



HM Inspectorate of Probation

AN EFFECTIVE SUPERVISION  
INSPECTION PROGRAMME  
THEMATIC REPORT

*“Working to Make Amends”*

An inspection of the  
Delivery of Enhanced  
Community Punishment and  
Unpaid Work by the  
National Probation Service

  
Home Office

2006

## Foreword

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The careful planning and investment in the development and implementation of enhanced community punishment was a credit to the National Probation Directorate and to probation areas. It was a major organisational change programme with a significant impact on service delivery, staff conditions of service, and training. Additional funding was made available to support this work and all areas had their schemes successfully signed off as meeting the accreditation criteria.

Unfortunately once enhanced community punishment was launched there was no systematic programme to follow-up identified issues for improvement. Areas have failed to maintain the necessary investment in staff so that the quality of case management has suffered. Some areas have also not given attention to how schemes and staff are to be integrated into the work of the service as a whole.

Although the national performance target for completions has been met or exceeded by many areas, this masked a major problem. In some areas, due to inadequate resourcing and recruitment processes, we found unacceptable levels of offenders being stood down from work, which meant both that they went unpunished and also that communities did not benefit. The National Probation Directorate, Boards and chief officers need to give this issue sufficient priority, especially in view of the developing national Visibility Initiative.

There is strong evidence that when schemes are properly resourced and well managed they can deliver a good standard of work. Supervisors are demonstrating a good level of engagement with offenders and beneficiaries and have developed skills in pro-social modelling and problem solving. By comparison, the role of the case manager has diminished and will need further consideration in preparation for end-to-end offender management. Every area can produce some excellent examples of work with Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships and creative placements with hard to reach populations. However, project management overall has suffered and it was also disappointing to find a lack of strategic direction in promoting race equality and other aspects of diversity.

During the planning and fieldwork stages of this inspection, enhanced community punishment was effectively brought to an abrupt end as a comprehensive national scheme. The challenge for the National Probation Directorate and areas will be to learn from the findings of this inspection and ensure that unpaid work now delivers an effective and consistent level of supervision to all offenders to the benefit of communities in every probation area.

**ANDREW BRIDGES**

HM Chief Inspector of Probation

## Acknowledgements

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We would like to express our thanks to the Boards, managers and staff of the six areas visited. All were very helpful in enabling the inspection to run smoothly. In each area local assessors also assisted with scrutinising files and interviewing case managers; their participation and commitment were greatly appreciated. A number of staff from the National Probation Directorate were consulted as part of the inspection and in particular we would like to thank Janet Corcoran for her help and support.

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Other HMI Probation staff who assisted with the inspection fieldwork were Shirley Magilton, Stephanie Mason, Mike Mullis, Joy Neary and Kate White.

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## Glossary

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ACE	Assessment, Case Recording and Evaluation System
CCTV	Closed Circuit Television
CDRP	Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership
CO	Chief officer
CP	Community punishment
CPO	Community punishment order: a community sentence requiring the offender to complete unpaid work, measured in hours
CPRO	Community punishment and rehabilitation order
CRAMS	Case Record Administration and Management System
CS	Community service
CSO	Community service organiser or officer
ECP	Enhanced community punishment
ESF	European Social Fund
ESI	Effective Supervision Inspection: HMI Probation's current programme of inspection of the 42 Probation areas over three years from June 2003
ETE	Employment, Training and Education
GSL	Guided Skills Learning
HMI Probation	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation
HR	Human resources
IiP	Investor in People
ISP	Initial supervision plan: In a probation case record, the first formal assessment and plan for an individual offender's period of supervision
IT	Information technology
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
LSI-R	Level of Service Inventory-Revised
MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements
NPD	National Probation Directorate: Although a part of the Home Office, the NPD is also the 'Head Office' of the NPS
NPS	National Probation Service: Consisting of 42 Probation Areas, each run by its own Board, plus the NPD
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
OASys	Offender Assessment System: The nationally designed and prescribed framework for both the NPS and the Prison Service to assess offenders, implemented in stages from April 2003.
OGRS	Offender Group Reconviction Scale
PC	Probation Circular
PLC	Probation Liaison Committee
PO	Probation officer
PPWS	Pre Placement Work Session
PQM	Placement Quality Matrix
PSAI	Post-Sentence Assessment Interview
PSO	Probation service officer
PSR	Pre-sentence report: Reports that advise a court at point of sentence
QAM	Quality Assurance Manager
SMART	Specific – Measurable – Achievable – Realistic – Time-bounded
SR2000	Spending Review 2000
SSR	Specific sentence report
TPO	Trainee probation officer
UPW	Unpaid work. The term will be used throughout the report for the name of the sentence, irrespective of the period of time concerned
YOT	Youth Offending Team

# 1. KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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## OVERALL FINDINGS FOR ECP/UPW SCHEME NATIONALLY

- 1.1 Approximately 100 UPW projects were visited during the inspection in the Bedfordshire, Humberside, London, Northamptonshire, Warwickshire, and West Mercia Probation Areas. The majority of these were groups supervised by probation service staff. In the larger areas we selected the projects visited and in smaller areas we saw whatever was available. Overwhelmingly we saw a good standard of work being delivered to beneficiaries who were happy with the outcome. In some cases they were also pleased to be able to participate in a scheme giving offenders a chance to make reparation and an opportunity to reform. Supervisors were almost universally praised and we were impressed by the standard of their work with offenders and for communities.
- 1.2 We were also impressed by the quality of some of the placements available in the areas. They were valuable to the beneficiary and it was of note that three areas – London, Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire – had invited community groups to select the work to be done in the area ahead of the national Visibility Campaign. Not all of the projects seen provided the positive benefit to the offender intended by ECP, e.g. in terms of contact with beneficiaries or skills development, but they did provide the punishment and indirect reparation that CS and then CP had offered. This was also understood by offenders. Whilst few interviewed said they enjoyed what they did, they knew why they were there and were prepared to do their punishment. There were also some excellent examples of imaginative placements that stretched offenders and afforded opportunities to improve skills.
- 1.3 The inspection underlined the fact that UPW gives the probation service its best access to the communities it serves, including the opportunity to appoint staff from those communities. Supervisors in particular spend significant amounts of time with both offenders and the public. Managers at all levels have the opportunity to ‘sell’ the service via this work.
- 1.4 Every area visited had implemented ECP to a point by the autumn of 2003. All had made the HR changes and implemented the training programme. Some had then continued to develop, but others had failed to do this, even before the publication of the Probation Circular 59/2004 in December 2004 which initiated some major revisions. We did not see *Enhanced* Community Punishment as described by the 2003 manual, although Humberside and Warwickshire came closest to running it in their different ways. The original intention had been to inspect the implementation of ECP. Probation Circular 59/2004, by doing away with the need for an OASys in certain cases, in effect brought its universal application to an end. The change applied to 62% of the UPW cases in the inspection.
- 1.5 Due to the continued popularity of UPW as a sentence, most areas had little difficulty in exceeding the national target which was around order completions. During the ESI

programme from 2003 we had found areas where the target was achieved but where this masked the routine need to stand offenders down due to a lack of supervisors. This was confirmed in the thematic inspection where in four out of the six areas stand-downs were a severe problem.

- 1.6 Operationally, ECP introduced changes to the staffing structure, which will need further consideration during the transition to offender management. Supervisors have universally gained through training and improvements in pay and conditions of service. The former CSO role has diminished and has become largely administrative. Other roles have been added which may or may not survive, e.g. the QAM. The inspection also found wide variations from area to area in the quality of the case management actually exercised.
- 1.7 Areas tended to have practical links with CDRPs but overall there was a lack of strategic direction around the contribution that UPW could make to their work. It was also disappointing that few of the areas had considered how useful UPW could be in addressing their duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 in relation to staff, offenders and the public. This partly reflected the lack of integration of UPW into the work of the service as a whole and in some areas a lack of investment in project development.

## **OVERALL FINDINGS FOR QUALITY OF ECP/UPW MANAGEMENT**

### ***Strengths***

- All areas had made the HR changes required to implement ECP and had invested in staff training.
- There were positive examples of quality placements in all areas providing benefits to the community and supervised by well-motivated and trained staff.
- Where a positive approach to health and safety procedures was built into the scheme, this added depth and consistency to placement development.
- Some areas worked with CDRPs to consult local people about what projects would be of value in their locality.
- Areas worked in partnership with other agencies to provide a range of placements where offenders could learn new skills.

### ***Areas for improvement***

- Investment in UPW staff was insufficient to manage orders consistently to national standards in several areas.
- There was a lack of strategic direction and investment in relation to promoting race equality and other aspects of diversity through UPW.
- A wider and more diverse range of placements was needed to ensure that all sections of the population could benefit and offenders' diversity needs be fully addressed. Local targets should be set and reviewed annually.

- UPW schemes and staff were often not well integrated into the work of the service as a whole and were often perceived by themselves and others as quite separate. The quality of case management suffered as a consequence.
- There was a patchy use of the 20% of hours available for employability linked activity.
- Areas where stand-downs were a problem did not share information with local courts about their ability to manage orders.

## OVERALL FINDINGS FOR QUALITY OF ECP/UPW ASSESSMENT

### ***Strengths***

- All areas had arrangements in place to assess and supervise offenders safely.
- All offenders were interviewed by UPW staff prior to being allocated to a work placement.

### ***Areas for improvement***

- There were examples of offenders being allocated to work without a risk of harm assessment in four out of the six areas inspected.
- Little use was made of the needs analysis in the PQM in matching offender to placement.
- Few sentence plans were completed in cases where there was not a full OASys.
- There was a fragmentation of the case management of orders in areas where the responsibility of the case manager was reduced to a largely administrative role once supervision commenced.

## OVERALL FINDINGS FOR QUALITY OF ECP/UPW INTERVENTIONS

### ***Strengths***

- Supervisors had embraced the pro-social modelling agenda and were confident in their engagement with offenders and beneficiaries.
- The introduction of the PPWS had contributed to increasing offenders' understanding of what was expected during supervision.
- Staff observed and interviewed demonstrated a positive and integrated approach to diversity work.
- The small number of GSL placements seen were excellent.

### ***Areas for improvement***

- Urgent action was needed to reduce and eliminate stand-downs.
- The management of risk of harm was not sufficient in all cases.

- Managers needed to ensure that enforcement policies were applied fairly and consistently across all requirements of community orders.
- More attention needed to be given to the quality of placements by all areas.
- There should be arrangements for the case manager or equivalent to maintain contact with offenders during the life of the order to sustain their motivation.

