

## Veterans in the Criminal Justice System

A survey published by the National Association of Probation Officers (NAPO) in 2009 found that approximately 12,000 former HM armed forces personnel were under the supervision of the Probation Service in England and Wales, either on community sentences or Licence.

Meetings have now been held by NAPO and the All Party Justice Unions Parliamentary Group attended by representatives from a number of service charities and criminal justice agencies, including the Police, Probation and the Prison Service. At the last meeting in October, attended by Kevan Jones, Minister for Veterans, a number of recommendations were put forward including the creation of a Veterans' Support Officer (VSO) post in each of the 42 Probation Areas/Trusts.

Alan Lilly, a Probation Service Officer from Cheshire Probation Area, is the first VSO in post. Alan, himself a veteran with 18 years' service in the 13<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> Royal Hussars (now The Light Dragoons), joined the Probation Service in 2002 after five years with the Prison Service.

He's created the VSO post at the Warrington Offender Management Unit where he is based to assist colleagues, who have identified ex-service offenders, with interviewing those offenders to establish what their issues and circumstances are and to signpost them towards ex-service support

agencies if required.

Alan says, "Often veterans who find themselves on Probation feel isolated and marginalised, and if they have other problems such as homelessness, alcohol, drugs or mental health issues, finding themselves in trouble with the law is often the end result. The sooner we can identify veterans in the system the quicker we can get them signposted to support which may help reduce the opportunities to re-offend."

Alan is now networking with local service support agencies to help re-enforce the links necessary to signpost veterans.

He explains, "If we can create a model in the community sentence path, similar to the Veterans in Custody Support provided at HMP Everthorpe, then expanding the VSO role may well help steer veteran offenders away from re-offending and therefore reduce the numbers in custody".

Neil, a veteran who served with the Royal Air Force in Northern Ireland and the Gulf, began to drink heavily after a serious motorbike accident and was medically discharged. Neil has found the transition to 'civvy street' very difficult and he has self-harmed and tried to take his own life several times. "My appointments with Alan at Probation have been very helpful and I have been able to discuss my worries and problems. I am



**Alan Lilly and Tony Tickle, Warrington colleague, Probation Service Officers who are also Veterans**

now going to a respite home in Spring where I hope to have my condition treated".

Tom was medically discharged from the Army and reports, "Alan's advice to see the British Legion has helped to speed up my search to find a place of my own. They have also offered to help me get some furniture once I've got a place".

Steven Griffiths, the local Regional Welfare Officer for Combat Stress, fully endorses the development of the VSO post. He said, "Referrals made to us so far by Alan may not have been identified until much later in the criminal justice system had it not been for his and his colleagues' early intervention."

Alan is now waiting to hear from Kevan Jones, the Minister for Veterans, who agreed to speak to Jack Straw, the Minister for Justice, about officially piloting the Veterans' Support Officer post across the Probation Service. For more information contact Alan on tel: 01925 650613 or e-mail: Alan.Lilly@cheshire.probation.gsi.gov.uk

## Corrections and clarifications

The article on the 2008 staff conference in the last edition of EPIC reported Professor Mike Hough, President of the British Society of Criminology and Director of the Institute for Criminal Policy Research at Kings' College London, as stating in his address that punishment drives down crime, that crime is rising and thus tougher punishment is required. As Professor Hough says, he has actually spent the last ten years arguing exactly the opposite!

He explains, "What I was trying to do was to explain why so many people think - erroneously in my view - that

court sentences are too lenient. It is pretty clear that there have been large falls in crime since the mid-1990s. It is equally clear from the British Crime Survey that two thirds of the population are unaware of this: year-on-year roughly two thirds of the population think that crime is rising. It is this belief in rising crime, in my view, that explains, at least in part, why people think that the courts are too soft. Many are straightforward deterrence theorists, who believe that if crime is rising then this is a consequence of sentencing practice; and they believe that crime is rising because

that is what the media tells them.

