

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL
REPORT

To: SCRUTINY PANEL SERVICE DELIVERY AND PERFORMANCE		Subject: QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REVIEW - QUARTER 2 INDICATOR - PROBATION
From: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK		
Date: 9 MARCH 2006	Ref: MF/JS	

1. Purpose of Report / Introduction

- 1.1. To provide the Scrutiny Panel with information regarding indicator 7, the proportion of new probationers seen by a supervising officer within one week and to advise of action being taken by the Department to improve activity.

2. Background

- 2.1. Indicator 7 is based on Standard 62.1 of the National Objectives and Standards for Social Work in the Criminal Justice System.
- 2.2. The period from when a probation order is issued until it is served on and signed by a probationer varies and is subject to a number of factors which include the following:
- The number of Courts involved and different Court processes
 - Admin practices
 - Social Work staffing levels
 - The postal system
 - Compliance by the probationer

3. Proposals / Considerations

- 3.1. The Department monitors its performance in relation to Indicator 7 and has identified some anomalies in the departmental information system and inaccurate recording which had resulted in a degree of under-reporting which is being addressed.
- 3.2. The Departments performance needs to be considered against a background of increased demand for services without an equivalent growth in resources.
- 3.3. Table I shows an increase in demand for Social Enquiry Reports on a year by year basis (overall). These reports contain the background information Courts use to consider making a probation order.

This also shows that North Lanarkshire has a higher than national average demand for Social Background Reports.

Table I – Social Enquiry Reports Requests

	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Social Enquiry Reports – North Lanarkshire	1990	2663	3184	3138	3825
Reports per 10,000 population in North Lanarkshire	87.4	116.7	139.3	137.0	166.2
National level per 10,000 population	88.1	97.4	106.7	110.3	111.7

- 3.4. Table II reflects an increasing trend in respect of probation orders being imposed by the Courts. In the main, this can be considered to reflect a growing confidence by the Courts in the services provided by the Department. Again North Lanarkshire figures are above the national average.

Table II – Probation Orders Imposed

	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Number of Probation Orders North Lanarkshire	385	585	536	666	687
Orders per 10,000 population in North Lanarkshire	16.9	25.6	23.5	29.1	29.9
National level per 10,000 population	16.6	19.8	20.8	21.6	23.5

- 3.5. The resourcing of this area of Justice activity is 100% funded by the Scottish Executive. Justice funding is awarded retrospectively which may impact on service delivery and does not always relate to service growth.
- 3.6. The Department is not complacent about its performance in respect of the proportion of probationers seen within seven days. The following actions are being progressed.
- A review of service delivery will be undertaken to improve notification timescales from Courts to area teams
 - Guidance will be issued to standardise / rationalise admin procedures
 - Consideration is being given to improve compliance of probationer attendance at the first scheduled appointment
 - Improved monitoring of recording and information practices are being developed
 - Further development of a probation clinic type service

4. Financial / Personnel / Legal / Policy Implications

- 4.1. There has been limited growth in the funding made available by the Scottish Executive for this area of Justice provision. Tables I and II reflect a growth in demand for SERs and Probation by the Courts which can impact on response times.
- 4.2. The introduction of the new Community Justice Authorities will be likely to impact on resource allocation and monitoring arrangements.
- 4.3. Compliance with Indicator 7 will be affected by the Departments ability to retain / recruit qualified Social Workers, particularly within the current climate.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1. The Scrutiny Panel is asked to:
 - (i) Note the action being progressed by the Department to improve performance in relation to Indicator 7
 - (ii) Note the challenges facing the Department in this area
 - (iii) Otherwise note the content of the report



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Director of Social Work
27 February 2006

For further information on this report please contact Maureen Hughes, Co-ordinator, Restorative Justice, TEL 01698 346873