## OVERALL FINDINGS FOR QUALITY OF ECP/UPW INITIAL OUTCOMES

### **Strengths**

- The majority of offenders had not been convicted of a further offence committed since the start of the order.
- Offenders were very positive about the impact of Skills for Life on their confidence and self-esteem.
- Once their order was completed some offenders had continued to work with a project on a voluntary basis. A number of beneficiaries had offered paid employment to former UPW offenders.
- Exit interviews were routinely done with offenders, with the information used in some areas to develop practice.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Areas should make greater use of feedback from offenders to improve practice.
- There should be a regular beneficiary survey with the outcomes shared with the Board and staff.

### **Recommendations**

#### ***The NPD should ensure that:***

- *Clarification is issued about the procedures and associated training required in the management of UPW.*
- *The national ECP/UPW performance target is revised to reflect the national standard requirement that areas offer offenders at least six hours work per week.*
- *Further consideration is given to staff roles within UPW to prepare for the end-to-end management of offenders.*
- *Consistent attention is given to health and safety in the delivery of UPW by all probation areas.*
- *Consultation is undertaken within areas and with the Youth Justice Board about the management of 16 and 17 year olds undertaking UPW in order to safeguard their welfare.*

- *Guidance is issued about the purpose, timing and content of supervision plans and reviews.*
- *Further thought is given to simple outcome measures to demonstrate the effectiveness of UPW.*
- *The time credited for offenders who are stood down from work should be one hour.*

**Probation Boards should ensure that:**

- *Sufficient staff are in place for UPW to be delivered that meets the requirements of the national standard.*
- *Diversity and partnership strategies are reviewed, including meeting the area's responsibilities under the Race Relations and Crime and Disorder legislation.*
- *Courts are kept fully informed about any shortfall in the area's ability to manage sentences.*
- *Local performance monitoring includes information about the satisfactory completion of assessment of risk of harm.*
- *No offender is allocated to work without a risk of harm assessment being completed.*
- *Proper use is made of risk and criminogenic needs analysis in allocating offenders to work.*
- *National standards performance data, including figures on stand-downs, are reported to them on a regular basis.*
- *Systems are in place that encourage and enable communication between supervisors and case managers.*
- *Training for UPW staff should include risk of harm issues.*
- *Evaluation of work on outcomes is published and shared with managers and staff so that lessons can be learned.*

## 2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

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### Historical background

- 2.1 The legislation for adult offenders to undertake UPW for the benefit of the community was originally introduced to England and Wales through the Criminal Justice Act 1972. A CS order, as it was then called, required the offender to complete between 40 and 240 hours of work within 12 months of the order being made. Following piloting in six probation areas, CS became available nationally in 1975 and quickly established itself as an attractive disposal for sentencers, given that it combined elements of both punishment and rehabilitation while also allowing offenders to remain in the community and minimised disruption to their employment and family circumstances.
- 2.2 There have been a number of important changes to the concept of UPW since its inception, these being:
- its extension to cover also 16 year olds in the Criminal Justice Act 1982
  - the introduction of new and then revised Home Office national standards with instructions on how orders were to be supervised and enforced
  - its redefinition as one of a number of community sentences involving restriction of liberty in the Criminal Justice Act 1991
  - the introduction of a new penalty, the combination order, in the same Act, combining elements of the CS order and the probation order
  - the renaming of the CS order as the CPO and the combination order as the CPRO in the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000
  - the Criminal Justice Act 2003, taking effect from April 2005, stating that UPW would now form one of the possible requirements of a generic community order. The Act also increased the total number of hours that a court could order from 240 to 300.

### The introduction of ECP and subsequent related developments

- 2.3 ECP was a development of the previous CPO, intended to increase its effectiveness by introducing 'What Works' principles. It was launched by the NPD in October 2003, after a considerable amount of advance planning and piloting that began with pathfinder programmes run in 2000 and 2001. It was a key component of the NPS's national structure of accredited offending behaviour programmes and was planned to deliver half the programme completions required. Once implemented all CPOs and the CP part of CPROs would be delivered as ECP.
- 2.4 ECP aimed to maximise the rehabilitative potential of UPW while not detracting from its effectiveness or rigour as a sentence that contained elements of both retribution and reparation. Through modelling, reinforcement and guided learning it would teach

offenders pro-social attitudes and behaviours, and employment related and problem-solving skills. The high amount of contact time that UPW allowed with probation staff would also facilitate targeting of a number of offenders' key risk factors, such as poor employment-related skills, identification with anti-social role models, and poor self-management and interpersonal skills.

2.5 ECP was based on four interlinking components

1. *Integrated case management. This was to introduce a more systematic approach to assessment and planning and had at its core completion of OASys*
2. *Placement Quality Standards. A set of criteria ensuring that all placements would meet a minimum standard*
3. *Pro-social Modelling by supervisors to reinforce positive attitudes and behaviours*
4. *GSL. Offenders would use work done on placements to learn employment related skills, with a view to gaining nationally recognised awards and improving their employability.*

2.6 The initial submission received provisional accreditation from the Correctional Services Accreditation Panel in March 2003. Some elements were referred back to the NPD, including diversity issues that needed to be improved to meet the demanding criteria set by the national diversity strategy. In fact though the whole scheme was never resubmitted and its provisional accreditation eventually lapsed in March 2005.

2.7 Probation areas were required to make substantial changes to their existing arrangements for delivering UPW in order to have their ECP scheme signed off. A new set of competences was established that required existing delivery staff to successfully complete an assessment centre. Despite fears about the readiness of staff to achieve this, most did complete successfully. Extra funding was also made available to regrade staff if necessary to meet the new competences, to provide for local trainers, to 'backfill' for UPW staff undergoing the training, and to assist with the creation of new posts, e.g. the QAM.

2.8 The core manual contained very detailed information on how ECP was to be delivered and was generally welcomed for its completeness and depth of coverage. It prescribed everything from staff roles, the assessment process and matching offenders to placements, to the format of feedback interviews. Each element had its own set of paperwork to complete for monitoring and quality assurance purposes.

2.9 Regional Effective Practice Managers worked with probation areas to identify what work needed to be done to achieve the criteria set by the Accreditation Panel. All areas were 'signed off' in Autumn 2003, although outstanding issues remained in some cases. Local schemes were reviewed by the NPD in the spring of 2004 and areas were then required to undertake a substantial self-assessment exercise, including a regional validation event. However, London, which is by far the largest probation area, did not participate, and there was also general criticism that the exercise should have been more demanding. The findings were published in Probation Circular 47/2005 in June 2005. On the positive side, it highlighted some excellent practice especially in the provision of high quality placements; staff supervision, appraisal and training; portfolio preparation;

and quality assurance of schemes by QAMs. However, the main areas for improvement were:

- increasing the number of placements that contributed directly to community safety
- improving targeting and liaison with sentencers to reduce the number of offenders on orders with a low likelihood of reconviction
- increasing throughput by ensuring offenders began their hours within the national standard timescale and then worked consistently at the hourly rate it prescribed
- supervision planning and review
- access by offenders to skills learning
- liaison in multi-requirement orders.

2.10 Although work is now in progress within the NPD to address these issues, there has as yet been no action plan to address the areas for improvement identified.

2.11 Also during 2004 the NPD published Probation Circular 50/2004 *ECP Placement Provider Research* requiring areas to provide information about UPW. It was intended that this would provide a national picture of ECP placement providers and also enable areas to understand how they compared to the national profile. The national findings have again never been published. The aggregated results for the areas visited during the inspection are given in the appendix of this report.

### **Other significant developments**

2.12 During the period of ECP implementation substantial changes were also being planned for the sentencing framework. The UPW requirement of the community order in the 2003 Criminal Justice Act (to be implemented in April 2005) made it clear that UPW was not intended to offer more than punishment and reparation for some offenders which was incompatible with ECP principles. However, the retention in the national standard of the 20% of hours time allowance for literacy/skills development or other work necessary to enable the offender to gain maximum benefit from the sentence did ensure that some of the original ECP principles continued.

2.13 In December 2004 the NPD issued Probation Circular 59/2004, intended to revise the operation of ECP in relation to low-risk/low seriousness offenders, while also giving advance notice of further changes arising from the introduction of the new sentencing framework. A full OASys assessment was no longer to be required where there was an OGRS of less than 41%, a risk of harm screening had assessed the level of risk as low and a basic skills screening had also been completed. Permission was also given to recruit supervisors who were not ECP trained and to manage offenders in larger work parties. This was in response to a number of concerns about the ability of some areas to deliver ECP in the quantities required, given the continuing popularity of UPW to sentencers. It was asserted that the completion of OASys had prevented them from starting and working orders to the national standards, but in fact it was much more the lack of supervisors in many areas that lay at the heart of the problem. The change

immediately benefited the areas that had done less to develop ECP while penalising those that had invested more time and resources.

2.14 Further more recent developments have been:

- Probation Circular 66/2005, issued in August 2005, implemented a national strategy in relation to Visible UPW and Community Engagement. The scheme, entitled Community Payback, required mechanisms to be put in place for the public to be better informed about the achievements of UPW in their locality and to be given clear information about how they could suggest a piece of work to be undertaken. The national roll-out took place in November 2005, following piloting in six probation areas
- in response to the emerging findings of this inspection areas have been required to monitor the level and reasons for offenders being stood down from work and report these to the NPD
- in November 2005, the NPD established a Project Board to consider and make proposals as to how areas managed the transition from ECP to UPW. It will assess the impact on UPW of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 and the introduction of the offender management model; review the guidance issued to areas; and approve new guidance, training materials and performance standards.

### **The inspection's aim, objectives and methodology**

2.15 The aim of the inspection was to determine the extent to which the NPS had successfully contributed to the reduction in crime through the management of a satisfactory UPW scheme. Within this the objectives were to assess the extent to which it had:

- implemented the ECP scheme
- achieved national and local targets in relation to UPW case management, including risk of harm management
- positively promoted good diversity practice in relation to communities, staff and offenders
- allocated sufficient resources to achieve the above
- developed HR strategies locally to support the above
- developed partnership links with communities and skills providers as essential elements of their schemes
- communicated satisfactorily with sentencers.

2.16 The inspection was carried out concurrently with the ESI in six probation areas: Bedfordshire, Humberside, London, Northamptonshire, Warwickshire and West Mercia. The criteria for both inspections were similar and evaluated the quality of management, assessment, interventions and initial outcomes. Cases to be inspected in the thematic element were drawn from the main sample and in total we looked at approximately 260 offenders being supervised on the then CPOs or CPROs. Although these had all started

before the new Act's implementation, we expected areas to be preparing for the new legislation and beginning to respond to the new sentencing arrangements.

- 2.17 Approximately 100 work projects were also visited, the majority of these being group placements supervised by probation staff. There were interviews on site with offenders, supervisors and beneficiaries. Each inspection concluded with a day of meetings with senior and middle managers responsible for UPW, case managers and supervisors. Finally, we interviewed members of the NPD who had been or were responsible for ECP and UPW.