If we are to have more rational sentencing policy, it is important for criminal justice professionals to work together to dismantle these misconceptions - and Probation has an important role to play here. We need to get across to the public that increasing the *severity* of punishment will make only a marginal difference to crime rates. Increasing the *certainty* of punishment will have more of an impact, but what we actually need is a co-ordinated approach, which gives equal weight to social, economic and situational measures".

## Qualifying Staff

Congratulations to the following who have passed their **Diploma in Probation Studies**:

Kelly Hadden, Janine Flitton, Richard Foulkes, Benjamin McCrorie, David Primmer, Sophia Sawula, David Teese and Timothy Thorne. With the exception of Janine Flitton and Richard Foulkes, all remain working for the Area as Probation Officers.

**NVQ Level 3 in Working with Offending Behaviour** has been achieved by:

Kate Beech, Charlotte Brown, Karen Dentith, Charlotte Fox, Samantha Green, Michelle Hallett and Clare Hammersley.

Diane Dibbert, Nicola Whitby, Thomas Whittaker and David Wilton gained the **PSO Foundation Award**.



Attendees at the regional Awards ceremony in Preston

The **A1 Assessor Award** was achieved by Janina Miklaszewicz, Carole Pritchard and Sue Ramsdale.

Paul Devenny gained the **Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector Award**.

Christine Evans and John Davidson, Assistant Chief Officers, both gained **Level 5 Management Awards**.

Staff were invited to a regional Awards ceremony in November which took place in

Preston, organised by the North West Consortium and attended by Leslie Robinson, Board Chair, who presented the Awards and Caroline Blackham, Practice Development Manager.

Leslie said, "I recognise and applaud all the hard work and commitment that has gone into achieving these awards. These qualifications are an important part of a continuing imperative to provide staff with the skills and experience to carry out their roles".

## Rewarding Staff and Recognising Long Service

Staff members in receipt of a Quarterly Employee Award (and their nominators) together with successful Staff Suggestion Winners joined the Board Award Winners and Long Service recipients at the fifth annual Reward and Recognition event. This was held in October at the Wild Boar Hotel near Beeston.

The event was organised by the Reward and Recognition Group chaired by Board Member, Jane Miller. Other Group members are Clem Esegbona, Liz Gaughran, Clare Hammersley, Andrea Hamlett, Derek Hughes, Kirsty Jones, Tina Ledwith, Penny McClelland, Tracy Smith and Nick Williams. The ceremony was conducted by Jane Miller and Leslie Robinson, Board Chair.

The **Employee of the Year Award** was



**Employee of the Year**

presented to **Chris Judge**, formerly Probation Officer, Cheshire East (Macclesfield) Offender Management Unit, now temporary Senior Probation Officer for the Drugs Intervention Programme, which recognised his exceptional achievements with regard to the Macclesfield Alcohol Treatment Pilot Scheme.

The **Board Award** for the outstanding team performance of the year, an award judged by Board Members, was awarded to the Probation



**Board Award Winners**

Service Officer Foundation Team - **Andrea Hamlett, Kirsty Jones** and **Clare Burrell**, nominated by Caroline Blackham. The Board recognised the outstanding work done by the team to fill a well-evidenced gap in training for new entrants to the Probation Service at Band 3, Probation Service Officer level and applauded the extensive programme of work to support those staff.



**Quarterly Employee Award Winners**

### LONG SERVICE

**25 - 30 years:** Val Norris and Christine Tomlinson.

**20 - 25 years:** Sheila Dodd and Lorna Edmondson.

**15 - 20 years:** Michael Boliver, Julie Gibbons, Christine McDonagh, Carole Pritchard, Carmille Rose, Pam Anderson, Pat Bowe, Dianne Lowe and Karen Taylor.

**10 - 15 years:** Maureen Benbrook, Marie Orrell, John Pazio, John Pike, Colin Richardson, Simon Stone, Jan Sykes, Kim Thornden and Sue Wyatt.



