

UNCLASSIFIED

National Probation Service Bulletin



Issue 100

4 April 2008

The Bulletin has been improved for easier on-screen reading. It now summarises new content placed on Epic (<http://npsintranet.probation.gsi.gov.uk/index.htm>) in the previous week and significant messages that have been circulated on the Chief Officer gateway. Articles can now be read by either scrolling down the page or by clicking the titles below:

- 079/08 [Ministry of Justice New Structure](#)
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079/08 MINISTRY OF JUSTICE NEW STRUCTURE

The new Ministry of Justice structure takes effect Tuesday 1 April. All relevant documents, including the new organisational structure and a letter to all NOMS staff from Phil Wheatley are now available on Epic.

Issued to Chief Officers & Chairs via the Chief Officer Gateway – 31 March

Epic: Navigate from *Home > News & Comms > News > MoJ New Structure*

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080/08 UPDATE – NOMS DIRECTOR GENERAL: PHIL WHEATLEY

1 April 2008 marked the official start of the new Prison and Probation headquarters. The organisation is called NOMS, though frontline staff will continue to work for the Prison and Probation Services which continue to keep the same titles. While I don't expect this has had much immediate impact in Probation Areas or in Prisons, it was an important first step in bringing together NOMS and Prison Service headquarters structures. It will help us to streamline the HQ organisation, saving money while creating greater join up of the work of the Prison and Probation Services. I want headquarters to really add value to our work with offenders.

We now have a good understanding of how the new headquarters will be structured (see chart on Epic). The Directors have now been confirmed and we are waiting for formal approval of Agency status. This will be a key development as it comes with a framework agreement which outlines how the organisation will operate and what

freedom it has to invest and take decisions. I hope we will receive this shortly and will publish the framework document in full when it is available.

On the probation side we need to ensure that we continue to focus our efforts on dangerous or prolific offenders. I've been impressed and grateful for the work of probation staff in helping ensure that only those who really need to go into custody are recommended to do so. The evidence is quite clear that community sentences have a generally more positive effect in reducing reconvictions than short custodial sentences. The prison population has recently reached concerning levels and although prisons are still under considerable operational pressure we've recently steadied the unexpected rise in short term prisoners. It is important that this work continues. The underlying trend in longer term imprisonment is upwards, and though we are building and opening new accommodation quickly the balance between available accommodation and population will remain tight.

The way that staff of both Services interact with offenders is also crucial in making a difference. On both sides of the prisons walls we need to make sure we're engaging properly with offenders and that we're making the right kinds of relationships with them. You don't get good results with offenders unless you really connect with them, win their respect and help them to address their problems. I'm clear that our daily work must be meaningful and not just a 'box ticking' exercise.

Issued to Chief Officers via the Chief Officer Gateway – 4 April

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081/08 NEW PROBATION TRUSTS

Six new probation trusts have started work as part of the government's drive to further reduce re-offending and increase protection for the public.

Trust status, introduced through the Offender Management Act 2007, will allow probation services more independence to focus their work on local communities and reduce re-offending while providing the same high level of service to the courts and oversight of offenders.

From the 1 April, as the six Probation Boards become Probation Trusts, they are:

- Dyfed Powys
- Humberside
- Leicestershire & Rutland
- Merseyside
- South Wales
- West Mercia

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082/08 PAROLE BOARD SPONSORSHIP

The Parole Board for England and Wales is now sponsored by the Ministry of Justice.

On 1 February the Court of Appeal ruled that, as a consequence of its current sponsorship arrangements, the Parole Board was not sufficiently independent of the executive to meet the requirements of the European Convention on Human Rights.

From 1 April sponsorship of the Parole Board will be transferred from NOMS to the Access to Justice Group in the Ministry of Justice. Although responsibility for sponsorship of the Parole Board will remain within the Ministry, there will be a clear separation between responsibility for the Board's sponsorship and responsibility for the management of offenders.

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083/08 CHANGE OF NAME FOR THE PROBATION BOARDS' ASSOCIATION

On the 1 April 2008, as six local Probation Boards become Probation Trusts, the PBA is changing its name to the Probation Association.

The Probation Association is the national employers' organisation, working with and on behalf of probation boards and trusts. It is their collective national voice, shaping and influencing opinions, policy and practice and promoting the work of probation services in the delivery of justice and community safety. It provides support to boards and trusts to achieve the best in local governance, employment practice, commissioning and service delivery. The Probation Association conducts national negotiations with the probation trade unions on pay and conditions of service and advises individual boards and trusts on employment policy and practice.

The Probation Association represents the interests of its members to government, parliament and the media as well as developing strategic alliances with other organisations in order to inform national policy and to promote public confidence. It also works closely with the Association of Chief Executives and Chief Officers of Probation (ACECOP).

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084/08 APPOINTMENTS

- Leslie Robinson – has been appointed as a Board Chair for Cheshire Probation as of 1 April 2008
- Hilary Tucker has been appointed as a Board Chair for Greater Manchester Probation, as of 8 April 2008

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085/08 ISSUED RECENTLY

Probation Circulars 2008:

PC05 Determining Unacceptable Absences

Issued 28 March

The National Standards for the Management of Offenders 2007 issued in September 2007 provides the relevant guidance to Offender Managers in relation to determining whether an offender's absence is acceptable or unacceptable.

PC04 Uncompleted Requirements in Community Orders

Issued 27 March

This guidance expands upon that already provided within the National Implementation Guide for the Criminal Justice Act 2003 community sentence provisions: Edition 2 version 5F issued in May 2005. The relevant section of the Implementation Guide is attached to this document as an appendix.

Under the Criminal Justice Act 2003 an order can only last for the term specified. If a requirement remains outstanding at the end of that term it cannot then be legally completed. The offender manager is responsible for taking action when a requirement is unlikely to be completed before the end of the order. For unpaid work the offender manager should apply to the court to extend the order, unless there are grounds for revocation or amendment. The application should not seek to extend the order beyond the maximum three year length of a community order. For all other requirements the offender manager should apply for revocation or amendment according to the circumstances of the case. The appendix outlines the relevant procedures.

OASys Messages to Areas – Via Epic:

Message 16 08 e-OASys Release 4.2.4a T1, T2 & Production Deployment

Issued 28 March

Message 15 08 e-OASys Connectivity Problems

Issued 28 March

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