### 3. QUALITY OF ECP/UPW MANAGEMENT

3.1 This chapter considers the quality of management of UPW schemes. We looked for evidence that Boards and senior management teams were committed to the implementation of ECP and the achievement of related national and local targets, in particular around case management, risk of harm management and promoting diversity. This included the allocation of resources and the implementation of HR policies and procedures to support strategy. We examined relationships with communities, partnership work in its widest sense, and communication with sentencers. Evidence came from documentation provided by areas, observation of placements, interviews with offenders, beneficiaries and practitioners, and meetings with staff and managers. Where appropriate information from the 29 areas inspected in the ESI programme prior to this thematic is given for comparison or context.

**Leadership and planning:**

- *The Board and CO lead the area in the achievement of ECP targets through the production of local policies and procedures which are regularly monitored and reviewed. The senior management team is committed to the implementation of these national and local targets, including case management, risk management and promoting diversity.*

Table 1: Leadership and planning

Bedfordshire	Humberside	London	Northamptonshire	Warwickshire	West Mercia
PARTLY MET	PARTLY MET	NOT MET	PARTLY MET	VERY WELL MET	PARTLY MET

3.2 All areas had worked through the ECP implementation process, identifying actions necessary in order to be signed off by the NPD as satisfying the accreditation criteria, and were assisted in this by Regional Effective Practice Managers. Areas could not count commencements against the national target until their scheme was signed off. To ensure a consistent approach to addressing problems, a national clearing house was set up to address issues arising out of the programme, something that was welcomed by staff. Not all areas were signed off by the original deadline, but all were successful within a few months. Two of the schemes in the sample (London and West Mercia) were signed off in October and September 2003 respectively despite not meeting all of the criteria. In each case plans were identified to rectify gaps. However, despite subsequent reviews some of these important shortfalls were still apparent during the inspection.

3.3 Although all areas were assessed by the NPD at the end of 2004 as having implemented some aspects of ECP successfully, the extent to which areas had implemented the requirements differed widely, and none had actually implemented them fully, even before Probation Circular 59/2004. There were two main reasons for this. First, some aspects of the scheme were too complex, e.g. the Placement Quality Standards and Problem Solving at Work. Each element was based on sound principles to bring quality and consistency to service delivery, but required completion of a significant amount of

paperwork that did not necessarily contribute to the value of the element and which areas often found too cumbersome. The complexity meant that in practice areas adopted local simplified versions. The second was the failure of some areas to invest in or recruit sufficient staff to deliver the scheme.

***Good practice example:***

ECP was a key strategic priority for the Warwickshire Probation Area. The Board and senior management team had doubled the number of staff involved since its introduction in October 2003, and the provision of quality training was a consistent priority. Management and supervision of staff and quality assurance work were strengths. This was reflected in the good work seen.

- 3.4 During earlier ESIs it had become apparent that a number of areas had insufficient supervisor staff to manage the workload, particularly at the weekend, which was brought to the attention of the NPD during the course of the inspection. The single relevant national target related to the number of ECP completions. The latter was not experienced as especially challenging given the high volume of orders being made and in 2004/2005 it was exceeded by all but three areas.
- 3.5 Of the areas inspected only Humberside and Warwickshire had routinely achieved the national standard of starting all offenders into work within ten working days of the order and then arranging a minimum of five hours work per week. Both areas took pride in not having to stand offenders down, either in advance by letter or by turning them away on the day. London took a pragmatic approach. Managers in some quadrants 'stacked' cases and delayed commencement until they believed they could instruct offenders every week, although some stand-downs still occurred. Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire and West Mercia meanwhile continued to instruct offenders every week, but were then forced to stand-down significant numbers.
- 3.6 In half the areas inspected there had been a disappointing response to the requirement to promote race equality and other positive aspects of diversity, this usually being attributed to the lack of resources. There had been no investment in project development so that staff and managers did not have the time to seek out minority groups to promote the work of the service in order that their communities could benefit. The issues were not routinely monitored and reviewed at senior levels.
- 3.7 The arrangements for GSL within UPW mirrored areas' progress on basic skills and other ETE activity. Each area had to make its own arrangements via LSCs or other partners or make a decision to fund it themselves. The PPWS should be a useful vehicle for introducing offenders to GSL assessment and provision, but except in Humberside we saw little evidence of areas using the 20% of UPW hours that are available for this. However, we did see some good examples of partnership work to provide GSL, for example furniture restoration in West Mercia, mobile phone recycling in Northamptonshire and conservation work in Bedfordshire.
- 3.8 General protocols with YOTs were in place in all areas except for Bedfordshire and Humberside, but the management of orders on 16 and 17 year olds varied widely. At one extreme Bedfordshire had no contact at all, as the YOT managed the orders itself, an apparently unique arrangement. All other areas reported the need for a consistent approach to managing the transition from the YOT to a probation approach to case

management. Whilst the day-to-day management of 16 and 17 year olds appeared to be successful, it relied everywhere on pairing potentially unmotivated and disruptive young people with more mature offenders within work groups. There is nowhere else in the criminal justice system where this type of contact between adult and young offenders takes place, for well rehearsed reasons. The NPD has acknowledged that this is a gap in the guidance it provides to areas.

- 3.9 Most areas had satisfactory health and safety arrangements to ensure that placements were properly assessed for risk. This worked best where there was a dedicated health and safety officer or coordinator, as in West Mercia and Northamptonshire, where they were able to work collaboratively rather than reactively with scheme managers. Humberside did have professional advice but, through being overcautious, this had had a negative impact and a number of routine and sensible projects had been curtailed. Although the NPD also carried out health and safety audits, these had not been coordinated with the implementation of UPW, and national guidance about health and safety had also not been issued.
- 3.10 Where the PPWS was run as a group session it was generally accepted that this had improved the quality and depth of health and safety understanding amongst offenders. This had also had a positive impact on the management of work groups from the supervisor’s point of view, as there could be no dispute about what information had been given out. All this was not possible where areas ran the PPWS as part of the PSAI as an individual session, as was the case in most of West Mercia and in Northamptonshire.

**Resource allocation:**

- *The area demonstrates a strategic approach in allocating resources to deliver effective performance and shows positive results in relation to value for money.*

Table 2: Resource allocation

Bedfordshire	Humberside	London	Northamptonshire	Warwickshire	West Mercia
NOT MET	PARTLY MET	PARTLY MET	VERY WELL MET	PARTLY MET	PARTLY MET

- 3.11 The tables below give indications both of the volume of UPW being delivered by areas and of the proportion of their budgets allocated to it. They were asked to supply information under several headings, which could be summarised as staff salary, travel (offenders and staff) and equipment. No central costs were included. It is not suggested that this reflects the true cost of UPW, but it does give a crude measure of spending and permits some comparison between areas. It also suggests that UPW is a relatively inexpensive sentencing option.

Table 3: The proportion of total commencements represented by CPOs and CPROs

	<b>Bedfordshire</b>	<b>Humber-side</b>	<b>London</b>	<b>Northamptonshire</b>	<b>Warwickshire</b>	<b>West Mercia</b>
2003/2004	39%	29%	37%	34%	34%	30%
2004/2005	37%	31%	38%	40%	40%	33%

Table 4: Investment in UPW staff, transport and equipment as a % of area budget

	<b>Bedfordshire</b>	<b>Humber-side</b>	<b>London</b>	<b>Northamptonshire</b>	<b>Warwickshire</b>	<b>West Mercia</b>
2003/2004	7.7%	10.6%	6.9%	10.4%	9.2%	7.4%
2004/2005	8.2%	12%	8.5%	11.6%	9.6%	10.4%
2005/2006	7.7%	13.2%	9.1%	12.4%	8.9%	9.9%

- 3.12 Clearly UPW represents a very significant proportion of the probation workload and its attraction to sentencers for a wide band of offenders has already been mentioned. In the 12 months following ECP implementation growth in most of the areas inspected ranged from 2% to 6% of the caseload, with only Bedfordshire showing a reduction.
- 3.13 The costs to areas in implementing ECP were significant. They were associated with improvements to supervisor pay and conditions, the creation of new posts such as the QAM, training costs, and the reduction in work group size. To deliver this the NPD had been successful in obtaining funding in the SR2000 probation service settlement, based on ECP delivering 50% of the required accredited programmes completions. Areas shared £6.6 million in 2002/2003 and £9 million in 2003/2004. However, the funding was not ring-fenced. While some areas prioritised spending to implement the required changes, others failed to allocate all of the additional funding to ECP.
- 3.14 In three of the areas where stand-downs were a significant problem – London, West Mercia and Northamptonshire – it was acknowledged that UPW was insufficiently resourced to manage the workload effectively. Although the position was made worse by other factors such as sickness, they could not manage UPW to national standards with their current establishment. In all areas where stand-downs were a feature, there was also a problem in recruiting staff who could supervise at the weekend, although other areas were able to do this successfully. The NPD is now collecting information about this and could usefully disseminate examples of effective practice.
- 3.15 With the exception of London, all the areas inspected had been able to reduce the supervisor/offender ratio of most groups to the six to one permitted by Probation Circular 59/2004. However, the frequent failure to invest resources in project development militated against a growth in individual placements which could have had an impact on the rate of stand-downs. Areas aimed for around 20% of placements to be individual ones, but achievement varied widely. Bedfordshire, where there had been a dedicated project manager, achieved around 40% of placements being supervised either singly or in groups by other organisations. In London, in contrast, the figure in some districts was said to be as low as only 5%.

**Good practice example:**

Despite the low proportion of the West Mercia population being from black and minority ethnic groups, the area had identified 14% of the groups benefiting from UPW work in 2004 as coming from those communities. There was also some work currently underway to establish a project to benefit the traveller community.

- 3.16 It had been thought that Probation Circular 59/2004 would free up areas to reduce the level of resources in UPW by creating a two tier system of orders involving ECP and also 'straight' UPW orders. Offenders assessed as having an OGRS of less than 41% (this applied to 62% of the sample) did not need to have a full OASys, provided a risk of harm screening identified them as low risk and a basic skills screening had also been completed. Staff who had not had full ECP training could then manage these orders. In reality, whilst areas had in the main been quick to end the requirement for OASys to be completed, only London felt it could attempt a two tiered system. All other areas had insufficient resources to manage differentiating between the two types of offender. The outcome for both staff and offenders has been confusion. This is described further in subsequent chapters.

