

# National Probation Service Bulletin



Issue 32

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## 087/05 INTRODUCING EPIC – ELECTRONIC PROBATION INFORMATION CENTRE

An intranet for the National Probation Service named the Electronic Probation Information Centre (EPIC) will be launched during October 2005. The intranet – which is the equivalent to an internal website – will be available to all staff in the 42 NPS Areas.

### EPIC Features:

**Staff Directory** – Containing as much information as exists in the Service on staff, their contact details and where they work. You can edit and update your details via the homepage from your desk at any time.

**Job Vacancies** – All the NPS job vacancies can be found in one place with staff able to subscribe to a jobs email alert service.

**Probation Circulars** – Issued since 2001.

**Library** – An electronic documents library which will act as a searchable ‘virtual’ probation library.

**Multimap** – A location finder which contains every Probation address and can be used for UK postcode searches and printable street maps.

**For Assistive Technology users EPIC’s features include:**

- Skip to content option
- Text only option
- Change contrast
- Print friendly format option

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EPIC will not affect existing Area intranets as they will be linked to EPIC via the ‘My Area’ link on the homepage and top bar. Probation Areas currently without a local intranet will be able to use EPIC to create a “micro” site of their own.

Consultation has taken place with staff throughout the development of EPIC to establish requirements. However, to keep it up to date and relevant we need your feedback. Once you’ve had a look at EPIC, let us know of documents or links that you think should be added or where improvements can be made.

### FURTHER INFORMATION:

Please email feedback to:

**Email:** [EPIC@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:EPIC@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk)

## 088/05 DISABLED STAFF SUPPORT NETWORK

Reminder – National Disabled Staff Support Network (NDSSN) conference will take place on 3 and 4 November 2005.

The Disabled Staff Support Network still has some places available for its inaugural conference. Please feel free to contact the Corporate Diversity Team with any queries you may have about this event. Areas may send more than one delegate if they wish.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION:**

**Venue:** Hayes Conference Centre in Derbyshire

**Date:** 3 and 4 November

**Contact:**

[disabledconference.nps@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:disabledconference.nps@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk)

**Cost:** Free (Areas to meet travel & subsistence costs)

## 089/05 OFFENDER MANAGEMENT NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE (OMNI)

The new IT (OMNI) contract has been awarded to Steria Limited subject to contract.

The contract provides Information and Communications Technology (ICT) services to the National Probation Service. It follows the contract with Steria from 2002 which provided the NPS with STEPS1. The OMNI contract will provide enhanced services and can adapt to the evolving needs throughout its lifetime.

Under the OMNI contract, Steria will provide ICT services to the National Probation Service's headquarters (NPD) and the 42 Probation Areas.

The OMNI contract will initially run over a period of six-and-a-half years with the option of extending to a maximum term of 10 years.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION:**

**Email:** [OMNI@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:OMNI@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk)

**Tel:** 020 7217 8825

## 090/05 LIAISON BETWEEN SENTENCERS AND THE NOMS/PROBATION

NOMS has agreed with the Senior Presiding Judge, Lord Justice Thomas, a protocol containing terms of reference for meetings to be held regularly between sentencers and probation court staff. The meetings should take place at Bench, Crown Court and area level, as already happens in some areas. They will ensure that there is dialogue with sentencers around key issues such as the Criminal Justice Act 2003 and court work. The forums are welcomed by the Magistrates' Association and replace and improve upon the pre-2001 Probation Liaison Committees. Details of the arrangements are contained in PC73/2005, to which the protocol is attached as an annex. Ruth Allan, Head of the Rebalancing Sentencing Team in NOMS has also written to Chief Officers, offering support to relevant staff in getting these meetings up and running.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION:**

**Email:** [Mark.May12@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Mark.May12@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk)

**Tel:** 020 70235 1763

## 091/05 MATERIALS TO SUPPORT THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE ACT 2003 – SENTENCING CHANGES

Printed copies of the National Guide for Criminal Justice Act (CJA) 2003 – Public Protection Sentences have now been sent to area communication contacts for distribution to staff working with dangerous offenders, adding to the stock of material produced to support the introduction of the new sentences under the Criminal Justice Act 2003.

Other materials include a National Implementation Guide for Community Sentencing Provisions, a Pocket Guide for Probation staff, offender leaflets for the new Community Order, Suspended Sentence Order and each of the new Requirements which make up the Orders, plus various training materials. In addition, the Bench Guide for magistrates issued in May includes information about the new sentences and a Bench

Manual for judges is due to be published at the end of October.

