FOREWORD BY:

Rt. Hon. Paul Goggins MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office

Rt. Hon. Douglas Alexander MP, Minister for the Cabinet Office and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

The rapidly changing world in which we live demands provision of modern and effective public services. Public sector reform, including reform of the criminal justice system, is a top priority for the Government. In order to achieve this reform, it is necessary to re-examine the way in which public services are delivered.

The management of the criminal justice system remains under constant Government scrutiny to ensure that public confidence in the system is maintained. Skilled professionals from a wide variety of organisations work together to improve processes and provide a safer society for us all. Working across organisational boundaries is never an easy task, but delivery of more effective and efficient public services requires a new approach to policy development. The creation of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS), which includes the responsibility for offenders both within custody and the community, is a prime example of this new approach.

This report focuses on the vital but frequently forgotten correctional service side of the criminal justice system that seeks to reduce re-offending and protect the public. These critical aspects of the system are the responsibility of front line staff who sometimes feel restrained by working arrangements which do not always encourage the highest levels of performance. Building on a previous study of police bureaucracy, the Government is reiterating its commitment to the criminal justice system by reducing further the unnecessary burdens on the correctional services.

The Regulatory Impact Unit’s (RIU) Public Sector Team (PST) in the Cabinet Office has worked with prison and probation services, other government departments and front line staff to establish ways that burdens can be removed or reduced. This report outlines 103 specific actions and commitments that will enable staff to focus more of their time performing their core duties. We believe that the specific actions and commitments outlined in this report, supported by the ongoing commitment of departments to reduce unnecessary burdens and bureaucracy placed on staff will have a lasting and positive effect on the criminal justice system.

Paul Goggins

Douglas Alexander

July 2004
I welcome the Cabinet Office report and the opportunity it brings for prisons and probation to examine many of its systems and processes in pursuit of reduced bureaucracy.

As the project sponsor, I am aware that over 400 staff of the two services have been interviewed during the research phase and for that reason, I would expect the findings to have ownership and thus a real and meaningful impact at local level. Many of the findings do have a practical edge and can therefore make a contribution to freeing front line staff to focus on delivery. The report has been agreed with senior managers and approved by the two Director Generals. I will ask for reports on implementation in due course.

I commissioned the study during a period when correctional services were subject to a fundamental review. The subsequent creation of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) will give further impetus to working with the findings of this report. Both prisons and probation will need to refine their systems to ensure that offender management becomes the focus of all that we seek to achieve and establish a competitive and efficient cost base.

The essential outcome of reducing re-offending, the cornerstone of NOMS, is a shared goal. The implementation of this report will make its own contribution to that objective, freeing up staff to deliver services that can reduce crime and benefit society.

Martin Narey
July 2004
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the prisons and probation project is to deliver practical measures to further reduce levels of unnecessary bureaucracy and other burdens that prison and probation staff have to contend with. This report was commissioned by Martin Narey, Chief Executive of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) and formerly the Commissioner for Correctional Services.

The Regulatory Impact Unit’s (RIU) Public Sector Team (PST) in the Cabinet Office together with prison and probation services have worked in partnership with stakeholders and front line staff to identify areas where immediate action can be taken to reduce the burdens they face. There are also areas within the report where progress may take longer to achieve and we will continue to work with our partners to facilitate improvements and ensure that reductions in unnecessary burdens are achieved.

The paperwork outcomes outlined in this first report relate to seven main areas:

- Analysing The Risk;
- High Risk Offenders;
- Supervision of Offenders Within Prison Custody;
- Release of Offenders;
- Supervision of Offenders in the Community;
- Managing and Monitoring Information;
- Prison Staffing Issues.

The commitments to be implemented in each of the above areas are outlined in the remainder of the report and summarised below.
## Executive summary

### Outcome

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analysing The Risk</th>
<th>Target date for action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Offender Assessment System (OASys) and Risk Assessments:</strong></td>
<td>September 2004 onwards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• High priority recommendations made in the Loughborough University evaluation report on the usability of e-OASys will be implemented to ensure its more effective use in the National Probation Service</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Front line visits to probation areas will be conducted to ensure the consistent implementation of e-OASys across England and Wales</td>
<td>July 2004 onwards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The quality and consistency of e-OASys completion will be addressed through the implementation of a Quality Management Plan. This will include the roll-out of training and communication packages</td>
<td>May 2004 onwards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Training will be provided to ensure that both OASys and e-OASys issues identified by the quality assurance process are addressed, removing the potential for misunderstandings to arise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Offender Assessment System (OASys) and Risk Assessments – other risk assessments:</strong></td>
<td>December 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Additional risk assessments such as the Spousal Assault Risk Assessment and Basic Skills Matrix will be incorporated into the National Probation Service e-OASys. Partial pre-population will negate the need for probation staff to transfer information manually</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-Sentence Reports:</strong></td>
<td>Autumn 2004</td>
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<tr>
<td>• A national Short Format report, pre-populated from OASys will ensure the adoption of a shorter and more standardised approach to pre-sentence reports</td>
<td>August 2004 onwards</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The Cabinet Office and National Probation Service will broker an agreement to ensure a standardised short format report is adopted across all courts</td>
<td>May 2004 onwards</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The introduction of e-OASys will reduce the manual collection of data for pre-sentence reports, removing the need for staff to complete additional forms</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>High Risk Offenders</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lifer Paperwork – Lifer Sentence Plan:</strong></td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Staff will benefit from structured training courses on managing lifer processes and paperwork, in particular the completion of the Life Sentence Plan</td>
<td>December 2004</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Components of the Life Sentence Plan will be incorporated into OASys to allow for more effective completion of risk assessments and any associated paperwork</td>
<td>December 2004</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Staff will no longer need to complete Life Sentence Planning forms (LSP2F and LSP3B) in addition to OASys</td>
<td>December 2004</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Lifer Records of Achievements will no longer be paper-based, negating the need for staff to duplicate information manually</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lifer Paperwork – termination of Lifer supervision:</strong></td>
<td>April 2004 (completed)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The length of time taken to terminate supervision of lifers will be reduced, preventing the need for staff to complete lengthy reports</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lifer Paperwork – interface with Lifer Recall and Review Section:</strong></td>
<td>Spring 2005 onwards</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The Cabinet Office will continue to work with the Lifer Recall and Review Section to improve communications and facilitate greater information sharing</td>
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</table>
### Schedule One Offenders – Schedule One legislation:
- A multi-agency working group will be established to investigate the specific problems with Schedule One classification.
- A consultation paper will be issued to practitioners and stakeholders to discuss these issues further.
- Following the findings of the consultation, recommendations will be implemented.
- Staff will be provided with a more consistent message on offenders who present a risk to children, ensuring that the current conflict between guidance is removed.