**Management and supervision of staff:**

- **The Board and CO have HR planning strategies that ensure delivery of an effective UPW scheme.**

Table 5: Management and supervision of staff

Bedfordshire	Humberside	London	Northamptonshire	Warwickshire	West Mercia
NOT MET	PARTLY MET	NOT MET	PARTLY MET	SATISFACTORILY MET	PARTLY MET

- 3.17 The NPD had described a comprehensive staffing model in the core manual but this was advisory rather than prescriptive. We found that in general the model used was that of a unit manager, a QAM, case managers, administrative staff and on-site supervisors. However, there were many variations including around the role and grade of managers. Some supervisors only supervised offenders on site, whilst others also acted as case managers. Some areas had a placement manager, others combined the role with the case manager. The scope, grade and remit of QAMs also differed widely. Despite these differences, all areas had put in place structures to ensure the day-to-day management of staff and the delivery of their version of ECP.
- 3.18 We found the best performing areas had a single scheme manager who took the major operational decisions and held staff and managers to account for the delivery of local policy. In areas with split management responsibilities, we found differential practice in relation to a number of issues, most notably the quality and timeliness of staff supervision and project development work. We also found too large a degree of discretion about staff working weekends, and about the levels of support given to case managers for them to be able to do their jobs properly.

***Good practice example:***

Warwickshire had a pro-active approach to performance management and meeting targets. The area manager carried out regular quality audits and staff were held accountable for their work. Information and IT systems were embedded and produced helpful management reports. The area had used some of its internal audit days to quality assure UPW and had acted on recommendations made to improve the scheme further.

- 3.19 The role of case manager in ECP nationally had been restricted by design from the more varied and responsible CP officer role. This had been taken to the extreme in some areas where case managers did not routinely meet ‘their’ cases or undertake the OASys assessment with their role then becoming largely an administrative one. The case managers conducting PSAs were not necessarily going to have responsibility for those cases and subsequently would only have contact with those allocated to them if the offender needed to be breached. Case managers also no longer had responsibility for finding and maintaining placements. In some areas this was done by a dedicated project manager but in others there were no staff to undertake this work.
- 3.20 Some areas combined the roles of case manager and supervisor that had the potential of retaining their ability to get to know and motivate offenders. Where this was successful it was the most effective model. However, in other areas in the sample and in other areas inspected in ESI it was beset with problems. These were in the main: (a) issues around the recruitment of staff prepared to work at weekends (this will be referred to later); and (b) some former supervisors in this role who had not willingly or readily embraced the office-based case manager role.
- 3.21 The make-up of the staff group in terms of diversity was an issue in five of the six areas inspected. Whilst the whole organisation had met or exceeded the Home Secretary’s target on the recruitment of black and minority ethnic staff, this was not always reflected in UPW teams. The best area was Northamptonshire which had set and achieved a target of 20% of UPW staff (managers, case managers and supervisors) to be from minority populations. This was the most effective example of targeted recruitment and staff retention. Other areas had successfully recruited female supervisors and other staff in what had traditionally been a male dominated area of work.
- 3.22 Prior to the launch of ECP, all staff had gone through an assessment centre. The aim of this centre was to allow staff to demonstrate that they had a pro-social and problem-solving approach to work. There had been a major concern at the time that not all staff would be successful but, as already mentioned, most did complete the centre and went on to undertake the ECP training. Once all staff had received their initial training, which was necessary for the scheme to gain accreditation, only Warwickshire had managed to deliver the required ECP training for new joiners in a timely manner.
- 3.23 It was disturbing that in a number of areas we found strong evidence of an ‘us and them’ culture in relation to UPW staff and other staff of the probation service. This was most pronounced where one group of UPW staff referred to the service as if it was a separate organisation. Staff gave anecdotal accounts of not being fully consulted about plans, for example on new office accommodation. When training was offered, UPW staff were often last to be included or they were given a reduced version.

- 3.24 This hierarchy was replicated within UPW teams themselves, with not all supervisors accorded the status of full team members. Supervisors often received very little ongoing training beyond the core induction. There was also a major concern that communication between case managers and supervisors was sometimes only one way, with the latter passing on information about individual offenders but this not happening in reverse. In Northamptonshire we found that supervisors were fully integrated with the rest of the team and played an appropriate part in its work. In Warwickshire too a written information exchange system enabled supervisors and case managers to share information and therefore properly manage risk, behaviour and attendance.
- 3.25 In some areas there was a dedicated UPW unit training plan that was also linked to the appraisal process. If there was no plan or it was deficient in other respects, it was unlikely that a UPW training need would be properly identified or actioned by managers. A major gap was staff understanding of risk of harm issues and how to manage them. Other areas that needed to be addressed were OASys and supervision planning, and for new staff basic induction into the aims and values of the probation service.
- 3.26 Where there had been investment in core training, this was reflected in better than average results in the file reading scores on assessment, case management and compliance. It was also a strength that most staff had had relevant health and safety training. However, this was not always the case and one group of supervisors complained of having only received limited training and of feeling not fully equipped to do the work as a result. We saw a number of examples where additional training in scaffolding or use of electrical equipment meant that the range and number of placements that could be undertaken was increased. This had had a direct and positive impact on the work that could then be done for local communities.
- 3.27 Most case managers had had OASys training and where they had not this was symptomatic of problems common to other staff. We found examples of little consideration apparently being given to the use of OASys in UPW. Case managers were typically trained alongside TPOs and could not apply what they were taught to their own work. In one area staff did not understand which orders needed an OASys, or at what stage this should be done or reviewed.
- 3.28 The quality of staff supervision was mixed. All areas had a policy and in the majority this had been updated to take into account the development of ECP. However, there was inconsistent application, even within areas, and in four of those inspected we made recommendations that staff supervision should be improved.
- 3.29 Some managers were able to ensure supervision took place, but others never achieved the required standard. Where agency staff were used the picture was further complicated as they were not entitled to either supervision or most of the training available. The most common reason to cancel was high workloads, despite the fact that supervision should have been prioritised if effective work was to be done and practice developed. In Northamptonshire, excellent work was found with group supervision used to review critical incidents so that the whole team could learn lessons. In Warwickshire the unit manager took random samples of supervision notes to ensure the sessions were of the desired quality.

- 3.30 It was encouraging that most areas were now beginning to report monitoring data on supervision to the senior management group and Board, on a regular timetable. This helped develop a culture of learning and accountability. Where areas had achieved or were working towards liP, they were also more likely to have in place relevant policies and practices that made supervision a core business imperative. The liP framework was seen as very helpful as a performance improvement initiative.
- 3.31 A better picture was found in relation to appraisal where the majority of staff interviewed had had an appraisal in the last operational year. However, where supervision was patchy the process of completing an annual appraisal could not be fully effective and it was not always translated into a training plan. We heard comments that sometimes the exercise was a tick box process and not a proper review of the work done. The best practice inspected involved working to a template that included what had been achieved, what needed to be improved, and the actions required from both staff and managers to make this happen.
- 3.32 Data for the full year 2004/2005 showed that none of the areas in the sample had achieved the national annual sickness absence target of an average of nine days per employee, with figures ranging from 10.3% in Bedfordshire to the overall figure of 16.5% in London. One of the biggest single factors in stand-downs was the availability of supervisors to work offenders. Whilst supervisor sickness was not the main reason for the number of stand-downs (this was failure to recruit), it was still a significant factor in some areas. An unintended consequence of improving the conditions of service for supervisors, which included entitlement to sick pay, was that sickness levels had begun to rise to match the prevailing local culture.
- 3.33 Areas' organisation of their staff also had an impact on their ability to be flexible to meet demand. For instance, there had been a growth in the number of employed offenders being made subject to UPW which had put pressure on areas to ensure sufficient cover was available for weekends. This had caused problems where staff had been employed as case managers and/or supervisors via a generic PSO recruitment process. Because it was not clearly spelt out in the selection process that a core part of the job involved working weekends, once in post staff in these areas often took the opportunity to transfer to other Monday to Friday work at the same grade, or in some cases actually refused to work at weekends. However, other areas managed this successfully through an effective recruitment process and by employing sufficient staff to allow a degree of flexibility. This approach struck the right balance and ensured that the needs of the service took precedence over the desires of staff, but where staff were still content and likely to stay.
- 3.34 Northamptonshire had completely revised its recruitment processes and had been successful in attracting a committed and diverse range of staff who worked both weekdays and weekends. Similarly, unit managers and QAMs in Humberside and Warwickshire had rotas to work alternate weekends, provide cover and deliver elements of UPW programmes. Sometimes this was at the expense of quality monitoring, but the outcome was that offenders could complete their orders in the time allowed and none were stood down.
- 3.35 Of the six areas, only Warwickshire satisfactorily met the inspection criteria on management and supervision of staff.

**Communities and beneficiaries:**

- *The Board and CO have strategies and procedures in place to ensure that the area's partnerships with both voluntary and statutory agencies support service delivery and are value for money.*

Table 6: Communities and beneficiaries

Bedfordshire	Humber-side	London	Northamp-tonshire	Warwickshire	West Mercia
SATISFACTORILY MET	PARTLY MET	PARTLY MET	WELL MET	SATISFACTORILY MET	SATISFACTORILY MET

- 3.36 With the exception of Northamptonshire there was a lack of a strategic approach to the integration of UPW into areas' partnership strategies. Although we found links at senior officer level with CDRPs, often resulting in a lot of meetings and activity, this engagement would have benefited from more explicit guidance about what the involvement of UPW could contribute.
- 3.37 The solid work being done to build sustainable relationships between areas and CDRPs was also not without its logistical problems. In London for example this involved working with 32 boroughs, and in Northamptonshire with seven local authorities. The work could also be complex through requiring an understanding of politics and organisations outside the probation service. Even within the smaller areas, staff often had to work with opposing political leaderships and different crime reduction priorities. It was not surprising that these relationships were at differing levels of maturity. All in all though we considered that only one area had failed to capitalise fully on the opportunities linked to the CDRPs. Links had also been made with other government programmes such as Sure Start.
- 3.38 Examples of excellent work undertaken with CDRPS and other agencies were:
- in London, the various Payback schemes were impressive multi-agency projects which consulted local residents in crime hot spots, agreed a plan of work and finally checked out with residents if the desired outcomes had been achieved
  - Northamptonshire had worked hard to get a county-wide agreement so that a budget from all the CDRPs was pooled to allow maximum flexibility when undertaking tasks such as community clean-ups and graffiti removal
  - West Mercia offenders were involved in fitting locks and other crime prevention devices for victims of burglary and other vulnerable groups
  - Warwickshire QAMs had worked with the Fire Service to reduce the incidence of accidental fires by fitting smoke alarms and distributing advice leaflets, thus having a direct impact on other agency targets to reduce crime and accidents
  - in Humberside some very creative work had been done with environmental agencies to enhance areas of natural beauty in the wildlife parks next to the Humber Bridge

- in Bedfordshire the acting scheme manager had made use of her knowledge and expertise in community development working to forge links with Luton Borough Council and the Safer Luton Partnership.