**Long Service Recipients**

### Charity News

#### Children in Need



Grenville Millington and the Upton & Broughton WeightWatchers® group walked along a stretch of the Chester canal from Telford's Warehouse to the Cheshire Cat raising £125.

Bunbury House carwash raised £90.

#### Afghanistan Shoebox Appeal

David Teese received enough contributions to send 97 boxes. He reports that the troops were overwhelmed by all the parcels received, making Christmas a very special time for them.

# Quarterly Employee Awards

**Congratulations to the three staff members nominated for a Quarterly Employee Award for exceptional work during Quarter 4 of Year 5 (April – June 2009) and the six staff members successfully nominated during Quarter 1 of Year 6 (July – September 2009). All Quarterly winners receive a voucher and may be short-listed for the annual Employee of the Year Award.**

## **Year 5, Quarter 4 (April – June 2009)**

**Gill Buckley**, Probation Service Officer, Cheshire West (Winsford) Offender Management Unit, received a nomination for "showing enthusiasm towards all aspects of her work". Along with other Employment, Education and Training colleagues, Gill played a major role in organising a full day of activities during Adult Learners' Week, using her own funds and in her own time, visited the local college to further improve services and opportunities for offenders. She is described as a person within the team "who many people turn to for support and advice" and that she "lifts morale with her good humour".

**Eddie Mayo**, Manager, Warrington Offender Management Unit, was nominated by four of his staff members for "exemplifying the best qualities of management - he motivates

his staff by showing confidence in them, is always approachable and helpful and exudes an air of calm that makes any crisis seem readily manageable". His management style leaves one of his nominators feeling "confident and secure in my work". He is described as being "very supportive and approachable with a wealth of knowledge and experience" and is "always willing to offer support and sound advice".

**David Teese**, Probation Officer, now at the Cheshire West (Chester) Offender Management Unit, was nominated for his work during his time as a Trainee Probation Officer based at the Halton Offender Management Unit in co-managing a complex Tier 4 High Risk case involving an offender who was described by the nominator as being "unpredictable, aggressive and challenging".

David was proactive in contacting other professionals involved in the case, contributed to risk assessment meetings and made an urgent and complex referral to an Approved Premise. His nominator described how David was "readily available to share ideas and thoughts on how to manage the Order" and the nominator described their confidence in David's management in their absence.

## **Year 6, Quarter 1 (July - September 2009)**

**Steven Holleran**, Programme Tutor, Cheshire West (Chester) Offender Management Unit, has been nominated for taking on extra training work on the Thinking Skills and Cognitive Skills Booster programmes and also a trainer on Risk of Harm. The nominator considered that "Steven always manages to have constructive ideas and can lighten any situation. Steven is an excellent co-worker and will always share tasks without complaint."

Steven delivered a number of national/regional training events and worked as a regional trainer for the national roll-out of the new Thinking Skills Programme (TSP) and undertook joint work with Greater Manchester Probation Trust around the Cognitive Skills Booster Programme. The nominator stated, "Steven's input with the TSP training in particular has assisted Cheshire in successfully implementing this new programme across the Area this year."

**Eddie Mayo**, Manager, Warrington Offender Management Unit, received a further nomination, this time for his work in relation to the Managers' Audit. His nominator described how he has made "an outstanding and significant contribution" to the monthly Area file audits, having audited 67 files\* for the period April to August 2009 when the nomination was made, which equates to an average of 13

per audit (the average number per audit being around 4 per manager).

\*The majority of the 67 files related to Order commencements which involve a higher level of auditing.

**Sue Parkinson**, Victim Liaison Officer, based at the Cheshire West (Chester) Offender Management Unit, for "making a significant contribution towards the learning and development of Victim Liaison Officers and other staff both within the team, at Cheshire Probation Area, and across the North West Region."

Sue has facilitated in-house training for Cheshire's Trainee Probation Officers in the area of victim practice and worked with Fran Odeka delivering the *Think Victim Awareness* roadshow across the Area's six Offender Management Units.