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<tr>
<th>Schedule One Offenders – Schedule One legislation:</th>
<th>June 2004 (completed)</th>
<th>August 2004</th>
<th>Winter 2004 onwards</th>
<th>April 2004 (completed)</th>
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### Schedule One Offenders – release notification of Schedule One offenders:
- Current mechanisms surrounding notification of Schedule One offenders will be reviewed to facilitate improved communications and information sharing between agencies.
- A pilot will be conducted to give Her Majesty’s Prison Service access to the Violent Offender and Sex Offender Register (ViSOR) with a view to ensuring more effective information sharing between prison and probation services.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schedule One Offenders – release notification of Schedule One offenders:</th>
<th>June 2004 (ongoing)</th>
<th>Autumn 2004</th>
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### Supervision of Offenders in Prison Custody

#### Sentence Calculation – previous time spent in custody:
- Better access to the Police National Computer (PNC) through the Prisoner Records and Integrated Management Environment (PRIME) project, will allow staff to calculate sentences faster and more accurately.

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<tr>
<th>Supervision of Offenders in Prison Custody</th>
<th>May 2004 onwards</th>
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#### Sentence Calculation – checking process:
- A pilot will be conducted to reduce the number of sentence checks and calculations conducted during an offender’s sentence.
- Depending on the success of the above pilot, new sentence calculation arrangements will be implemented across all prison establishments.
- A number of staff will be identified to calculate and check sentences and trained appropriately, allowing for a more effective and speedier process.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supervision of Offenders in Prison Custody</th>
<th>Summer 2004</th>
<th>January 2005</th>
<th>Summer 2004</th>
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#### Sentence Planning – duplication of information captured:
- An electronic sentence plan will be made available as part of OASys and will replace the Automatic Conditional Release (ACR) and Discretionary Conditional Release (DCR) forms, negating the need for staff to transfer information manually from Local Inmate Database System (LIDS).
- The structure of sentences will be streamlined as part of the Criminal Justice Act 2003, ensuring that a consistent approach is applied to sentence planning.

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<th>Supervision of Offenders in Prison Custody</th>
<th>Winter 2004</th>
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#### Self-Harm Paperwork:
- A review of self-harm paperwork (F213SH) will reduce the duplication with other forms, improving the effectiveness with which they are used.
- A new self-harm system ‘Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork Plan’ will be piloted across prison establishments with a view to replacing the current F2052SH system.
- The pilot will include a number of considerations to ensure procedures are as effective and efficient as possible e.g. use of flow diagrams and guidance notes.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supervision of Offenders in Prison Custody</th>
<th>June 2004 onwards</th>
<th>January 2004 onwards</th>
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### Executive Summary

**Reception Health Checks:**
- A new health screening procedure will enable more effective identification of offenders with clinical needs.
- Health screening forms will differentiate between male and female offenders, reducing the time taken for completion.

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**Prisoner Escort Records (PERs) – completion of PERs:**
- An awareness-raising campaign and a ‘model’ PER will ensure more effective completion of the form.
- A revised PER Handbook will provide staff with guidance on its completion and the level of detail required, ensuring a more efficient process.
- Her Majesty’s Prison Service will consult with police to ascertain whether they have identified similar issues around the completion of PERs.
- Depending on the findings of the above consultation, the Cabinet Office and Her Majesty’s Prison Service will approach other stakeholders with a view to resolving these problems.

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<td>May 2004</td>
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**Referrals to Democratic Therapeutic Communities – paperwork:**
- Standardised referral forms will be made available electronically for staff to download through the Therapeutic Communities web-site.
- Staff will benefit from further standardisation of services through the national roll-out of a ‘core’ accreditation model.
- Internal assessment forms will also be standardised, allowing staff to manage processes more effectively within their own establishments.
- Referral and internal assessment forms will be continually reviewed and rationalised by the Therapeutic Liaison Committee to ensure they remain standardised and up-to-date.

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<td>April 2004</td>
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<td>June 2003</td>
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### Release of Offenders

**Release On Temporary Licence (ROTL) – paperwork:**
- A review of ROTL forms will ensure the amalgamation of several forms, including ROTL 1, 2 & 3 and ROTL 8 & 9, ensuring that instances of duplication are reduced.
- A generic notification of ROTL form to outside agencies will further save time for staff in reading duplicative paperwork.
- To further reduce the need to complete paper-based forms, these will be made available in Microsoft Word templates to download from Her Majesty’s Prison Service Intranet.

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**Release On Temporary Licence – guidance:**
- A Prison Service Order (PSO) will aid staff in the ROTL process. It will include a detailed flowchart together with an explanation to the different stages involved.

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**Home Detention Curfew (HDC) – paperwork:**
- A review of HDC forms will consider the amalgamation of several forms to ensure that duplicative information is reduced.
- Following the above review, HDC forms will be made available as Microsoft Word templates, allowing them to be e-mailed across departments, other establishments and external agencies.

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</table>
**Home Detention Curfew – process in obtaining clearance:**
- Governors will only be required to sign HDC forms at the initial confirmation of suitability (HDC1) or if referred to the enhanced board (HDC4), minimising the flow of paperwork and ensuring a more efficient clearance process

**Home Detention Curfew – guidance:**
- A consolidated Prison Service Order (PSO), taking into account significant changes in the HDC process will be introduced. The new user-friendly document will include a detailed flowchart and explanation of the process so staff no longer have to access the lengthy document

**Home Detention Curfew – transfer of information:**
- Her Majesty's Prison Service will continue to monitor regulations surrounding the release of offenders on HDC and effective transfer of information, ensuring that the completion of paperwork is not unnecessarily duplicated

**Parole Assessments and Paperwork:**
- Future prison parole assessment reports will be conducted as part of the OASys rather than separately, ensuring that the manual duplication of information is reduced

**Parole Assessments and Paperwork – prioritisation of parole assessments:**
- Clarification of the importance of parole reports will be issued to facilitate more effective decision making by Parole Board members