3.39 Whilst there was scope for more work to be done, it was positive that many quality projects had been developed and these had generated positive feedback from local communities. Unfortunately though some of the chosen tasks were poor in terms of capacity to engage offenders, e.g. litter picking and some graffiti removal schemes. This had led to an increase in non-compliance with a consequent effect on the staff time needed to deal with this. Warwickshire had taken a pragmatic approach to this problem and made sure that offenders worked in turn on both unpopular boring schemes (known locally as ‘grot-spots’) and on constructive placements. This was more likely to maintain motivation and continue to create opportunities for them to develop skills whilst doing UPW. It also met the demand from communities for visible punishments and reparation by offenders.

3.40 However, we also found instances of some offenders working the majority of their orders (often up to 240 hours) stuffing envelopes or litter picking, few of which placements met the PQM criteria. The areas concerned were not able to justify this or explain how they been approved under the quality assurance framework. As a result, we asked for a number of placements to be discontinued.

3.41 The lack of staff in some areas also meant that people were unable to invest much time in placement development or in finding and supporting agency placements. They were particularly low on individual agency placements. Finding good quality placements in most areas where there was no dedicated placement manager seemed to be at the discretion of the individual CPO or unit manager, with no apparent corporate approach.

3.42 In some areas all placements available scored the maximum on the QPM. This allowed staff to claim that all offenders’ needs were fully matched. In some cases the QAM had brought this to a more senior manager’s attention as against scheme guidelines, but no changes had been made. Senior managers in other areas were also aware of gaps in placement provision but had not taken timely action to improve matters. Whilst work on placement quality had been undertaken at the time of ECP implementation, we found that only Humberside now had a strategy in place to improve low scoring placements or discontinue them.

3.43 Whilst on site we were given letters of appreciation from beneficiaries highlighting the good work carried out. Beneficiaries in the six areas who had responded to the NPD survey all said that they would recommend the work of the service to others and that they would use UPW again themselves.

3.44 We found that on-site supervisors worked positively with offenders and beneficiaries and were much appreciated by both. We also observed positive work done by offenders who were able to tell us about new skills they had learned, e.g. reading, writing, electrical skills and working safely with hazardous substances. Projects that we observed and commended were:

- in London offenders, who had contributed to making costumes for the Notting Hill carnival as their UPW, took friends and families to see the parade and proudly showed off their work. The project included an historical

overview of carnival tradition and was a good example of practical work helping to break down racial and cultural stereotypes

- in Midby Park in Humberside the local councillor had consulted residents on what work should be undertaken by offenders so as to promote local knowledge and ownership of the scheme. In addition, a regular newsletter updated the local population on progress on the restoration work being carried out, while positive local press coverage included that the work in the park was done by offenders on community sentences
- Oldington and Foley Park Community Network in West Mercia offered a quality placement in a furniture restoration workshop, incorporating the elements of ECP. This project was well used, particularly during the week
- QAMs in Warwickshire had developed an impressive range of crime and disorder linked placements. These included graffiti removal, which was county wide, erection of notices advising 'this area is under CCTV surveillance' and building 'Safe Routes' to public picnic areas
- work with Sure Start in Northamptonshire had resulted in a high quality skills opportunity for offenders to work with vulnerable young families installing safety equipment, i.e. safety gates on stairs. This had led in the past year to a decrease from 70 to zero in the number of recorded accidents involving children. Staff from Northamptonshire had presented the findings from the project to a major national Public Health conference in April 2005
- residents in one area of Bedfordshire had been given the opportunity of selecting what community clean-up work should be chosen for offenders. This had been successful in getting them to use problem-solving skills to determine how to clear-up alleys and paths, and receiving feedback from local residents. The work also anticipated the national Visible UPW Scheme.

3.45 The approach to individual placements was more mixed, with an almost total reliance in some areas in placing offenders in charity shops. Where this was the case we made a recommendation that the area should enhance the range and scope of those placements available.

3.46 There was no evidence of a strategic approach to communication with communities or specifically with black and minority ethnic populations, nor was there a planned approach in several of the areas to finding suitable placements for black and minority ethnic offenders. Placement managers did what they could in the time available. This was worrying as areas had a duty under the Race Relation (Amendment) Act 2000 to produce a Race Equality Action Plan which should have considered the impact of UPW policy and procedures on local black and minority populations, following local consultation. An exception to this was Northamptonshire which had set and achieved a local target to have 20% of placements with black and minority ethnic and other diverse populations. West Mercia had also achieved a creditable 14% of projects working with these groups and also had plans to work with the traveller community.

3.47 No area had been able to develop fully the necessary partnerships to deliver GSL for all offenders where this was identified as a criminogenic factor and/or specified as a supervision objective. Two areas had no infrastructure at all to deliver GSL, although in one of these a pilot project was underway at the time of the inspection.

- 3.48 A number of positive initiatives were nevertheless seen. Two contracted partnerships in West Mercia involved the collection, repair and distribution of furniture and offered GSL. Northamptonshire managers had negotiated with Thresham College to provide GSL through a mobile project that was parked on site for tutors to work with offenders and deliver IT based learning. The project was very well used and the offenders we spoke to rated it highly. In Bedfordshire the Marston Vale Forest Centre was a conservation project that had introduced GSL under an ESF contract. It regularly took two supervised work parties and offered opportunities to offenders to learn skills as well as providing contact with beneficiaries.
- 3.49 On painting and decorating projects, in addition to the practical skills being taught, rooms had been set aside for tutors to offer basic literacy work so that offenders could gain basic skills, NVQ and other recognised qualifications. Humberside had an impressive arrangement to provide GSL on site in the Scunthorpe office where there was a well-equipped classroom with IT and other resources.

**Effective communication with sentencers:**

- *There is high quality, proactive communication by the area with local sentencers and clerks to the justices about the UPW scheme*

Table 7: Effective communication with sentencers

Bedfordshire	Humberside	London	Northamptonshire	Warwickshire	West Mercia
NOT MET	SATISFACTORYLY MET	SATISFACTORYLY MET	SATISFACTORYLY MET	SATISFACTORYLY MET	SATISFACTORYLY MET

- 3.50 We found poor evidence of a strategic dimension to work with the courts. Only Northamptonshire had a strategy to communicate with sentencers and this had been in place since April 2004. To support this, a survey had been undertaken to test out sentencer views on their understanding of ECP and of PSR proposals that were linked to this. This was to be commended. Other areas were not able to evidence a similar comprehensive approach.
- 3.51 Communication specifically about ECP was nevertheless included within most areas' regular contact with magistrates and judges. In addition, some Board members were sentencers, which was another route to providing information. Sentencers were informed of targeting criteria and OGRS thresholds. Leaflets were routinely attached to PSRs about the ECP criteria. ECP was included in new magistrates' induction training. In the majority of areas the implications of the change to UPW had also been included within recent training for sentencers given by probation service staff.

***Good practice example:***

In London a range of high quality briefing papers, information leaflets and newsletters for sentencers had been produced. There were also a number of examples of good liaison and exchange of information through meetings with magistrates in each quadrant and at bench level.

- 3.52 In some areas stand-downs had led to a number of orders passing the 12 month stage without being returned to court for an extension to be requested, as the law required. One area had raised the issue of extensions with their local magistrates' court only to be told that a return to court was not necessary.
- 3.53 In most areas where this was the case they had chosen not to highlight their inability to manage orders to their local courts. This led to problems with courts being made aware of stand-downs only when offenders pleaded not guilty to breach. As a consequence of sentencers taking the view that failing to attend on several occasions was understandable, case managers were less likely to breach orders when the national standard required this.
- 3.54 Despite the work done by the areas with sentencers to inform them of the ECP sentencing criteria, our sample indicated that 36% of offenders had an OGRS score of less than 20% and 26% were in the range 21% to 40%. Further steps were needed to ensure more appropriate sentencing was part of the wider dialogue with courts. During the inspection the NPD issued Probation Circular 86/2005 which reaffirmed work with courts as a key business objective in all probation service work.
- 3.55 Positive work undertaken by areas to support a good working relationship with sentencers included:
- unit 'open days' at the main centres in Humberside specifically aimed at sentencers. Feedback from these events had been positive
  - recognising the likelihood of sentencers continuing to use UPW as a popular option, Bedfordshire had targeted its efforts towards persuading them to make shorter orders
  - during the implementation of ECP the Northamptonshire unit manager had made a number of visits to inform magistrates about the planned changes, the work then being continued via the PLCs
  - of particular note was a 'Bench Book', that contained information about the work of the probation service for judges and recorders in London Crown Courts
  - there were regular meetings between sentencers and West Mercia senior managers and the Board Chair. Progress in, and changes to UPW were featured in examples of minutes seen
  - in Warwickshire sentencers were informed of targeting criteria and OGRS thresholds. Leaflets were routinely attached to PSRs about the ECP criteria. ECP was included within new magistrates' induction training.

## Overall findings for Quality of ECP/UPW Management

### Strengths

- All areas had made the HR changes required to implement ECP and had invested in staff training.
- There were positive examples of quality placements in all areas providing benefits to the community and supervised by well-motivated and trained staff.
- Where a positive approach to health and safety procedures was built into the scheme, this added depth and consistency to placement development.
- Some areas worked with CDRPs to consult local people about what projects would be of value in their locality.
- Areas worked in partnership with other agencies to provide a range of placements where offenders could learn new skills.

### Areas for improvement

- Investment in UPW staff was insufficient to manage orders consistently to national standards in several areas.
- There was a lack of strategic direction and investment in relation to promoting race equality and other aspects of diversity through UPW.
- A wider and more diverse range of placements was needed to ensure that all sections of the population could benefit and offenders' diversity needs be fully addressed. Local targets should be set and reviewed annually.
- UPW schemes and staff were often not well integrated into the work of the service as a whole and were often perceived by themselves and others as quite separate. The quality of case management suffered as a consequence.
- There was a patchy use of the 20% of hours available for employability linked activity.
- Areas where stand-downs were a problem did not share information with local courts about their ability to manage orders.

## Recommendations

### *The NPD should ensure that:*

- *clarification is issued about the procedures and associated training required in the management of UPW*
- *the national ECP/UPW performance target is revised to include the national standard requirement that areas offer offenders at least six hours work per week*
- *consistent attention is given to health and safety in the delivery of UPW by all probation areas*

- *consultation is undertaken within areas and with the Youth Justice Board about the management of 16 and 17 year olds undertaking UPW in order to safeguard their welfare.*

***Probation Boards should ensure that:***

- *sufficient staff are in place for UPW to be delivered that meets the requirements of the national standard*
- *diversity and partnership strategies are reviewed, including meeting the area's responsibilities under the Race Relations and Crime and Disorder legislation*
- *courts are kept fully informed about any shortfall in the area's ability to manage sentences.*

## 4. QUALITY OF ECP/UPW ASSESSMENT

4.1 In this chapter we discuss the assessment of the risk of harm and likelihood of reoffending; the extent to which these assessments informed supervision plans and reviews for case management purposes and their use in the identification and planning of placements. The sources of evidence of assessment are the approximately 260 cases examined in the six areas. Further evidence also came from discussions with case managers, supervisors, middle and senior managers, partner agencies, beneficiaries and evidence provided in advance by the area. We also include for comparison information from the 29 areas inspected under the ESI programme before the start of this thematic inspection.