Sue's nominator stated, "There is currently no known training structure for the Unit's Women Safety Workers and Sue played a significant role in supporting new staff and helping them to understand the role and responsibilities of Women Safety Workers. Sue has had to work flexibly and balance a demanding workload with the competing training delivery demands".

A comment received in respect of Sue as part of the Victims' Survey praised the, "enormous support and information given to help me. I have been through a difficult time and I feel it would have been impossible to cope

without the help I received from her."

**Jane Richards**, Strategic Management Team Personal Assistant, based at Headquarters, received two separate nominations during this Quarter. Jane was nominated for working tirelessly to produce a very professional Trust Application document, involving her working in excess of 80 hours' additional work over a relatively short period of time to ensure that the final documents were of exceptional quality and submitted on time. Her input is described by her nominator as having made "a real and significant contribution to Cheshire Probation Area becoming a Trust".

Jane's second nomination was in relation to her willingly agreeing to extend her part-time working hours and take work home to meet tight deadlines. Jane "always finds time to help a newer colleague even when her own workload has been high". Her willingness to work far in excess of her contracted hours is not just when a quick turnaround is required but "whenever she is asked or if she feels it is necessary to do her job to her usual high standard".

Jane "grabs challenges with open arms" and is described as "a pleasure to work with, with a wonderful sense of humour".

**Michelle Wilkinson**, Case Administrator, Cheshire East (Crewe) Offender Management Unit, was nominated for improving on an existing system designed

to track all the community cases that are subject to enforcement action. Her nominator commented that, "This report, which has been developed by Michelle, is an excellent example of 'the right tool for the job'. It should be rolled out across all Offender Management Units."

It was clear to the nominator that Michelle, "fully understands not only the process but the probation practice that sits behind this process. She clearly has detailed knowledge of the national standard requirements and is fully conversant with the expectations placed upon Offender Managers to progress such cases within a tight timescale."

**Helen Wilson**, Human Resources Officer, based at Headquarters, was nominated for her support to a member of the Strategic Management Team. Helen worked long hours and adjusted her annual leave to ensure that critical deadlines were met.

Helen is described by her nominator as being "supportive, good humoured and giving sound advice". She freely shares her knowledge and experience with Human Resources colleagues and has the ability to "manage a varied, high volume workload, completing work to a high standard".

Quarterly Employee Award nomination forms are available from the Area Policy and Key Documents database on Lotus Notes (Documents section)



# Jane's Public Protection work acknowledged

Congratulations to Jane Catterall, Probation Officer, Warrington Offender Management Unit, who was a finalist in the first ever Probation Awards for England and Wales. Jane's nomination was considered by the Director of Offender Management, Caroline Marsh, as being worthy of submission for consideration for the Public Protection Award. This Award recognises individuals who specifically work with managing difficult and dangerous offenders.

Jane manages a high volume of offenders who present significant public protection concerns, and deploys a highly investigative approach to her work so that she can engage appropriate, timely interventions to address and manage risks. She has also taken on training responsibilities which included

training Probation staff on a number of subject areas including the management of dangerous offenders, as well as Children's Services staff in relation to public protection issues.

Jane is the elected Chair of the North West National Organisation for the Treatment of Abusers and plays a key role in organising relevant training events, targeting staff who work with sexual abusers in all public and private sector organisations across the North West.

Jane, one of three finalists in this category, attended an Awards Ceremony in Leicester in November where she was presented with her Award.



**Jane Catterall (right) with Phil Wheatley, Director General of NOMS and co-finalist Sarah Thompson, Probation Officer, County Durham Probation Area**

Steve Collett, Chief Officer, said "Jane got through to the final against a high level of nominations and I'm delighted that her work has been recognised at the national level. Her nomination was a good reminder to a wider audience that many Probation staff, including Jane, go far beyond their formal responsibilities to contribute in their own time to the development of public protection and other important services that support local communities".