**Parole Assessments and Paperwork – timing of parole assessments:**
- Probation areas will also be provided with clarification of the timing of parole reports and the amount of information they need to provide

**Parole Assessments and Paperwork – parole assessment guidance:**
- Draft examples of good parole assessments will be provided to support staff in completing them effectively
- Probation staff will be provided with greater clarification of their roles and responsibilities within the parole process
- Feedback on the usage of parole assessments will be given to ensure that staff have a clearer understanding of their role and the parole process as a whole
- To further promote the effective use of parole assessments, standardised requirements will be promoted through various mediums including probation circulars

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<tr>
<th>Supervision of Offenders in the Community</th>
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**Orders and Licences – Community Sentence Order paperwork:**
- Staff will benefit from a more standardised approach to community punishment paperwork, including the abolition of referral forms
- Assessment forms will be pre-populated wherever possible through the implementation of new technology across the National Probation Directorate
- The introduction of a Generic Community Sentence (GCS) Order will allow greater consistency in implementation of the new process
- As part of the new Order, a national framework will be introduced to ensure that any associated paperwork is produced in a standardised format
- A computerised case management system will be introduced to ensure that future case files are standardised across all probation areas
### Executive summary

**Orders and Licences – Community Sentence Order guidance:**
- Staff will be provided with clear guidance for community sentence orders, including the introduction of summary documents detailing where amendments have been made
  - March 2004 onwards

**Post Custodial Licences:**
- The implementation of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 will ensure greater consistency in which licences are structured
  - December 2004 onwards
- To further ensure that consistency is applied across licences, the existing structure will be replaced by two determinate sentences (Custody Plus and Intermittent Custody)
  - March 2004 onwards

**Supervision Plans – paperwork requirements:**
- A clearer and more user-friendly supervision plan will be developed for probation staff to use
  - Summer 2004

**Supervision Plans – review of supervision:**
- The timing of regular supervision plans will be reviewed to allow distinction between short and long term supervision
  - Autumn 2004

**Supervision Plans – information requirements:**
- Unnecessary duplication across progress reports and supervision plans will be reduced, with a view to amalgamating the two documents
  - Summer 2004
- The Cabinet Office will continue to work with various stakeholders to ensure the introduction of a combined and user-friendly form
  - August 2004 onwards

**Breach Paperwork – enforcement letters:**
- Enforcement letters will be reviewed to ensure that they are less complex and easier for the offender to understand
  - July 2004
- Following any recommendations implemented as part of the Criminal Justice Act 2003, enforcement letters will be amended in a user-friendly manner
  - December 2004

**Breach Paperwork – breach report:**
- A joint action plan between National Probation Service and Department for Constitutional Affairs will improve enforcement processes, including measures to ensure that future documentation is standardised across areas
  - August 2004

**Breach Paperwork – requirements from court:**
- Probation staff will benefit from reduced information requirements for breach hearings, with better use made of centrally held information
  - August 2004
- Probation staff will no longer be required to send duplicate copies of documentation to the court prior to a breach hearing
  - Autumn 2004

**Notification of Breaches:**
- A pilot, allowing greater access to the Police National Computer (PNC) will ensure that staff are effectively notified of any breaches whilst an offender is in police custody
  - June 2004 onwards
- The Cabinet Office will continue to work with the National Probation Service to improve the transfer of breach information between areas
  - August 2004 onwards
**Managing and Monitoring Information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regime Monitoring in prisons – paperwork:</strong></td>
<td>An awareness-raising campaign will ensure that prison staff are provided with standard templates and best practice examples to use in the recording of purposeful activity</td>
<td>January 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regime Monitoring in prisons – completion of forms:</strong></td>
<td>Sampling of purposeful activity will be adopted as an alternative to weekly monitoring</td>
<td>Spring 2005</td>
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<td></td>
<td>A handbook, tailored to specific members of staff, will be introduced to ensure a better understanding of the regime monitoring process</td>
<td>September 2004</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A ‘What’s Changed’ section will be included in future Prison Service Orders (PSOs), allowing staff to quickly ascertain where amendments have been made</td>
<td>July 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regime Monitoring in prisons – duplication of information:</strong></td>
<td>Her Majesty’s Prison Service will empower additional members of staff to complete regime monitoring forms, ensuring that duplication and risk of error are reduced</td>
<td>November 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prison Governors’ Journals:</strong></td>
<td>Clarification will be issued to ensure Governors Journals only record the most relevant hand-over information</td>
<td>August 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Probation Service – standardised paperwork:</strong></td>
<td>Probation areas will be provided with standardised forms to use across their local offices, allowing staff to utilise centrally held information more effectively</td>
<td>September 2004</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To further ensure a standardised approach is adopted across areas, forms will be made available electronically as Microsoft Word templates</td>
<td>October 2004</td>
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<td></td>
<td>National Standards monitoring forms will be reviewed to make them shorter and more concise</td>
<td>March 2004 (completed)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>National Probation Service – information storage:</strong></td>
<td>Staff will be provided with clarification on the policy surrounding closed files, ensuring that only the most relevant information is stored and kept up-to-date</td>
<td>September 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communicating with the National Probation Directorate – length of guidance and documentation:</strong></td>
<td>A National Probation Directorate audit of communications will be undertaken to ensure that future communication provided to local probation areas is as clear and concise as possible</td>
<td>July 2004 (completed)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>An ‘Information Reader Box’ summary on all documentation will allow staff to quickly ascertain what action is needed</td>
<td>July 2004 onwards</td>
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<td>Executive summaries will be included in any future nationally produced guidance or manual, allowing staff to quickly ascertain where amendments have been made</td>
<td>April 2004 onwards</td>
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<td>A ‘gateway’ will ensure that communications to local areas remain as effective and streamlined as possible</td>
<td>August 2004</td>
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### Executive summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communicating with the National Probation Directorate – documentation across other probation areas:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• National leaflet templates will be made available to local probation areas, ensuring that the same message and corporate image are promoted nationally</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Leaflets will be updated periodically to ensure they remain relevant and up-to-date</td>
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### Prison Staffing Issues