**Assessment of risk of harm:**

- Risk of harm is satisfactorily assessed using an approved instrument (OASys where available), specialist assessment tools, where relevant, and draws on MAPPA, other agencies' and previous probation service assessments.*

Table 8: Assessment of risk of harm

CRITERION	Bedford-shire	Humber-side	London	Northamp-tonshire	Warwick-shire	West Mercia	All Areas
Assessment of risk of harm	29%	62%	40%	56%	55%	64%	51%

4.2 UPW was designed to manage offenders who presented a low to medium risk of harm, although high-risk cases could also be successfully worked if there was careful matching of the offender to the placement. Because of this it was important that no offender should be allocated to work without a risk of harm assessment. Whilst there are now few POs working in UPW all areas had arrangements in place to ensure that risk assessment in medium and high risk of harm cases could be properly undertaken. However, this sometimes had to be carried out by staff from outside the scheme that might lead to delays or the assessment not being completed at all. Such problems were also more likely to happen if UPW was not well integrated with the rest of the organisation.

4.3 In none of the areas was the quality of risk of harm assessment satisfactory. The low scores often reflected poor timeliness, but in some areas a significant number of assessments were not completed at all. The number of missed assessments in Humberside and Warwickshire was negligible, but they were missing in 16% of Bedfordshire cases, 18% in West Mercia, 19% in Northamptonshire and 28% in London. These were all cases that had already been instructed to work.

4.4 Case managers did interview all offenders before they started work in line with traditional practice, but they then tended to use their judgement rather than an assessment tool to determine what risk of harm and potential disruption to the work

party an individual posed. For many case managers the two issues amounted to the same thing.

- 4.5 The average score for this criterion was 51% which was lower than that of 57% scored by the first 29 areas inspected in ESI for risk of harm assessment in all orders. However, this latter score was also unsatisfactory and is currently being addressed by the NPD and all probation areas. It is important that the quality of risk of harm assessment in UPW is included in any remedial plans.

**Assessment of likelihood of reoffending:**

- *The likelihood of reoffending and criminogenic factors are satisfactorily identified and assessed using an approved instrument (OASys, OGRS2, LSI-R, ACE).*

Table 9: Assessment of likelihood of reoffending

CRITERION	Bedfordshire	Humber-side	London	Northamptonshire	Warwickshire	West Mercia	All Areas
Assessment of likelihood of reoffending	85%	97%	52%	76%	85%	91%	81%

- 4.6 Assessment of the likelihood of reoffending reflects whether OGRS and/or OASys have been completed. This was more likely to have been done and at 81% the completion rate was almost the same as for all the cases inspected in the first 29 ESI areas. However, the fact that not all cases had been given an OGRS score raised doubts as to how well areas would be able to determine the different levels of supervision and assessment laid down in Probation Circular 59/2004.

**Case management:**

- *The case is managed effectively and interventions coordinated to enable criminogenic factors to be addressed (combined order cases) and any risk of harm managed. The ISP takes account of the PSR or SSR and describes an overall plan of work for each offender, in line with the assessments of risk of harm and need and the likelihood of reoffending.*

Table 10: Quality of case management

CRITERION	Bedfordshire	Humber-side	London	Northamptonshire	Warwickshire	West Mercia	All Areas
Quality of case management	27%	79%	27%	51%	66%	62%	52%

- 4.7 Integrated case management in UPW requires that an assessment of the quality of a placement has taken place and that this is matched to offender need by extracting a limited number of scores from OASys. We saw little proper use of this approach, although elements of it were in place in most areas. London for example had relatively few OASys completions, the PQM was also rarely completed, and allocation was based on the offender’s day of availability and location. However, the area did have QAMs in post assessing placement quality. West Mercia, Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire also

had a QAM in post and usually completed placement assessments and matrices, but when it came to allocation used the same system as London. In all of this the introduction of ECP had brought little change to previous practice.

Table 11: Satisfactory match between need and the QPM

CRITERION	Bedfordshire	Humber-side	London	Northamptonshire	Warwickshire	West Mercia	All Areas
Satisfactory match between need and the QPM	15%	85%	14%	28%	64%	31%	40%

4.8 In Humberside and one unit in West Mercia all placements were assessed as having top marks. This meant they could provide for the needs of anyone, though in theory they also provided too much for low needs offenders. Having observed some of these placements we considered that they did not all merit such a high rating, suggesting that decisions had been made on the grounds of expediency rather than through proper assessment.

4.9 Areas' achievement of the requirement that PSAIs should be carried out within five working days of sentence are shown in the table below. Where performance was poor this was due to a lack of UPW staff.

Table 12: PSAI completed within five working days of sentence

CRITERION	Bedfordshire	Humber-side	London	Northamptonshire	Warwickshire	West Mercia	All Areas
PSAI completed within five working days of sentence	81%	84%	53%	56%	79%	17%	62%

4.10 Performance in putting together the actual sentence plan, including the decision about allocation, was even more mixed. As a result of the changes introduced by Probation Circular 59/2004 and the 2005 revised national standards, the plan was no longer a single generic document for all cases and so we needed to make a judgement about what was required in each case. In the table overleaf the first criterion relates to both whether the plan had been produced promptly and also whether its quality was satisfactory. The second relates only to the plan's quality. It should be noted that following the publication of the circular, some areas, for example Humberside, had responded by setting up their own non-ECP/non-OASys plans. A short template of SMART objectives had been developed and was well used by case managers. Staff there were able to demonstrate that they understood the concept and use of such objectives and many good examples were found in the files themselves.

Table 13: Quality and timeliness of the ISP

CRITERION	Bedfordshire	Humber-side	London	Northamptonshire	Warwickshire	West Mercia	All Areas
Plan meets requirements of national standards and is appropriate to the needs of the case	13%	65%	11%	44%	42%	52%	38%
Was the content satisfactory?	16%	71%	17%	41%	58%	58%	44%

- 4.11 The PPWS element of ECP was seen as a positive development by both staff and offenders. Staff were able to reinforce key messages about enforcement, health and safety and the expectations placed on both the offender and the probation service. Supervisors believed that compliance and discipline had improved as a result. Offenders interviewed during the inspection were able to tell us about the issues discussed with the result that they were then more likely to keep to the rules.

**Documentation:**

- *All relevant documentation is available and has been satisfactorily completed.*

- 4.12 The table below shows the overall quality of the case records and also whether liaison responsibilities were clearly defined, a particularly important issue in UPW. There was again a wide variation in quality. The second row we believe to be an example of where areas sell themselves short by under-recording. We found that most liaison responsibilities were clear but that they were not well recorded.

Table 14: Overall quality of case records and whether liaison responsibilities are clearly defined

CRITERION	Bedfordshire	Humber-side	London	Northamptonshire	Warwickshire	West Mercia	All Areas
Case records are well organised and complete	52%	74%	33%	28%	60%	58%	51%
Liaison responsibilities are clearly defined	14%	59%	12%	28%	60%	46%	37%

**Overall findings for Quality of ECP/UPW Assessment**

**Strengths**

- All areas had arrangements in place to assess and supervise offenders safely.
- All offenders were interviewed by UPW staff prior to being allocated to a work placement.

### ***Areas for improvement***

- There were examples of offenders being allocated to work without a risk of harm assessment in four of the six areas inspected.
- Little use was made of the needs analysis in the PQM in matching offenders to placement.
- Few sentence plans were completed in cases where there was not a full OASys.
- There was a fragmentation of the case management of orders in areas where the responsibility of the case manager was reduced to a largely administrative role once supervision commenced.

### **Recommendations**

#### ***The NPD should ensure that:***

- *guidance is issued about the purpose, timing and content of supervision plans and reviews*
- *further consideration is given to staff roles within UPW to prepare for the end-to-end management of offenders.*

#### ***Probation Boards should ensure that:***

- *local performance monitoring includes information about the satisfactory completion of assessment of risk of harm*
- *no offender is allocated to work without a risk of harm assessment being completed*
- *proper use is made of risk and criminogenic needs analysis in allocating offenders to work.*

## 5. QUALITY OF ECP/UPW INTERVENTIONS

5.1 In this chapter we discuss the delivery and quality of interventions. The sources of evidence are the approximately 260 cases examined in the six areas. Further evidence also came from discussions with case managers, supervisors, middle and senior managers, partner agencies, beneficiaries and evidence provided in advance by the area.

### **Managing attendance and enforcement:**

- ***Contact with the offender and enforcement of the order is planned and implemented to meet the requirements of national standards.***

Table 15: Managing attendance and enforcement

CRITERION	Bedfordshire	Humber-side	London	Northamp-tonshire	Warwick-shire	West Mercia	All Areas
Managing attendance and enforcement	85%	91%	71%	84%	91%	78%	83%

5.2 Offender attendance was monitored satisfactorily and action taken to ensure compliance in 89% of all the cases in the sample. The majority of offenders we interviewed were able to confirm that they knew the policies on acceptable and unacceptable absences and turning up late for work. Most of them also said that these were communicated and enforced consistently. We found that judgments about the acceptability of reasons for absence were satisfactory in most cases. In Humberside and Warwickshire in particular we found good systems, clear policy and close liaison to ensure staff worked to a common set of standards.

5.3 In some areas problems were found as a result of inconsistent application of the policies. In an effort to improve compliance and meet targets case managers would let offenders arriving late attend placements instead of being sent home. This was also more likely to be the case when offenders had to travel long distances to get to the pick-up point, for example in rural areas. We also found that in 28% of relevant cases breach action had not been taken within the national standard timescale.

5.4 Staff were making good use of standard materials when undertaking PPWS so that offenders could be informed of expectations regarding attendance, behaviour, and health and safety rules. The best results were when the PPWS was run as a group and did not form part of the PSAI. Where they were combined either assessment or information giving suffered. Not all areas ensured that the PPWS took place within the required ten working days and in 59% of cases where this did not happen no acceptable reason was given to explain the delay.

5.5 In two areas, Warwickshire and Humberside, managers had taken all the necessary steps to ensure that no offenders were stood down during the course of their orders. No

offenders in these samples reported being stood down due to lack of supervisors or insufficient work. They were commended for this excellent achievement.

5.6 In all the other areas we discovered many examples of offenders being stood down from work, either being told in advance not to report, or being sent home once they had actually turned up on the day. In the sample of cases inspected:

- 23% had been stood down at some point in the order
- 82% had been stood down more than twice
- one offender had been stood down on 18 consecutive occasions.

