



NATIONAL PROBATION SERVICE
for England and Wales

Cheshire

The national picture: "What Works"

"What Works" is a Home Office policy to ensure all probation and prison practice is effective and based on properly researched evidence of success in reducing re-offending.

Common features of "What Works" programmes include:

- reduced re-offending
- improved public protection
- seamless execution of the sentence of the Courts
- greater public confidence in community punishments.

Tried and tested

Addressing Substance Related Offending (ASRO) is nationally accredited by the Joint Accreditation Panel. Research has proved that the methods, principles and techniques used are effective in reducing re-offending. By 2004, Cheshire will only deliver nationally accredited programmes.

A national target of 60,000 has been set for the number of offenders completing accredited programmes by 2003/4, with 30,000 of these being subject to Community Punishment Orders.



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Enforcement, rehabilitation and public protection

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Addressing Substance Related Offending ("ASRO")

Information for Solicitors

Addressing Substance Related Offending (ASRO)

This is an accredited, offence specific programme. Its aim is to break the link between alcohol and/or drug use and crime.

Offenders will be helped:

- to stop offending
- to reduce and control their alcohol and/or drug use

Suitable offenders

The ASRO programme is designed for those who are at significant risk of re-offending because of their alcohol or drugs use.

Rigorous assessment of offenders during the preparation of Pre-Sentence Reports is essential. As the programme is demanding, the offender must consent to take part and be highly motivated to change.

Pre-Sentence Reports

Where appropriate, Pre-Sentence Reports will contain proposals for offenders' attendance on the ASRO Programme as an additional condition in a Community Rehabilitation Order or a Community Punishment and Rehabilitation Order with a Schedule 2(3) condition of the Powers of Criminal Courts (Sentencing) Act 2000. It is not appropriate for this programme to be made as a result of a Specific Sentence Report.

Solicitors should liaise with Probation Court Officers before suggesting adjournments for Pre-Sentence Reports specifically for ASRO assessments. This will avoid many cases being adjourned which could have been properly dealt with on that day by another disposal.

Programme Content

The programme is delivered to groups of up to 12 offenders and consists of four modules:

- the offender's motivation to change
- understanding the elements that led to substance abuse and offending
- preventing relapses
- building a positive future

There are 20 group sessions. Offenders must attend two 2½ hour sessions a week.

Attendance

Offenders must attend all sessions. The programme design allows two failures to attend. These sessions can be caught up individually so the offender can then rejoin the main group. More than two absences require the offender to re-start the module or the whole course.

An offender is allowed a maximum of three attempts to start the programme.

Unacceptable absences are dealt with in accordance with the Service's National Standards and offenders are returned to Court.

Assessing individual progress

Before the group sessions start, offenders see their Case Managers at least three times to assess motivation and to fill out a questionnaire. At the end of the group work, a written report is discussed between the group tutor, the Case Manager and the offender. An action plan is also prepared covering education, employment or training opportunities and leisure, sporting or cultural activities. This action plan is regularly reviewed in the offender's future supervision sessions with the Case Manager.