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<th>National Security Vetting Procedures:</th>
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<tr>
<td>• As part of a wider Home Office Review, security vetting levels across Her Majesty’s Prison Service will be reviewed to ensure levels of clearance remain appropriate to risk</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Following this review, guidance will be distributed to staff to ensure easier understanding of the recruitment process and reduce duplication of forms completed</td>
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<td>December 2003 (completed)</td>
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<tr>
<th>National Security Vetting Procedures – additional checking procedures:</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Additional sources of information will be used to conduct referee identification checks, including the introduction of an Her Majesty’s Prison Service call centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A business case will be developed to assess options for conducting such checks through a ‘Quick Address System’ (QAS) across Her Majesty’s Prison Services estate</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Following a successful business case the QAS software application will be rolled out nationwide to allow staff to quickly verify applicants from their own prison establishments</td>
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<th>Staff Performance and Development Record (SPDR) – purpose:</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Guidance will be issued on the use of SPDR’s in the promotion process</td>
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<tr>
<td>• An awareness-raising campaign will ensure staff have a better understanding of the importance of SPDR’s and how the document should be used to meet staff and business needs</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Simple guidance will be issued to ensure that staff are better supported in identifying alternative methods of development</td>
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<tr>
<th>Staff Performance and Development Record – completion of form:</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Her Majesty’s Prison Service will develop a ‘model’ SPDR form to ensure staff are aware of the optional and compulsory parts for completion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summer 2004</td>
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<tr>
<th>Staff Performance and Development Record – countersigning:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Duplicative countersignature requirements will be removed from the SPDR form</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Better use will be made of electronic signatures, reducing the need for paper copies and speeding up the approval process as a whole</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 2004 (completed)</td>
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<th>Promotion Paperwork – applications for Job Simulation and Assessment Centre:</th>
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<tr>
<td>• A shorter and more streamlined Job Simulation and Assessment Centre (JSAC) application form will be introduced, reducing the amount of line management input and making the process simpler for applicants to complete</td>
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<td>January 2004 (completed)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Promotion Paperwork – applications for advertised jobs in Her Majesty's Prison Service:</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Her Majesty’s Prison Service application process will be streamlined, reducing the need for extensive line manager commentary and minimising time spent verifying applicants’ competencies</td>
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INTRODUCTION

The Government is committed to maintaining a safe, just and tolerant society in which the protection and security of the public are maintained. The roles and responsibilities of the National Probation Service (NPS) and Her Majesty’s Prison Service (HMPS) are integral to achieving this aim. Releasing the energy of the workforce in these two sectors is central to this agenda and any burdens holding them back should therefore be removed.

The NPS for England and Wales was established by the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act in April 2001 and comprises 42 probation areas throughout England and Wales together with the National Probation Directorate (NPD) based in London. HMPS is responsible for providing safe and well-ordered establishments in which those offenders committed by the courts are kept in custody. Currently there are 138 prison establishments (including Her Majesty’s Young Offender Institutions (HMYOI) and privately contracted prisons) across England and Wales. Collaboratively the two services work together to ensure the effective delivery of justice through the execution of custodial and community sentences in order to reduce re-offending and protect members of the public.

Recent reforms in the criminal justice system and wider public sector services have increased the pressure on prison and probation staff to maintain an effective correctional service capable of protecting the public and reducing re-offending by rehabilitating offenders. Whilst there have been great improvements in the way in which the offender is managed, different approaches have been applied across the two services and as a result, inconsistencies in the management of offenders have occurred.

In an attempt to address this issue, the Prime Minister commissioned Patrick Carter to conduct a wider independent review of correctional services in March 2003. Its aim was to investigate in more detail, the differences in which the two services operated and explore new approaches to break down the silos of prison and probation, ensuring a better focus in managing offenders. His report ‘Managing Offenders, Reducing Crime’, published in December 2003, outlined a number of recommendations to improve the effectiveness of the criminal justice system, in particular correctional services.

The Government has supported his recommendations and subsequently outlined their strategy to provide end-to-end offender management whether offenders are serving sentences in prison or in the community. The new service, called the National Offender Management Service (NOMS), will be responsible for bringing together the prison and probation services to ensure that sentences are planned and delivered in an integrated and effective way.

The Regulatory Impact Unit’s (RIU) Public Sector Team (PST) within the Cabinet Office was commissioned separately by the Chief Executive of NOMS, to undertake a study with front line members of staff to identify particular areas of bureaucracy within the two services. The Director Generals of prison and probation services and the Director of Change, NOMS, have also endorsed the study. The results of this study will be taken forward by NOMS and the prison and probation services and the removal and reduction of the burdens identified will go some way towards ensuring that staff workload is reduced.
Introduction

Analysing the Burdens – Methodology

The key objectives were to:

- Investigate the main burdens affecting both probation and prison staff with particular reference to:
  - burdensome and time-consuming paperwork;
  - the transfer of case information and other interface issues;
- Analyse the information gathered from approximately 450 interviews with front line staff, challenge the existing culture and prioritise the issues of concern;
- Improve the efficiency of prison and probation services through generating innovative solutions to existing burdensome processes and procedures whilst assessing the implications of amending current practices and working directly with prison and probation colleagues to secure tangible results.

A series of face-to-face interviews with 450 front line members of staff including Governors, Chief Probation Officers and prison and probation staff were undertaken. The prison and probation areas chosen were representative in terms of geography, size, type of establishment and overall performance. From this initial research over 300 issues were identified as being burdensome. These were then prioritised according to:

- Time saved for front line staff (weighted score);
- Impact on re-offending;
- Impact on the continuity of care for the offender;
- Key departmental priorities – including consistency with the Carter Review.

Following this exercise, the PST worked directly with stakeholders to deliver changes by obtaining a series of firm commitments with relevant stakeholders involved in the management of offenders. Implementation of all the changes identified should result in positive differences to prison establishments and probation areas, and ultimately will result in improved protection for the public and more efficient handling of offenders.

A comprehensive list of institutions visited and stakeholders consulted can be found at Annex 1 whilst the Public Sector Team’s role is outlined in more detail in Annex 4.
REDUCING BURDENS ON FRONT LINE STAFF

The Public Sector Team’s (PST) report seeks to deliver 103 specific outcomes, each described in this chapter. Although some of the burdens identified by prison establishments and probation areas have been simplified or removed, it will take longer for a significant change in the way that organisations and staff themselves view improvements in their business management processes. Full and effective implementation of these changes will take time, with all stakeholders including professional bodies and central government having a part to play.