5.7 The majority of areas inspected both in the thematic and in the ESI programme generally credited offenders who were stood down with one hour's work. There was no specific national standard or NPD guidance available to areas on the maximum allowed. We considered one hour to be a reasonable figure in these circumstances.

5.8 Discussions with offenders out on placement highlighted the fact that being stood down was the single greatest cause for complaint amongst them. In particular, offenders instructed to attend for UPW at the weekend were in employment, often working six days per week and were angry that: (a) they had turned up on what should have been their only rest day; (b) they wanted to get their order completed; and (c) for the self-employed this was costing them money as they would otherwise be using the day for some aspect of their business.

5.9 Staff had to make decisions on the day about how many offenders could be supervised safely and who should be sent home. In some circumstances this responsibility fell to a lone supervisor who had to deal with the possible consequent anger. Some areas had taken steps to reduce the impact of lack of supervisors by:

- delaying the commencement of orders to avoid routinely instructing offenders to work only to then send them home because supervisors were unavailable
- creating a 'holding bay'. Offenders were told that they could spend up to 18 weeks here before being instructed to work. However, this had considerably extended the time needed to complete orders, including most probably doubling it as far as shorter orders were concerned.

5.10 As a result offenders in some areas were unlikely to complete orders within the statutory 12 months, particularly if they required a weekend supervised work party. We were extremely concerned about this situation and the negative impact it would have on public confidence in community sentences if left unchecked. The matter has already been brought to the attention of the NPD which has issued new instructions on monitoring stand-downs. From October 2005 areas have been required to provide the NPD with information quarterly on the number of occasions when:

- orders did not commence within the national standards timescale
- offenders were not offered the now required six hours work each week
- offenders were told in advance not to report
- offenders were sent home due to lack of supervisors.

- 5.11 The inspection also examined issues of liaison in relation to the management of CPROs. In Northamptonshire these were dealt with by a small group of staff so problems with liaison did not arise. The orders were also well managed in Humberside and Warwickshire with staff confident in the use of IT which facilitated the sharing of information. However in the other areas CPROs tended to be managed as two separate orders. An example of the problems caused by this was that UPW staff were often frustrated by the inconsistent application of the enforcement policy between themselves and the PO case managers who had responsibility for judgements about the acceptability of reasons for absence on the UPW element. Not only did this slow down the enforcement process but UPW staff also believed unacceptable absences were more likely to be ignored. This caused problems on work parties where offenders who had been breached in similar circumstances felt this was a discriminatory approach. In one unit we found a poor level of communication between UPW staff and PO case managers despite being based in the same office.

***Good practice example:***

A Warwickshire offender on a CPRO, was the father of a young child, who lived in another part of the country, and he was applying for a residence order. He needed to travel there so that regular contact and meetings with Social Services could take place. This was the most important factor in his life and supervision took this into account. Through good liaison with both CP and community rehabilitation elements in the other probation area, he completed the order satisfactorily, and the two areas ensured that contact levels met national standards.

**Delivering appropriate supervision:**

- ***The principles of integrated case management are applied consistently in ECP. Interventions are delivered to achieve the objectives identified in the ISP and recorded according to the requirements of national standards. Case managers oversee and coordinate the work of other staff and partner organisations and all staff play an active part in motivating and supporting offenders throughout their supervision.***

- 5.12 The arrangements to undertake supervision reviews were mixed. Where no supervision plans had been prepared in the first place, there could be no attempt at integrated case management. However, once the order had commenced many offenders were also not seen again to undertake a review using OASys, nor did case managers use the information available to them from supervisors to do a paper-based review. Overall, supervision plan reviews were found in only 17% of sample. Even where a review had been completed, the quality was often insufficient, including a general absence of SMART objectives.
- 5.13 There was mixed evidence of case managers engaging with offenders and motivating them to get through their orders, with the work here assessed as sufficient in only 60% of cases. This reflected the changed nature of the role, with many case managers having very little direct contact with the offenders for whom they were responsible. Similarly, only about two-thirds of the cases showed sufficient evidence of case managers liaising with other people who were providing supervision. This included supervisors not being

given all necessary information about the offenders in their work parties, including that related to the management of risk of harm.

- 5.14 We also found that case managers in some teams were not making fullest use of the information available from supervisors. At the end of each work session supervisors would complete an attendance and participation log to be given as a record to the offender with a copy sent to the case manager. However, these were to be found on the file in only 59% of cases. There needed to more evidence of this information being used on a day-to-day basis by case managers to maintain or improve the effectiveness of supervision.
- 5.15 UPW was assessed as demanding and as fully occupying offenders in over 90% of cases. Offenders spoken to were likely to believe that the work they were undertaking was worthwhile, and they planned to engage positively and benefit as much as the placement would allow.
- 5.16 Whilst in general we found that literacy and dyslexia were addressed, many offenders we spoke to had not been encouraged to make use of the allowance to undertake Skills for Life work, which could now form up to 20% of their total hours. In one area though the time spent undertaking Skills for Life exceeded the 20% allowance in 44% of cases. This failed to encourage an appropriate voluntary response from the offender to their personal development and diminished the punishment aspect of the order.

***Good practice example:***

Humberstaff staff had an impressive record of helping offenders achieve qualifications in health and safety and through participation in the Skills for Life scheme. The scheme was explained at an initial interview with the case manager, the offender encouraged to participate, and all this reinforced at the PPWS. Offenders completed the Skills for Life assessment, which was independently marked by education staff, and then attended sessions which ran over three days and two evenings per week at an adult education centre. Successful completers were centre stage at a ceremony where they received a £50 WH Smith voucher. Offenders we spoke to during the inspections were very positive about the impact this initiative had had on their confidence and self-esteem.

- 5.17 Supervisors reported that some groups were too large to deliver ECP and Problem Solving at Work fully. Probation Circular 59/2004 had approved a relaxation in the previous ratio of six offenders to one supervisor, but in the worst case we had reported to us one supervisor worked alone with a group of 15 offenders. London, Northamptonshire, and Warwickshire now worked groups up to a maximum of eight offenders, which we considered an appropriate number provided the group had been properly assessed and selected. However, on larger groups with only one supervisor it was difficult to occupy everyone fully and the groups also missed out on problem-solving work as insufficient time was spent with each member. We did see larger groups working well in projects such as Pay Back in London or on graffiti and environmental works in Northamptonshire and Warwickshire. Here, a police officer, community support staff, or local authority workers provided additional supervision. They also brought other dimensions to the management of the placement and ensured stronger links with the local community.

**Diversity needs:**

- *There is a full range of interventions to meet diverse needs. There is evidence of appropriate support arrangements for women, minority ethnic and disabled offenders.*

Table 16: Attention to diversity in UPW

CRITERION	Bedfordshire	Humber-side	London	Northamp-tonshire	Warwick-shire	West Mercia	All Areas
Arrangements for interventions took account of diversity	80%	97%	57%	62%	85%	88%	78%
Delivery of interventions took account of diversity	81%	100%	56%	84%	82%	79%	80%

5.18 We observed that most UPW staff, both case managers and placement managers, were sensitive to the diverse needs of offenders and were consequently likely to make appropriate decisions about allocating them to work. Although it was not always clearly documented, the actual practice observed shone out as a clear strength. It was normal practice to check out with female and minority ethnic offenders that what was on offer was acceptable, even though it was not always possible to ensure that a choice of placements could be delivered. In Northamptonshire and Humberside areas literacy, numeracy and dyslexia had been properly addressed in all relevant cases.

**Good practice example:**

There was a good level of female members of staff in Bedfordshire ensuring that women offenders need not be the lone female member of a work group. Two members of supervising staff also identified themselves as being from black or minority ethnic groups. Staff reported that there were also sufficient numbers of black and minority ethnic offenders on UPW for there to be no concerns about them being isolated on a work party. We were able to confirm this in our visits to worksites.

5.19 All the areas provided an interpreter at the PSAI for offenders with limited knowledge of the English language, but the use of interpreters was rarely extended to placements where people had to get by with the assistance of supervisors and other members of the work party. This raised questions about their understanding of health and safety issues. This was brought to the attention of managers in Humberside during the inspection and a full review was undertaken. It was a credit that they planned to issue new placement procedures to ensure staff were aware of this issue.

**Responsivity:**

- *Offenders' learning style, motivation and capacity to engage with work are taken into account in the assessment and intervention plan.*

5.20 70% of the cases showed that consideration had been given to the best methods to engage with offenders and ensure their compliance with supervision. Although this showed scope for improvement, we observed good examples of staff working hard to

demonstrate pro-social modelling to the offenders they were supervising. Offender satisfaction levels were high where attempts had been made to keep them with the same supervisor and in the same work placement throughout the order.

- 5.21 Not every placement fully matched the PQM, which the case manager should have completed as part of the assessment. We found a PQM on file in only 36% of cases, although these were nearly all of a satisfactory quality.

**Management of risk of harm:**

- *Risk of harm is actively managed in consultation with other agencies.*

- 5.22 The majority of cases we inspected were low or medium risk of harm. In a small number of cases, risk factors changed during the course of supervision and in these circumstances it was essential that their significance was recognised. Supervisors who were seeing offenders weekly for a considerable amount of time were best placed to do this. However, those we spoke to during the inspection painted a mixed picture with regard to getting the necessary ongoing training to support this work. Warwickshire had developed a pack which enabled the sharing of information in a timely and effective manner between case managers and supervisors, but other areas had only limited systems to achieve this.

- 5.23 Whilst the majority of the interventions (81%) were sufficient to manage the presenting level of risk of harm, individual area performance ranged from 100% in Warwickshire and Humberside to below 50% elsewhere. There were also 52 cases where there had been significant events that should have prompted a review of the level of risk of harm, but in only half of these had this been sufficiently well managed.

- 5.24 Only a third of the 19 cases assessed as high risk of harm showed there to have been sufficient management oversight in line with the national standard. We also found only one satisfactory risk management plan in respect of these cases, with all the others being assessed as either insufficient or poor.

- 5.25 In four areas we made a recommendation about improving the training given to supervisors so that they would have more confidence about on-site management of risk of harm. This was linked to the need for areas to have systems in place to allow good communication between case managers and supervisors, especially about possible risk of harm issues.

## **Overall findings for Quality of ECP/UPW Interventions**

### **Strengths**

- Supervisors had embraced the pro-social modelling agenda and were confident in their engagement with offenders and beneficiaries.
- The introduction of the PPWS had contributed to increasing offenders' understanding of what was expected during supervision.

- Staff observed and interviewed demonstrated a positive and integrated approach to diversity work.
- The small number of GSL placements seen were excellent.

