ESF Gender Equality Award for 2012.

University of Worcester

Perhaps the development that might have the most long term impact, is our work with the University of Worcester. Providing placements for trainee mental health nurses, jointly developing a post graduate qualification for probation officers and now planning a degree in applied criminology. These developments mean, whatever the structure of probation in years to come, we will have put arrangements in place that will enable the knowledge base of work with offenders to be developed and be passed on to a new generation.

Season's Greetings

Finally, on behalf of the Trust and its staff, we extend Season's Greetings to all of you that work with us to achieve these results and look forward to an even more successful 2013.

David Chantler,
Chief Executive Officer
Twitter: @ceowestmercia



New Police & Crime Commissioner

Independent, Bill Longmore, has been elected as the first West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC). He took up post on 22 November and is responsible for holding the force to account.

The introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) signals a big change to how the police are governed. They replace Police Authorities and are responsible for setting priorities for their police force, overseeing the budget and appointing the Chief Constable.

A retired businessman from Shrewsbury, 74 year old Mr Longmore also spent 30 years working for Staffordshire Police, finishing as a Superintendent. His priorities in his new role include looking at new ways to rehabilitate offenders, developing partnerships with voluntary bodies, representing the people's voices about how to tackle crime and engaging better with young people.

He said: "My intention is to spend as much time as possible in communities working with, and speaking with people to find out their true views about policing and how we can effectively prevent crime and disorder together."



Pictured: Bill Longmore, West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner

Adult Attendance Centres



West Mercia Probation Trust has commissioned Adult Attendance Centres, giving the courts a new punitive option for offenders.

The centres are being run by our strategic partner, YSS, from their Vocational Training Centre in Carden Street, Worcester and they, in turn, are working in partnership with Willowdene to provide a centre in Shropshire.

An Attendance Centre Requirement can be stand alone or combined with other community order requirements. The courts can also make an Attendance Centre Requirement for beach of other community orders.

The centres are aimed at 18-24 year olds. Courts can impose between 12-36 hours to be completed in sessions up to a maximum of three hours on alternate Saturdays.

Offenders are expected to travel to the centre in their own time (up

to a total of 90 minutes in each direction) and at their own expense. Although public transport fares may be reimbursed in cases of hardship.

Attendees will be expected to take part in a range of activities linked with a responsible lifestyle. The curriculum covers education, training and employment needs and offender focused work, including a specific restorative justice perspective. It also covers a range of vocational skills such as horticulture, motor vehicle maintenance and construction. Each three hour session will be broken down into three elements so an attendee can expect to attend three different sessions each Saturday giving a structured and meaningful programme within a disciplined environment.

WMPT Takes Shares in Clarent

West Mercia Probation Trust has recently partnered with eight other Probation Trusts and Excalibur, its current commercial service provider, to form a new Community Interest Company called Clarent Commerce CIC.

The new company will be in a position to provide commissioning and commercial support across the whole of the public sector with all of the profits it makes being distributed to local voluntary sector led projects nominated by the nine Probation Trusts. Excalibur will hold 51% of the shares in Clarent with the other 49% being equally distributed between the nine Trusts.

Ian Clarke, Excalibur's Managing Director, said: "By inviting the Trust to take a stake in Clarent, we are able to build on our existing commitment to support community based rehabilitative services in West Mercia by introducing a financial support mechanism. It also enables Clarent to promote local commissioning, whilst at the same time collaborating with other statutory organisations to explore ways of increasing purchasing leverage".

This latest initiative further enhances West Mercia Probation Trust's reputation as an innovator and leading strategic thinker in the probation sector. The link with Excalibur and the eight other participating Trusts increases the opportunities to collaborate and explore new ways of working to ensure probation services across West Mercia increasingly influence local and national policy.

Working with Willowdene

West Mercia Probation Trust's partnership with Willowdene Farm goes from strength to strength with the development of new and exciting initiatives this year. Including a Social Enterprise to develop day care provision, a Residential Intervention Programme and plans to work with women offenders in a residential and day care capacity.

RITE Social Enterprise

Willowdene has established RITE (Relational, Inspiring, Trusting, Engaging) Social Enterprise which provides day care provision such as the new Specified Activity Requirement and Adult Attendance Centre (see page 3). Students are actively involved on the farm growing, harvesting and retailing produce and the proceeds subsidise future initiatives, thus ensuring its long term sustainability.