The outcomes and achievements recorded in this report fall into three categories:

- The removal of a restrictive rule, revision of guidance or simplification of a process;
  
  e.g. the introduction of a shorter and more streamlined application form for promotion, reducing the amount of line management input and making it easier for staff to complete;

- An agreement with, or commitment from, the relevant stakeholders or ‘process owners’ to remove a restriction, change guidance or simplify a process;
  
  e.g. removing the need for staff to send duplicate copies of the required documentation to court for breach hearings;

- An agreement or commitment to conduct a review of a process or pilot a new way of working prior to implementing an improved solution nation-wide;
  
  e.g. the adoption of sampling as an alternative to weekly monitoring of purposeful activity within prisons.

The remainder of this section outlines the various issues highlighted as unnecessary burdens on prison and probation staff, and the associated outcomes and agreements negotiated to reduce or remove these. The report focuses on outcomes around the following subject areas:

- Analysing The Risk;
- High Risk Offenders;
- Supervision of Offenders within Prison Custody;
- Release of Offenders;
- Supervision of Offenders in the Community;
- Managing and Monitoring Information;
- Prison Staffing Issues.
Analysing The Risk

Offender Assessment System (OASys) and risk assessments

OASys was developed jointly by Her Majesty’s Prison Service (HMPS) and the National Probation Service (NPS). It was introduced throughout NPS between 2001 and 2003 in paper-format and subsequently as an IT version. HMPS decided to defer its introduction until an electronic version was available and roll-out started in April 2003. OASys is a risk and needs assessment and sentence/supervision planning tool, which takes staff through a series of questions, helping them to fully assess the likelihood of re-conviction and risk of harm posed by offenders and to plan how to manage and reduce those risks. It identifies criminogenic needs that must be addressed if the likelihood of re-offending is to be reduced. An electronic version, known in the NPS as ‘e-OASys’, is currently being rolled out across both prisons and probation areas. Roll-out of e-OASys is due to be completed by the end of 2004 when the NPS system will be networked across England and Wales and connectivity between the NPS and HMPS systems will be delivered.

NPS e-OASys risk assessments

Probation staff have raised concerns about the length of time it takes them to complete an e-OASys risk assessment – up to two hours in most cases – although this process is generally quicker than the paper version. Several of the concerns voiced reflected a degree of miscommunication about e-OASys and how it can be best used. For example, staff comments included inflexibility of the assessment; the inability to adapt the assessment according to the offender; that entries are required in every field regardless of the relevance to the offender and that progression to the next screen is only possible after all the fields in the current screen have been completed. This lack of understanding about how e-OASys operates has led to confusion amongst staff and to inefficiencies in time. In order to alleviate this confusion, the National Probation Directorate (NPD) commissioned Loughborough University to undertake an evaluation report on e-OASys.

Action: A comprehensive quality assurance procedure will ensure consistent and high quality completion of e-OASys by NPS across England and Wales

(i) Chief Probation Officers and Trade Unions received a copy of the Loughborough University report in March 2004. High priority recommendations will subsequently be implemented to benefit probation staff using e-OASys – September 2004 onwards.

(ii) e-OASys experts will continue to make front line visits to probation areas to check on e-OASys implementation and practice. The focus will initially be on areas with the greatest needs identified by the NPD OASys team. The team monitors areas’ responses on progress they have made to implement e-OASys, roll-out of training etc. This information is captured in monthly area implementation reports and through other contacts – Ongoing.

(iii) NPS will develop with HMPS colleagues, and implement an e-OASys Quality Management Plan. This will ensure consistency in the quantity and quality of e-OASys completion in England and Wales through:

- The appraisal of completed e-OASys samples at area and regional level. Participating staff will be provided with a questionnaire to aid the process which, at regional level, will be undertaken jointly with prisons – December 2004;
• The monitoring of e-OASys completion by the OASys Data Evaluation and Assessment Team (O-DEAT). Staff at the NPD will carry out quality checks of the e-OASys database – Ongoing;

• A series of reliability studies that will involve a selection of probation staff. They will complete e-OASys assessments on the basis of videotaped interviews then compare assessments – July 2004;

• Roll-out of necessary training or communication campaigns, e.g. regional workshops, to address any problems identified by the quality assurance procedure – Ongoing.

(iv) e-OASys training is currently being altered to combine IT as well as OASys trainers at area level. The aim is to ensure that training is made as appropriate as possible to address both OASys and e-OASys issues faced by staff. It will also remove the potential for misunderstandings to arise about the functionality of e-OASys – May 2004 onwards.

Other risk assessments

In addition to the basic risk assessment provided by OASys, other risk assessments are also needed for offenders who have committed specific types of crimes – for example, violent or sexual offences. The risk assessment forms for these additional processes are currently paper-based and contain some information already in existence via OASys, resulting in probation staff unnecessarily duplicating data. This is not only time-consuming but is also an inefficient use of probation staff time.

Action: Probation staff will find it easier to complete risk assessments

A number of risk assessments and related procedures will be incorporated into e-OASys including the Spousal Assault Risk Assessment, Basic Skills Matrix and Risk Assessment 2000. Some parts of these forms, such as offender details, will be pre-populated by the initial assessment. Work has already begun on this and the forms will be ready to use by December 2004.

Pre-Sentence Reports (PSRs)

PSRs are documents requested by courts to help magistrates or judges decide on the most appropriate sentence to pass. This is after an offender pleads guilty or has been found guilty and in cases where a custodial sentence is likely. The reports contain information such as the offence, the risk posed by the offender, interventions (e.g. drug programmes) that would appear suitable and of course a sentencing proposal. The term PSR is used to capture a range of reports serving this purpose such as full pre-sentence reports, specific sentence reports and short format reports.

Currently, the format, type and use of PSRs varies across England and Wales. They are often lengthy and onerous, taking up to five hours to complete. This is partly because of the need to ensure that the court is provided with a clear and supported proposal, based on known facts of the offence, offender background, and risk assessments. However, this process is exacerbated by the breadth of supporting documentation that is also provided to the court, such as ethnicity monitoring forms and the Basic Skills Matrix.
Staff are required to produce PSRs either the same day that a verdict is given, or anything up to 15 days later depending on the type of PSR required, e.g. Specific Sentence, Short Format or full PSR. To meet these deadlines, OASys risk assessments that should be carried out prior to most PSRs are sometimes completed afterwards, reducing the value of the assessment. PSRs are also not always completed as fully as they could be and different courts have different requirements over the type and quality of PSRs. All of this has implications for risk management and consistency of offender care.