A full list of available CJA 2003 materials, the languages and formats in which they have been produced, and reordering details, is being finalised and will be emailed to NPS communications contacts and CJA NPS Area leads in early October.

**FURTHER INFORMATION:**

**Email:** [cja.sip@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:cja.sip@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk)

**Email:** [NPSpublications@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:NPSpublications@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk)

## 092/05 ROLE BOUNDARIES AND WIDER MODERNISATION ISSUES

Arising from discussions between the Home Secretary, the Probation Service trades unions and the NPD, work is in hand to develop a joint Modernisation Project Board to contribute to the performance agenda for the Service.

The Home Secretary has agreed that joint work should continue on the development of proposals that might create a workforce “able to provide the necessary flexibility and efficiency to meet the current and future demands for the effective community supervision of offenders”.

Trades unions have submitted proposals on the basis that cooperation and partnership offer a more effective basis for delivering a high performing Probation Service than contestability and competition.

It is recognised that many Probation Areas are reviewing their current practice on role boundaries in the light of changing working practices required to meet the needs of the offender management model and the Criminal Justice Act 2003.

We aim nationally to get further information to Areas on a way forward on role boundaries as soon as possible. In the meantime it is hoped that Probation Areas and unions at a local level will be working together on these matters and it is hoped that Areas will not seek to introduce any further change to job descriptions pending the issue of this further advice.

**FURTHER INFORMATION:**

**Email:** [Roger.McGarva2@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Roger.McGarva2@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk)

## 093/05 MANCHESTER PROBATION AREA PRESS COVERAGE

Offenders carrying out Unpaid Work in Manchester are involved in a number of schemes to make the city a better place to live, work and visit.

**Bloomin’ Marvellous** – Work has been carried out to make the gardens at Harry Piggott Court in Blackley a sheltered housing scheme. Lawns and shrubbery areas have been tended regularly, flowers planted, garden furniture maintained and the area spruced up generally.

**One the Street** – The Unpaid Work Unit stepped in when funds ran out to carry out improvements on Victoria Avenue in Blackley. Undergrowth has been cleared and railings painted.

**School Transformed** – A lick of paint has helped to brighten up Crosssacres Primary School in Wythenshawe thanks to Manchester’s Unpaid Work Unit. Offenders and staff supervisors have painted the school inside and outside including all of the corridor areas and classrooms. The work took over 12 months to complete and also involved making planters and tending the gardens.

**Building Bridges in the Community** – Offenders have been working alongside park staff, managing Heaton Park, to make the facility a better place for all users. They have been busy building bridges, repairing paths, putting up fences, painting out buildings and clearing overgrowth to make access to all areas of the park easier.

**FURTHER INFORMATION:**

**Email:** [melanie.kettle@manchester.probation.gsx.gov.uk](mailto:melanie.kettle@manchester.probation.gsx.gov.uk)

**Email:** [donna.fury@manchester.probation.gsx.gov.uk](mailto:donna.fury@manchester.probation.gsx.gov.uk)

## 094/05 WALES QUALITY AWARD PRIZE

The Wales Quality Centre held their annual Award Prize Ceremony at the BBC Studio in Llandaff, Cardiff on 15 September 2005.

The National Probation Service in Wales and South Wales was awarded the Public Sector Prize.

### FURTHER INFORMATION:

Email: [Jackie.John@dyfed-powys.probation.gsx.gov.uk](mailto:Jackie.John@dyfed-powys.probation.gsx.gov.uk)

## 095/05 HOME SECRETARY SPEECH

On 19 September Charles Clarke delivered the Prison Reform Trust Annual Lecture: *Where Next for Penal Policy?*

The speech was circulated to communications contacts in areas on 20 September. The key points mentioned in the speech for probation staff included:

- Reducing re-offending will be at the core of the Home Office strategy.
- Each and every offender needs a constructive package of support and interventions implemented well.
- Work needs to be in close partnerships with a wide range of statutory, voluntary and community organisations.
- The skills and professionalism of staff needs to be supported.
- The prison estate needs investment to reflect a new approach (i.e. an emphasis on “community prisons”).

Charles Clarke underlined the fact that people who were the least educated and least healthy were those that remain in the Criminal Justice System. He indicated that Probation Boards will change to become providers of whatever services are commissioned from them. A consultation paper will be published setting out proposals for Probation in more detail. The section aimed at sentencers exhorted them to be flexible and positive in their use of community sentences.

This was the first major speech by the Home Secretary to outline his long-term approach to NOMS and Probation.