Specified Activity Requirement

A new Specified Activity Requirement called the 'Care Farm Skills Training Programme' has been developed. The aim of the programme is to get offenders 'work ready'. It offers a range of learning opportunities including mechanics, animal welfare, forestry operations and welding. Offenders spend 25 days at the farm spread over a 14 week period and should achieve at least two qualifications by the end of the programme. It also provides a therapeutic input and engagement in job search and training opportunities together with work experience in a 'real world' setting.



The results have been excellent. Since it began in May, eight groups have gone through the programme. From a total of 50 offenders that started the programme 80% have successfully completed it. Many of these have now gone into employment, training and further education.

Matt Home, Director, Willowdene said: "Not only is this a deprivation of the students' time but it is hard work. They have to come along and get stuck into every qualification on offer, getting the most out of the experience and getting that work ethic. We hope that this is the end of their offending lives and we want to help give them the skills to move into a purposeful lifestyle".

Residential Intervention Programme

A new Residential Intervention Programme has been developed using funding from Shropshire, Telford and Worcestershire Local Authority Drug and Alcohol Teams. Together they fund a total of 15 six week residential placements at the farm.

The programme taps into the success of Willowdene's residential rehabilitation programme, albeit in a much shorter format. It is available to individuals who have been on day placements at the farm and have been identified as needing extra help to ensure a long lasting change to their lives.

Women Offenders

Advanced plans are in place to create a Women's Residential Programme. Funding is being sought through the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) to pay for placements which represent a significant saving on a prison place. The aim is to reduce the use of custody for women by 50%.

In addition, a pilot for a day care programme for women, through the AIM partnership is underway. This is a voluntary 10 week placement for two days a week specifically designed to get women ready for work and achieve qualifications.



Graduation

At the end of each Care Farm Skills Training Programme a special graduation ceremony is held to recognise the students achievements. Tricia Bradbury, JP and Chair of the Bromsgrove and Redditch Bench, attended a presentation, she said: "I have used the Specified Activity in court so it is really good to come along and see the place and meet the people. As a Magistrate, protecting the public is our primary concern but we also want to sentence the individual to something that is going to achieve the biggest success so that we don't see them in court again. Coming here today it is so evident that this new initiative is working well".

Tom's Story

Tom left an unhappy home life aged 16. For the next few years he stayed with relatives and friends and had nowhere to call home. He was in and out of jobs and didn't stick at anything. He felt he had no real purpose in life and spent most of his time and money on drinking and drugs. He started off on cannabis but as he began to feel more and more low he took amphetamines too and his drinking continued to escalate.

Aged 22, Tom had two convictions for burglary and he decided it was time to change. He talks about how his current sentence has helped him to do this.

"I got a Community Order with a Specified Activity at Willowdene. During my time there I was offered the Residential Intervention Programme where I would live at the farm for six weeks and get help. I knew this was my chance to make changes to my life, but I was worried I wasn't strong enough to do it.

I was wrong, it has been the best thing I could have done. Everyone has been great here and really supportive, it felt like a family. I couldn't believe how friendly the people are here compared to what I knew and they are willing to help you. It has given me routine and set tasks and goals and proper food for a change. The therapy has helped me look at my issues and understand what I am all about.

I have cried here, something I never thought I would do in this situation, but it has been a relief and it has set me free inside. I got a real feel-good factor and the highs I felt on the farm replaced the highs of the drugs.

I have finished at the farm now and have left with a different attitude. I have a CV and some qualifications and have discovered I am quite good in the kitchen. I am living with my Nan for a while until I get somewhere to live. My probation officer has put me in touch with people to help sort this and help with finding work or training. I am much more motivated and positive about the future now and would really like to go to college to do construction or cooking and maybe some voluntary work to keep me busy".



Working with the University of Worcester

West Mercia Probation Trust has been working with the University of Worcester to explore developmental opportunities. This has resulted in the following partnership projects commencing.

Firstly, the Trust will host observational placements for trainee mental health nurses with the first placement starting shortly.

Secondly, the development of a Post Graduate Certificate called, 'Enhancing Professional Practice: Working with Offenders'. This is a professional development programme for practitioners working with offenders. It aims to up-skill practitioners through post graduate study. The Trust has committed to supporting six probation officers to undertake this certificate during 2012/2014.