**Action: A national Short Format PSR will be developed**

(i) A national Short Format PSR is currently being developed and will be built into e-OASys. This will mean that the report will be pre-populated as the e-OASys risk assessment is completed. The aim will be to make it adaptable for use depending on whether the PSR is needed in court the same day, a few days later or 15 days after adjournment. This will ensure that a standardised process is delivered across England and Wales and that risk assessments are always done prior to the PSR where appropriate – **Autumn 2004**.

(ii) The Cabinet Office and National Probation Service (NPS) will jointly broker an agreement with Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA) to ensure that Short Format Reports are accepted by all courts. Following this, a paper-based version of the Short Format Report will be introduced – **August 2004 onwards**.

(iii) In addition, the manual collection of data associated with PSRs will be minimised through the introduction of e-OASys as the same information will be captured – for example, ethnicity data. This will remove the need for probation staff to complete additional forms. An initial project to identify and remove these duplications will begin in **May 2004 onwards**.
High Risk Offenders

Lifer Paperwork

‘Lifers’ are convicted offenders who receive life sentences for the seriousness of their crimes – around 70% of lifers in custody have been convicted of murder. Unlike the majority of offenders, lifers are classed as having an ‘indeterminate’ sentence - that is, their release is not guaranteed. Release is dependent on the Parole Board being satisfied that the offender’s risk has reduced to a level that is compatible with the protection of public safety.

All lifers are given a tariff by a trial judge. This is the minimum period they must serve in custody to meet the requirements of deterrence and retribution. Detention beyond tariff expiry must be justified on risk grounds. The Parole Board considers the offender’s suitability for transfer to open conditions around three years before tariff expiry.

Should risk assessments show a low risk of re-offending, lifers are released into the community on a ‘life licence’. As a condition of this licence, lifers must maintain contact with their assigned supervising probation officer who, amongst other things, is responsible for approving the lifer’s home location and occupation. Whilst supervision can be terminated after a period of time, a lifer remains on licence for the rest of his or her life and can be recalled to prison at any time should their level of risk increase to a point when the authorities no longer consider it safe for the licensee to remain in the community.

Due to the real and potential risk that offenders on a life sentence can often pose, the length of time they are in custody and on supervised licence and the associated monitoring processes, there is a considerable amount of paperwork for both prison and probation staff. Front line staff specifically raised the issue of the amount of paperwork, the frequency of reporting and the time-consuming nature of ending supervision as hindrances to doing their job effectively.

Life Sentence Plan

The Life Sentence Plan (LSP) and associated process has numerous stages and paperwork. There are six stages with a total of 28 forms although not all of these are required to be completed at once – many are processed throughout various stages of the lifer’s sentence.

The LSP was revised following the “Joint Thematic Review – Lifers” carried out by the Chief Inspector of the Prison and Probation Services in 1999. A revised LSP was introduced in 2002. The new design incorporates the various recommendations made by the review, including better risk assessments. The new stages include:

- LSP0 – for ‘potential’ lifers to ensure that those accused receive the care needed while they await trial;
- LSP1 – focuses on gathering core information about the newly convicted offender, including multi-agency risk assessment panels with police and the National Probation Service (NPS);
- LSP5 – to deal only with those lifers recalled to serve their sentence in custody.
Prison staff have raised concern at the increased paperwork that has been introduced as a result of these stages being added.

Lifers and other serious offenders have sufficiently robust assessments and management to ensure the protection of the public. However, the level of detail expected cannot be provided through the Offender Assessment System (OASys) alone. The LSP risk assessment sections (contained in LSP 2) provide greater detail and are more comprehensive than OASys. However, staff are still concerned about potential duplication between OASys and the LSP risk assessments.

**Action: The Lifer Recall and Review Section will provide information on the introduction of the new lifer stages and will simplify the associated paperwork**

(i) Local prison and Lifer stage staff will continue to receive structured training courses on lifer issues, including managing processes and completion of paperwork – **Ongoing**.

(ii) The LSP and OASys development teams will continue to work closely together to ensure that lifers and other complex serious offenders are fully and accurately risk-assessed by using a combination of the two systems. The LSP has been designed to be compatible with OASys and by the time the national roll-out has been implemented the LSP will be fully integrated with the OASys system. This will ensure that Lifer processes will become more efficient and effective – **December 2004**.

(iii) As part of the ongoing roll-out of OASys, the forms LSP2F (Sentence Planning Objectives) and elements of the LSP3B (Sentence Planning and Review Board Report) will be incorporated. This will eliminate the need for these forms to be completed separately by staff – **December 2004**.

(iv) The LSP3C (Record of Achievements in Offence Related Targets) and the LSP3D (Record of Achievements in Non-Offence Related Targets) will additionally become printouts derived from OASys, negating the need to duplicate information manually – **December 2004**.

**Termination of Lifer supervision**

Termination of supervision for lifers can be a long process taking up to nine months. During this period probation staff are still required to provide supervision for the offender and complete any necessary paperwork (i.e. review plans). Probation staff feel that this time would be better spent on offenders who pose a greater risk to the community.

**Action: The Lifer Recall and Review Section will introduce measures to reduce the time taken to terminate supervision of lifers**

The Lifer Recall and Review Section will introduce a performance target in their 2004/05 business plan, with the aim to reduce the termination process to six weeks for all lifers. This will reduce the burden on probation staff by negating the need to complete reports and conduct supervision meetings with lifers who no longer pose a threat to society – **April 2004 (completed)**.
Interface with Lifer Recall and Review Section
Throughout both prison custody and supervision within the community, it is essential that prison and probation staff have regular contact with the Lifer Recall and Review Section. It is often necessary to contact them to ask advice or to gain further information. Staff have experienced difficulties in contacting the Section and have commented that communication can often be difficult. In addition, they are often required to provide information to the Section that they feel is unnecessary and burdensome.

Action: The Cabinet Office will liaise with the Lifer Recall and Review Section to improve communications and information sharing issues

The Cabinet Office will raise front line concerns with the Lifer Recall and Review Section with the aim of improving communication and information sharing to lessen the burden on prison and probation staff – Spring 2005 onwards.