### FURTHER INFORMATION:

A full copy of the speech can be downloaded from:

[www.probation.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.probation.homeoffice.gov.uk)

Or requests can be emailed to:

Email: [NPSBULLETIN@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:NPSBULLETIN@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk)

## 096/05 POLICE FORCE STRUCTURES

Last year the Home Secretary commissioned Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) to examine the issue of force structures in England and Wales. Denis O'Connor's report, *Closing the Gap – A review of the 'Fitness for Purpose' of the current structure of policing in England and Wales*, has been published. The report concluded that smaller police services were less likely to protect reliably the public from terrorism and organised crime. A consultation paper will be issued based on the report and will seek views on the amalgamation of smaller police services. If accepted, other criminal justice services like Probation are likely to follow in order to preserve coterminosity.

### FURTHER INFORMATION:

The report is available at:

[www.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/hmic.htm](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/hmic.htm)

## 097/05 EVENTS

Tribal Education-CTAD, commissioned by the Offender Learning and Skills Unit (OLSU), is having a Speaking and Listening Skills Conference for life teachers and support staff to disseminate findings and share new teacher support materials developed during 2004/05.

### FURTHER INFORMATION:

**Venue:** The British Library, 96 Euston Road, London

**Date:** 14 October

**Contact:** [sophiea@ctad.co.uk](mailto:sophiea@ctad.co.uk)

Developing Practice Seminar, hosted jointly by the HMPS Women's Team and the National Probation Directorate, is aimed at informing strategic managers about current developments in practice and delivery of services to meet the needs of women offenders in custody and the community.

**FURTHER INFORMATION:**

**Venue:** The Civil Service Recreation Centre, London

**Date:** 14 October

**Contact:** [gini.manuel@hmpps.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:gini.manuel@hmpps.gsi.gov.uk)

**Contact:** [caroline.stewart@hmpps.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:caroline.stewart@hmpps.gsi.gov.uk)

The Young Witnesses in Court Conference, facilitated by Nottinghamshire Victim Support, will highlight the particular needs of young witnesses in court and provide practical solutions.

**FURTHER INFORMATION:**

**Venue:** The Galleries of Justice, Nottingham

**Date:** 17 November

**Contact:** [ywitness@vsnotts.org](mailto:ywitness@vsnotts.org)

**098/05 NPD DIARY**

October

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Children's Reference Group, Horseferry House, London
- 4<sup>th</sup> Community Confidence Seminar, London Probation Area, Great Peter Street
- 6<sup>th</sup> Offending Behaviour Programme Board, Horseferry House, London
- 6<sup>th</sup> Workshop on Offender Learner Journey, City Inn Westminster
- 12<sup>th</sup> NPD Public Protection Network, Horseferry House, London
- 17<sup>th</sup> Publication date of the MAPPA reports
- 17<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> Inside Justice Week
- 18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> Living Leadership in Transition, Wyboston Lakes, Bedfordshire
- 19<sup>th</sup> Kent Community Service Conference, Bridgewood Manor Hotel, Chatram, Kent
- 24<sup>th</sup> Chairs Conference, One Whitehall Place, Whitehall, London

- 25<sup>th</sup> MAPPA Responsible Authority National Steering Group, Horseferry House, London
- 28<sup>th</sup> Senior Management Team Awayday, venue tbc

**099/05 ISSUED RECENTLY**

**Probation Circulars 2005:**

PC74 Criminal Justice Act 2003 – Activity Requirements

PC75 Revitalising Health & Safety: Phase Two

**Other Publications:**

- NPS leaflet – Who we are, What we do
- MAPPA leaflet – Preventing Serious Harm
- NPS Performance Report 17
- Interventions News Issue 21
- Interventions News IAPS Update
- Workforce Information Report Issue 7
- Prisons & Probation Ombudsman Annual Report
- HMIC Police Force Structures Report
- CJS in Brief Issue 5

**NOMS Publications:**

- Please visit: [www.noms.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.noms.homeoffice.gov.uk)
- NOMS Property Services (Non-Custodial) Annual Report 2004/05
- Grant Funding for Voluntary and Community Organisation 2006/07
- The Role of the Voluntary and Community Sector in NOMS
- Action Plan for the Development of Effectiveness Partnership with the Voluntary and Community Sector 2005-07

**TO SUBMIT ITEMS FOR THE NPS BULLETIN, OR TO BE ADDED TO THE DISTRIBUTION LIST CONTACT:**  
[NPSBULLETIN@HOMEOFFICE.GSI.GOV.UK](mailto:NPSBULLETIN@HOMEOFFICE.GSI.GOV.UK)