## Happy Retirement

Under the Area's Reward and Recognition Scheme, EPIC marks the retirement of staff who have devoted at least 10 years' service to Probation work in Cheshire. Gratitude for valued service and best wishes for a long and happy retirement go to:

**Jan Atkinson**, Probation Service Officer, who retired in August after 21 years' service. Jan joined in 1988 as a Community Service Officer becoming Community Service Area Manager in 1993. From 2001 she worked as a Probation Service Officer at Cheshire East (Macclesfield) Offender Management Unit and in 2003 moved to HMP Styal.

**Mavis Head**, Probation Service Officer retired in August 2009 after 17 years' service. Mavis began working for the Area in 1992 in the Information Services Unit. She took on the role of Probation Service Officer as a member of the Court Services team in 1999.

**Cynthia Pearce**, Senior Probation Officer, retired in August after 36 years' service. Cynthia joined as a Probation Officer in 1972 working with Accommodation, moved to Cheshire East (Crewe) Offender Management Unit in 1975 and Macclesfield in 1973. In 2001 she took on the role of Practice Supervisor and continued this through to her retirement in August 2009. In 2007 additionally she took on the role of part-time Senior Probation Officer at the Cheshire East (Crewe) Offender Management Unit.

# An Excellent Area

**Cheshire Probation Area is celebrating after winning the North of England Business Excellence Award for the category *Public Sector Organisation - more than 250 employees*, at the Annual Awards Ceremony held in Leeds in September.**

The ceremony was attended by Ron Howarth, Board Member who chairs the Audit Committee, Christine Evans, Assistant Chief Officer, Michelle Collins, Human Resources Manager, and Val Pilling, Strategic Management Personal Assistant and Assessment Team representative.

The Award reflects the commitment of the Area and its staff to the use of the European Excellence Model (EEM) to develop the organisation over

the past eight years. Each year since 2001 the Area has undertaken a self-assessment through an internal assessment team comprising of cross-grade staff or had an external assessment using the EEM framework. This has enabled the organisation to go from strength to strength over a substantial period of time.

A delighted Christine Evans, Assistant Chief Officer and lead senior manager for EEM, said "I was stunned but really pleased when we won because it's quite an achievement. The reason we enter this competition is that it is a way of improving quality



**Michelle Collins, Christine Evans, Ron Howarth and Val Pilling representing Cheshire Excellence**

across the organisation."

Adds Christine, "We are always looking at how we can raise the bar through continuous improvement and this is an external validation. The Assessor Team looked at the whole organisation – how leaders operate in the organisation, how you manage people, how you reward and recognise staff and what processes you have in place".

## EDAG Short-listed

Cheshire Probation Area's Equality & Diversity Action Group (EDAG) has been recognised for its effective work by being short-listed for the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) 2009 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Awards.

EDAG is a cross grade group led by Kim Thornden, Assistant Chief Officer with responsibility for Equality and Diversity. The Group is a central part of the Area's Equality and Diversity structure, reporting to the Diversity Panel which is chaired by a Board Member. EDAG also includes representation from the Area's three Staff Support Groups:

- Access (focusing on issues of sex, gender and sexuality)
- Aware (focusing on disability), and
- CMESN (Cheshire Minority

Ethnic Support Network)

The Group meets quarterly to drive forward and monitor the Area's Single Equality Scheme Action Plan as well as the Women Offenders' Action Plan. Part of the Group's role is to focus the organisation's attention on addressing areas where negative disproportionality exists in relation to practice. This can be around policy, service delivery and employment with EDAG making recommendations to the Strategic Management Team to further improve diversity practice.

The group also reviews key data that is collected to form what is known as a Diversity Grid. This a regional approach, unique to the North West, which focuses on specific outcomes across critical areas of service delivery,

including Community Payback, Accredited Programmes and Pre Sentence Reports.