Schedule One Offenders

The Children and Young Persons Act 1933 was introduced to protect children of school age from “cruelty and exposure to moral and physical danger”. Schedule One of this Act is a classification used in respect of someone who has committed an offence against a child or young person (under the age of 18). The legislation covering Schedule One offences is broad and covers offenders convicted of murdering a child or young person, to abandonment of a child or young person, to intercourse with a young person under the age of 16.

The Schedule One classification remains with the offender for life. They may also have a variety of different restrictions placed upon them, although any legal implications relate to the offence committed rather than to the Schedule One classification. Whilst these restrictions were created to reduce the risks that Schedule One offenders cause the public, the supervision of these offenders substantially increase the burden placed on front line staff. In addition existing guidance does not make allowances for distinguishing between the different classes of a Schedule One offence. Therefore probation and prison staff are required to ensure that the restrictions are enforced and rigidly applied to most cases.

Schedule One legislation
Whilst prison and probation staff understand the need for the classification of Schedule One and the legislative framework surrounding this, they have voiced concerns that both the legislation and associated guidance are extremely unclear and confusing. The following examples are instances where the offender would be classed as a Schedule One:

• An assault committed in the context of a fight between two young people in a school playground;
• A road traffic accident involving a child where the driver is prosecuted.

The purpose of Schedule One legislation is to protect children. However due to the confusions and the broad nature of the legislation, there are classes of Schedule One offenders such as the above, who do not necessarily pose a risk to children. Unnecessary Schedule One classification creates
Reducing burdens on front line staff

additional work for both prison and probation staff because of the associated paperwork and risk assessments. They have expressed concern that time is being wasted on these types of offenders who do not continue to pose a risk to children, whilst those who present a substantial threat may be slipping through the net.

**Action: A review of both the guidance and legislation surrounding Schedule One offences will be undertaken**

(i) A multi-agency Schedule One offenders working group will be established to undertake a scoping exercise in order to investigate the problems surrounding the Schedule One classification and explore options to address them – **June 2004 (completed)**.

(ii) Following the scoping exercise, the working group will issue a consultation paper to practitioners and key stakeholders including local authorities, the police, Her Majesty’s Prison Service (HMPS), National Probation Service (NPS), Department for Education and Skills (DfES) Safeguarding Children Unit and the Youth Justice Board (YJB) – **August 2004**.

(iii) Following the consultation exercise, the working group will collate the responses received from practitioners and, on the basis of these responses will put recommendations to Ministers, which will subsequently be implemented – **Winter 2004 onwards**.

(iv) HMPS are currently reviewing the Schedule One guidance provided within Prison Service Order (PSO) 4400 (Chapter One Child Protection Measures) and the replacement policy, (Safeguarding Children – Child Contact), widening its scope to include all offenders who present a risk to children. This will resolve the conflict of guidance that existed between PSO 4400/1 and Instruction to Governors (IG) 54/1994. The resulting guidance will be published on the HMPS Intranet – **April 2004 (completed)**.

**Release notification of Schedule One Offenders**

When Schedule One offenders are released from prison, whether it is for a hospital appointment or to be Released On Temporary Licence (ROTL), a variety of organisations and stakeholders need to be notified. Some Schedule One offenders, other than sex offenders, can also be considered for release on Home Detention Curfew (HDC) in conjunction with other stakeholders. These stakeholders include the police, NPS, social services and, in the case of young offenders, Youth Offending Teams (YOTs).

Despite the guidance available and the standard processes within HMPS, there is a lack of consistency in the way that the stakeholders are notified when Schedule One offenders are released.
Action: Communication between stakeholders on Schedule One issues will be improved through the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) and revised guidance

(i) The multi-agency Schedule One Offender working group will review the current notification mechanisms and will consider adopting MAPPA’s communication framework. MAPPA provides a tried and tested mechanism to communicate either temporary or permanent release of Schedule One offenders to all stakeholders and is a recognised approach used throughout England and Wales – June 2004 (ongoing).

(ii) In addition, the police, NPS and Police IT Organisation (PITO) are currently developing a cross-organisation application called ViSOR (Violent Offender and Sex Offender Register). This will provide the police and probation services with a shared national database containing a wealth of intelligence to ensure these offenders are effectively registered, risk assessed and managed. With the amalgamation of HMPS and the NPS within the National Offender Management Service (NOMS), there is an opportunity to include HMPS in the roll-out of ViSOR, which will further increase the ability to share information across organisations. HMPS Dangerous Offender project team has recently developed a business case for ViSOR and will be trialling the application in a prison establishment from Autumn 2004.
Supervision of Offenders in Prison Custody

Sentence Calculation

Following a custodial sentence given by the courts, prisons are required to calculate an offender’s release date. This calculation includes time spent remanded in police or prison custody. It is important that offenders’ release dates are calculated accurately to ensure that they are in custody for the correct amount of time as defined by the legal warrant sanctioning their custody. Sentence calculation is also important as a trigger for other business processes such as Home Detention Curfew (HDC). Incorrect release dates can result in offenders being released too early and therefore not serving the appropriate custodial term. Conversely, offenders that are illegally imprisoned for too long can initiate costly legal proceedings against Her Majesty’s Prison Service (HMPS).

Prison staff are required to calculate and check offenders’ release dates at the point of sentencing and at every transferral to another prison. This calculation process is both complicated and time-consuming.

Previous time spent in custody

Whilst staff can access the Inmate Information System (IIS) computer system to find information about time spent in other prison establishments, they rely on offenders to tell them about any time spent in police custody. Although this information is held on the Police National Computer (PNC), prison staff do not have access to this. As a result, prisons are required to liaise with police colleagues to confirm an offender’s assertion about their time in police custody. This is a lengthy and onerous process that often results in release dates being calculated right at the end of sentences in an atmosphere of increased pressure and greater risk of error.

Action: Prison staff will have greater access to the PNC allowing more timely information about previous custody

The Cabinet Office and HMPS will jointly agree arrangements with the police for better access to the PNC as part of the project to implement Prisoner Record and Integrated Management Environment (PRIME), a prison management system. The system is designed, amongst other things, to calculate prison sentences automatically based on court IT system and PNC interface data. This will provide a quicker and more accurate means of calculating sentences – May 2004 onwards.