Finally, a proposal for an Applied Criminology Degree was submitted to the University's Academic Portfolio Committee this year. If



successful, planning will commence with a view to the course being available from September 2014. The Trust has agreed to support this by offering practice placements.

David Chantler, Chief Executive, said: "After many years of centralised training I am pleased that the local probation service is back into academic studies and that

we can meet the needs of our own staff in this innovative partnership with Worcester University."

"With the re-emergence of professional judgement as a key component in the probation officer's day-to-day work, this rigorous theoretical underpinning becomes more valuable than ever for successful probation practice".

Staff Awards 2012

Members of staff were recognised for their achievements at a special awards ceremony.

The prestigious High Sheriffs' Award went to Dick Schwab, Probation Service Officer, Worcester. Dick has been a consistent thread of high quality service to the courts both personally and through his contribution in the development of others working in the court setting. The runner-up was Michele Hatfield, Assistant Chief Officer and AIM Project Co-ordinator.

The High Sheriffs' Team Award went to the Victim Liaison Unit

which has demonstrated the reality of West Mercia's commitment to victims by consistently out-performing national performance targets. The team runners-up were the Integrated Offender Management Team at Telford.

Penelope Lewis, High Sheriff of Worcestershire and John Abram, High Sheriff of Shropshire, presented the awards.

The Board Performance Award 2012 went to Telford Local Delivery Unit and Chief Executive's Commendations went to Kate Bramford, Jane Lewis, Andy Foster and Stan Reeves.



Pictured above: Dick Schwab with the High Sheriffs' Award 2012

Award Winning AIM Project

Congratulations to the AIM Partnership for winning the ESF Gender Equality Leader Award 2012 for its work with women offenders.

The AIM Partnership (Active Inclusion into Mainstreaming) is a European Social Fund project to develop innovative approaches to supporting offenders into employment and enterprise.

The award reflects the work carried out by West Mercia Probation Trust and the AIM partners in their various pilot activities working with women offenders. The partners involved were YSS and Willowdene in West Mercia and Ubique in Warwickshire.

Michele Hatfield, AIM Partnership Project Co-ordinator, said: "We recognise that community services to women offenders are not universally available and, through our pilot projects, we have developed approaches that are both innovative and sustainable".

Representatives from the partnership went along to an awards ceremony at Birmingham NEC in November to collect the award. The award was presented to Rebecca, an ex-offender, who has taken part in a women's programme herself and now works for Ubique delivering the programme.



Pictured: above: Rebecca and AIM Partners

Launch of West Mercia Youth Offending Service

A new West Mercia Youth Offending Service, to support young offenders and reduce youth crime, was launched on 1 October. This will bring major changes to the way youth offending services are organised and delivered in the area.

Building on the existing strengths of the former Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and Worcestershire & Herefordshire Youth Offending Services, the new service aims to improve efficiency, improve outcomes for young offenders and create significant savings.

It will be managed day-to-day by West Mercia Probation Trust and headed up by Keith Barham, previous Head of Service for Worcestershire and Herefordshire YOS. The new arrangement will give the new Police and Crime Commissioner a West Mercia focus to youth offending.

Probation is keen to capitalise on the real opportunities this provides to work with young adult offenders, across the current arbitrary change of agency from youth to adult at 18 - which is also the age of peak offending. Under these new arrangements YOS and probation will explore the development of a transition service for 15-21 year olds.

David Chantler, Chief Executive, West Mercia Probation Trust, said: "My enthusiasm for this project is driven by an observation that in 35 years of working in probation, I have known very few people who started offending as adults. If we can stop troubled youths from becoming troublesome adults it would enhance their lives and



Pictured: Keith Barham, Head of Service, West Mercia Youth Offending Service

prospects immensely and free up resources in a range of adult services to be re-invested in early interventions. That would be an innovation of which to be proud".

The new YOS will deliver statutory core services for young offenders such as the preparation of court reports. This core service will be supported by commissioned activities which do not have to be carried out directly by a YOS. Some of the commissioned activities will be statutory, such as reparation activities and others will be discretionary, such as mentoring.

The new Head of Service, Keith Barham, said: "The new arrangements will allow for clear pathways to be developed into a range of other services and opens the potential for integrated working with children and family services across West Mercia".

By the end of March 2013 there will be five teams under the umbrella of the new West Mercia wide service, one each for Telford, Shropshire, Herefordshire, North Worcestershire and South Worcestershire.