The data is analysed by race, disability, gender and age and has produced some interesting, and sometimes surprising, results. Responding to these issues has been a key role for EDAG and many of the recommendations have resulted in the organisation making changes to the way it operates.

Kim Thornden said, "It is a significant achievement for EDAG to have been shortlisted for the MoJ 2009 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Awards. The members of EDAG are all extremely committed and energetic when it comes to ensuring equality and driving up standards within Cheshire Probation Area. EDAG is not a "talking shop" - it has made and continues to make a real difference to the service we deliver and the way we treat staff and service users".

## A Day in the Life of....

**Chris Judge, previously Probation Officer, Cheshire East (Macclesfield) Offender Management Unit, now temporary Senior Probation Officer leading the Drug Intervention Programme based at Crewe and Employee of the Year!**

### **When did you join the organisation?**

I joined as a Trainee Probation Officer in October 2004.

### **What attracted you to the role of Probation Officer?**

I wanted to help people to make changes in their lives to prevent them from committing further offences. I come from quite an underprivileged area of Manchester where there was a lot of crime. I myself had been the victim of crime whilst I was growing up. I thought these experiences might benefit me in connecting with the people we work with and understanding people; although in reality, I don't know if it has been of any benefit at all.

### **What particular skills are required for the role of Probation Officer?**

For me the most important skill is to be able to listen to the people we are working with. We need to be able to handle information in a sensitive way whilst at the same time ensuring that any information we are given that may impact upon the protection of the public is passed on to relevant agencies and acted upon. It can be a fine balancing act between maintaining a positive relationship with the

people we work with and disclosing information that may damage that relationship. I also think it's really important to have a sense of humour and to be able to have a laugh with colleagues, something that is really important to me.

### **Describe an average working day (if there is such a thing!)**

One of the things that attracted me to Probation is the fact that there isn't an average day, every day is different. I am still presented with different and new challenges on a regular basis. I plan my week as best as I can but you can guarantee that something will arise to throw my plans into disarray.

### **Briefly tell us about the range of people you may be in contact with**

I work with Drug Rehabilitation and Alcohol Treatment Requirements in the Macclesfield Offender Management Unit so my main contacts are with practitioners from drug and alcohol services. There is regularly contact with Children's Services about cases and contact with the police at various levels as well as accommodation providers and of course my cases.

### **What are the most rewarding aspects of your job?**

The most rewarding aspect of this job is seeing that somebody has made real changes to their life when you get to the end of an Order or Licence. Without people making these changes and co-operating much of the other work we do would be really difficult and would probably involve containment rather than progress. It is to the credit of our cases when despite some terrible difficulties in their life they are



**Chris Judge, former Probation Officer, now temporary Senior Probation Officer, works closely with drug and alcohol service practitioners to help offenders**

able to break the cycle of offending and move on to live offence free lives.

### **What frustrates you the most?**

I get frustrated by the amount of computer work I have to do and feel there needs to be a re-balancing between working on the computer and working directly and face-to-face with people. I also find the budget problems a frustration and the fact that we can't be as effective as we want to be in helping people to change because there are things we can't afford. I am also really discouraged when I put in a lot of work in with people who talk about being highly motivated to change only for them to commit a further offence, fail to comply with their sentence, or fail to make the changes they say they want to make.

### **What do you enjoy doing away from work?**

I enjoy spending time with my family, going on holiday and playing football a couple of times a week. I occasionally like to socialise with friends over one or two pints of lager (obviously only one or two maximum though).

EPIC Editorial Board thank everyone who sent in contributions and ideas for this issue.

**Any suggestions, articles or ideas for the next issue are invited. Copy date for the next issue is Friday, 5th March 2010. Please email to: [Liz.Gaughran@cheshire.probation.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Liz.Gaughran@cheshire.probation.gsi.gov.uk) or post to Liz Gaughran at Beech House, Park West, Sealand Road, Chester, CH1 4RJ; tel 01244 394500, fax 01244 394507**

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