

## PRESS RELEASE



CHESHIRE

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### **Community Sentences are not a “soft option”**

The Cheshire Probation Area is keen to reassure the public that if an offender is not sent to prison, a community sentence is not a “soft option”.

Unpaid Work is at the heart of community sentences as it results in an offender making amends to the local community for the harm they have done. Last year, in Cheshire alone, over 91,000 hours of compulsory Unpaid Work were completed by offenders. Projects combine hard work on projects which benefit the community with the prospect for the offender of achieving vocational and critical life skills.

Residents of Cheshire, Halton and Warrington can also have their say in the suitable punishment of offenders by nominating projects they would wish to see undertaken in their local community.

Steve Collett, Cheshire Probation Area’s Chief Officer says, “The Government’s message is that it is important for offenders to be properly and suitably punished for their crimes but sending people to prison is not the only way of punishing them. Community sentences are not a soft option. They are tough and can be more successful than prison in reducing reoffending which means fewer crimes and fewer victims. Offenders are required to address their reasons for offending, for example by attending an intensive groupwork programme linked to their offence. Protection of the public and risk assessment of offenders who receive a community sentence are of paramount importance”.

To nominate an Unpaid Work project or obtain more information about the work of the Cheshire Probation Area, including details of community sentences, visit the Cheshire Probation Area’s website at [www.cheshireprobation.org.uk](http://www.cheshireprobation.org.uk) or telephone Liz Gaughran, Corporate Services Manager (01244 394500).

**Press Release contact: Liz Gaughran, Corporate Services Manager**  
Tel 01244 394500, email [liz.gaughran@cheshire.probation.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:liz.gaughran@cheshire.probation.gsi.gov.uk)

**Photo caption: Steve Collett, Cheshire Probation Area’s Chief Officer**

**NOMS** National Offender  
Management Service

Working together to reduce re-offending