### ***Areas for improvement***

- Urgent action was needed to reduce and eliminate stand-downs.
- The management of risk of harm was not sufficient in all cases.
- Managers needed to ensure that enforcement policies were applied fairly and consistently across all requirements of community orders.
- More attention needed to be given to the quality of placements by all areas.
- There should be arrangements for the case manager or equivalent to maintain contact with offenders during the life of the order to sustain their motivation.

### **Recommendations**

#### ***The NPD should ensure that:***

- *the time credited for offenders who are stood down from work should be one hour.*

#### ***Probation Boards should ensure that:***

- *national standards performance data, including figures on stand-downs, are reported to them on a regular basis*
- *systems are in place that encourage and enable communication between supervisors and case managers*
- *training for UPW staff should include risk of harm issues.*

## 6. QUALITY OF ECP/UPW INITIAL OUTCOMES

6.1 In this chapter we discuss the initial outcomes from the interventions. The cases examined had been running for approximately five months, so we expected to be able to assess some improvements as a result of supervision. The sources of evidence are the approximately 260 cases examined in the six areas. Further evidence also came from discussions with case managers, supervisors, middle and senior managers, partner agencies, beneficiaries and evidence provided in advance by the area.

**Interventions are delivered with the required outcomes:**

- *Planned objectives are achieved and the risk of harm/likelihood of reoffending is demonstrably reduced.*

Table 17: Interventions are delivered with the required outcomes

CRITERION	Bedfordshire	Humber-side	London	Northamp-tonshire	Warwick-shire	West Mercia	All Areas
Interventions are delivered with the required outcomes	65%	58%	67%	64%	66%	62%	64%

6.2 We found that offenders on UPW had similar reoffending rates to those on other orders/licences in our overall sample. The majority had not been convicted for a further offence committed since the start of the order. In Bedfordshire reconviction rates were better than average, with nine out of ten offenders not reoffending whilst under the supervision of the probation service.

6.3 Humberside staff had an impressive record on helping offenders achieve qualifications in health and safety and through participation in the Skills for Life scheme. Offenders we spoke to during the inspections were very positive about the impact this work had had on their confidence and self-esteem.

6.4 Whilst not in a position to offer direct help, we found many examples where case managers and supervisors had referred offenders on UPW to the relevant agencies who could assist with issues such as alcohol, debt, drugs, housing or relationship problems.

6.5 Only 55% of offenders had attended all or nearly all of their appointments or work sessions. This was directly linked to the area's ability to offer work. Where stand-downs had been a problem offenders could not build up a regular pattern of attendance and there was a very negative impact on compliance.

6.6 Once their order was completed some offenders had continued to work with a project on a voluntary basis. A number of beneficiaries had offered paid employment to former UPW offenders.

## OUTCOME INFORMATION AND FEEDBACK FROM OFFENDERS

*During the inspection we met with over 400 offenders. The majority were seen on site. A number of others were interviewed over the telephone as part of the main ESI inspection. Their response to some key questions from the telephone interviews are listed below:*

- *90% said the probation service had taken account of their individual needs and circumstances*
- *89% said the service had been able to help them with their problems*
- *86% said that the work done by the service had been helpful*
- *82% said that the UPW they were asked to do was demanding*
- *76% thought there had been a big improvement with their problems*
- *73% thought that being under supervision had caused them to 'think twice' about their offence*
- *69% thought that they were now less likely to reoffend*
- *59% thought that probation work had made them more aware of the impact of their offence on the victim or the wider community.*

### **Outcomes of interventions are assessed and reviewed using all available data:**

- **All available data are used to assess the effectiveness of interventions.**

6.7 The NPD had commissioned the Cambridge Institute of Criminology to evaluate a number of the ECP pathfinder projects. The aim of the research was to gauge the impact on reoffending. A report was produced and circulated within the NPD. It indicated some promising results, but a decision was taken within the Home Office not to publish it or share the results with the wider criminal justice community. Some of the key findings had relevance to this inspection:

- completion of orders was indicative of lower reconviction
- staff judgements about offenders could be critical in predicting the likelihood of reoffending so training programmes needed to aim to cultivate relevant professional skills
- UPW continued to hold potential in reducing levels of reconviction for medium and higher risk offenders.

Like the placement provider survey of UPW this was an example of a considerable amount of resources being invested but the outcomes not being disseminated.

6.8 Humberside staff were beginning to obtain information about UPW from eOASys and CRAMS. From this, they were able to analyse and profile offenders on orders and use this information to ensure interventions were correctly targeted. They had also analysed outcomes of work with women to discern if there was any differential practice. This had found lower compliance and higher breach rates for CPOs and CPROs. They had also recently identified a disproportionately high use of CPROs for black and minority ethnic offenders and intended to investigate this further.

6.9 In Northamptonshire a regular beneficiary survey was carried out with the data produced fed back to unit and case managers. There was also evidence of the survey being used to review the quality of placements. In the other areas inspected apart from the compulsory work on Probation Circular 50/2004, which required all areas to

undertake a survey of beneficiaries, there was no local evidence of the area collecting feedback from beneficiaries.

- 6.10 In Warwickshire, West Mercia, and Northamptonshire offender exit interviews were carried out and the results used to inform practice. In other areas this happened but results were not used to undertake any review of the work, inform change or give feedback to staff. In one area exit interviews were not carried out with all offenders.

**Interventions demonstrate value for money:**

- **Interventions are delivered with efficient and appropriate use of resources.**

Table 18: Interventions demonstrate value for money

CRITERION	Bedfordshire	Humber-side	London	Northamptonshire	Warwickshire	West Mercia	All Areas
Interventions demonstrate value for money	63%	92%	67%	61%	93%	79%	76%

- 6.11 The resources used in UPW were consistent with both the assessed risk of harm and the likelihood of reoffending in the majority of cases.
- 6.12 We considered that overall the use of the available resources was efficient and was producing good outcomes for offenders and communities.

**OVERALL FINDINGS FOR QUALITY OF ECP/UPW INITIAL OUTCOMES**

**Strengths**

- The majority of offenders had not been convicted of a further offence committed since the start of the order.
- Offenders were very positive about the impact of Skills for Life on their confidence and self-esteem.
- Once their order was completed some offenders had continued to work with a project on a voluntary basis. A number of beneficiaries had offered paid employment to former UPW offenders.
- Exit interviews were routinely done with offenders, with the information used in some areas to develop practice.

**Areas for improvement**

- Areas should make greater use of feedback from offenders to improve practice.
- There should be a regular beneficiary survey with the outcomes shared with the Board and staff.

## **Recommendations**

### ***The NPD should ensure that:***

- *further thought is given to simple outcome measures to demonstrate the effectiveness of UPW.*

### ***Probation Boards should ensure that:***

- *evaluation of work on outcomes is published and shared with managers and staff so that lessons can be learned.*

## APPENDIX

Aggregated responses to Probation Circular 50/2004 by the six probation areas visited during the inspection.

### Type of agency worked with

Charity shops	18%
Faith institution	6%
Local authority	6%
Social care	22%
Housing provision	6%
Education	8%
Environmental	6%
Other (including graffiti removal, work in village halls, work in country parks, hospital work and animal welfare)	28%

### Groups that benefited from UPW during 2004

Agencies providing services for children and young people	23%
Agencies providing services for disabled persons	23%
Agencies providing services for homeless persons	5%
Agencies providing services for minority ethnic populations	8%
Agencies providing services for elderly people	30%
Agencies providing for animal welfare	11%
<b>NB</b> Some agencies provided services to more than one user group	

- The survey was based on responses from 161 placement providers, a return rate of 54% on those consulted. Of these 79% provided group and 21% individual placements.
- Registered charities provided 55% of the placements.
- Individual placements accounted for 30% of the work and groups 70%.
- Most work was available at both weekends and during the week, although a small number of placements were only available at the weekend.
- 53% of providers gave as the main reason for using UPW *'To complete a job which would not otherwise be done'*. 29% said it was *'To assist the rehabilitation of offenders'* and 13% said it was *'To save money'*.
- 25% of placements had come about because of a direct approach by probation staff, as against 29% as a result of being told about UPW by another placement provider. 6% of placements were the direct result of the public responding to a press article.

- In 71% of cases probation and the provider had worked together prior to the launch of ECP. Only 14% had noticed any difference between the previous CP scheme and ECP.
- Once their order was completed a number of offenders had continued to work with the project on a voluntary basis and 13 projects had subsequently offered paid employment to former offenders.
- A substantial majority of providers said they would use UPW again. Only one area had a significant number who were dissatisfied with the service they had received.
- 75% of respondents expressed overall satisfaction with the level of communication they had had with both the probation service and with offenders.

## The role of HMI Probation

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HMI Probation is an independent Inspectorate, originally established in 1936 and given statutory authority in the Criminal Justice Act 1991. The Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 renamed HMI Probation 'Her Majesty's Inspectorate of the National Probation Service for England and Wales. HMI Probation is funded by the Home Office and reports directly to the Home Secretary.

### Home Office Objectives

HMI Probation contributes primarily to the achievement of Home Office Objective II:

- more offenders are caught, punished and stop offending, and victims are better supported
- and to the requirement to ensure that custodial and community sentences are more effective at stopping offending. We also contribute to the achievement of Objective III through scrutiny of work to address drugs and other substance misuse, and to other relevant criminal justice system and children's services objectives.

### Role

- Report to the Home Secretary on the work and performance of the National Probation Service and Youth Offending Teams, particularly on the effectiveness of work with individual offenders, children and young people aimed at reducing reoffending and protecting the public
- In this connection, and in association with HM Inspectorate of Prisons, to report on the effectiveness of offender management under the auspices of the National Offender Management Service as it develops
- Contribute to improved performance in the National Probation Service, the National Offender Management Service and Youth Offending Teams
- Contribute to sound policy and effective service delivery by providing advice and disseminating good practice, based on inspection findings, to Ministers, Home Office staff, the Youth Justice Board, probation boards/areas and Youth Offending Teams
- Promote actively race equality and wider diversity issues in the National Probation Service, the National Offender Management Service and Youth Offending Teams
- Contribute to the overall effectiveness of the criminal justice system, particularly through joint work with other criminal justice and Government inspectorates.

### Code of Practice

HMI Probation aims to achieve its purpose by:

- undertaking its work with integrity in a professional, impartial and courteous manner
- consulting stakeholders in planning and running inspections and regarding reports
- forming independent inspection judgements based on evidence
- the timely reporting and publishing of inspection findings and recommendations for improvement
- promoting race equality and wider diversity issues in all aspects of its work, including within its own employment practices and organisational processes
- developing joint approaches with other Inspectorate and Audit bodies to ensure a coordinated approach to the criminal justice system

The Inspectorate is a public body. Anyone who wishes to comment on an inspection, a report or any other matter falling within its remit should write to:

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