Checking process

Sentence calculations and checks are made several times during the offender’s sentence. Initially this is done when the offender first arrives in prison after sentence, and following this, after every prison transfer. Checks are also carried out 14 days and two days before release. This manual process is time-consuming and onerous. With the rising prison population, offenders are moving between establishments more quickly than before, exacerbating the problem for prison staff.
The Prison Service Order (PSO) 6650 requires that a trained and competent individual undertakes the calculation and another checks it for errors. Some prisons interpret this guidance as being a governor grade who is required to check the calculations. However, given that sentence calculation is not their core work, they are usually less proficient at the process making it more lengthy and burdensome that it needs to be.

**Action:** Prison staff will only be required to undertake a maximum of three sentence calculations and checks during an offender’s sentence

(i) Sentence calculations will only be required a maximum of three times during the offender’s sentence (except in cases where further relevant information is received such as a new sentence warrant). After the initial calculation and check, it should be checked again on first transfer and then at least two months before the date of earliest release, depending on the length of sentence, on sentences of 12 months or more. There will be no pre-release check on sentences of less than 12 months. To ensure that risk of error is minimised, HMPS will check calculations on a sample basis. This will significantly reduce the time spent on calculations on transfer and on the 14 day and two day checks. The PSO 6650 will be amended appropriately and piloted across establishments – **Summer 2004**.

(ii) Dependent on the success of the above pilot, new sentence calculation arrangements will be implemented across all prison establishments – **January 2005**.

(iii) A number of staff will be identified to calculate and check sentences and trained appropriately. These staff will have the knowledge and expertise in the role and the checking process will become faster and more effective as a result. The PSO 6650 will be amended appropriately and changes communicated to staff – **Summer 2004**.

**Sentence Planning**

The sentence planning process aims to maximise the possibilities for the rehabilitation of offenders by encouraging them to address the reasons for, and the consequences of, their offending behaviour and by giving them planned experience of work, training and education to help prepare them for release. It is disclosed and discussed with the offender at regular intervals during the course of the sentence. It is reviewed at least annually or more often if necessary. Sentence planning provides the framework for assessing the offender, planning his or her sentence, and setting targets and reviewing progress, based on the risks and needs identified.

All adult offenders sentenced to 12 months and over (with at least six months left to serve) and all young offenders (with at least four weeks left to serve) are subject to sentence planning. Those sentenced to life imprisonment and juveniles (under 18s) have their own system.

Sentence plans typically consist of information obtained from a variety of sources including:

- Internal contributions from relevant staff and departments within the prison establishment;
- Contributions from probation, compiled from pre-sentence reports (PSRs);
- Up-to-date risk assessments carried out by prison and probation staff;
- Any interventions identified, such as family contact or employment in the community.
Reducing burdens on front line staff

Her Majesty’s Prison Service (HMPS) currently has two separate sets of forms for offenders based on the amount of time being served in prison. Automatic Conditional Release (ACR) forms are used for offenders serving between 12 months and four years and Discretionary Conditional Release (DCR) forms are used for offenders serving four years and over.

**Duplication of information captured**

Following the initial assessment, reviews of the plan are undertaken twice annually for offenders serving less than a four year sentence or annually for those offenders serving over four years. For each review, core information (such as an offender’s surname, forename, prison number) is duplicated making the completion of DCR and ACR forms a frustrating and onerous process for prison staff.

**Action: Prison staff will be supported with more effective information technology for use in the sentence planning process**

(i) A new sentence plan is being made available electronically as part of the Offender Assessment System (OASys), which is currently being implemented across both HMPS and National Probation Service (NPS). This system has been jointly designed and piloted as a core assessment tool to be used with offenders from the PSR stage, through custody and on release to the community. OASys will play the central role in the assessment and sentence planning process and will be the key factor in deciding the appropriateness of interventions both inside and outside prison. When OASys is made available in an establishment, it replaces the current mechanisms and forms used for these types of sentences. At the time of publishing, 69 establishments have switched to OASys. OASys is automatically pre-populated with core information from the Local Inmate Database System (LIDS), negating the need for prison staff to transfer this information manually. OASys reviews are pre-populated by previous assessments reducing duplication of effort, as only areas of change will need to be altered. OASys also replaces the existing ACR and DCR sentence planning forms and complete roll-out in HMPS will be completed by **Winter 2004**.

(ii) In the longer term, the ongoing implementation of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 will make substantial changes to the way prison and community sentences are structured (see page 38). The Act replaces the current three-part structure (Automatic Unconditional Release, Automatic Conditional Release and Discretionary Conditional Release) with two sentences: one for less than 12 months and one for 12 months and over (both include a period on licence). This further standardises the processes used by prison staff by amalgamating the current two processes into one – **December 2004 onwards**.

**Transfer of Sentence Plans between prisons**

An offender’s sentence plan, regardless of which establishment it originated from, should follow the offender when transferred to another establishment to ensure continuity of support. However, in practice, this does not always occur and it is quite common for these (and educational records) to take up to a week or more to arrive. Due to the time delay, prison staff unnecessarily have to complete further sentence plans and assessments. In particular, duplication arises in the completion of Basic Skills assessments, which are often re-sat by offenders. Prison staff remain concerned about this duplication of effort and the lack of continuity of care for the offender.
Action: Offender records will be transferred more smoothly between prison establishments

The implementation of OASys ensures that offenders’ OASys forms with assessments and other information including basic skills and sentence plans are transferred electronically between establishments, thereby ensuring quicker access to core information by the receiving prison establishment – Winter 2004 (see above action).

Self-Harm Paperwork

A F2052SH file is opened on any prisoner identified as being at risk of self-harm or suicide. The file encompasses a support plan for the prisoner and is a system for monitoring and recording the behaviour and care of the prisoner until such time that they are considered to be at no further risk. The process involves incident reporting, case reviews, health care assessments and supervision records, all of which are conducted by staff working in the prison. In 2002, approximately 30,000 F2052SHs were opened. Of these roughly a third were by prison escort staff who now complete a one page form rather than open an F2052SH.

Prison staff have raised concerns and identified problems associated with the F2052SH system. For example, staff feel that the forms do not always capture the most relevant information they need in order to provide the best care for prisoners. Staff are also required to check ‘at risk’ prisoners at intervals dependent on the estimated level of risk; this can be anything from constant observation to checks once a shift. Whilst it is accepted that these checks are necessary, staff are required to make an entry of their observations on a log for each check even if there has been no change since the last observation. This can turn into a duplicative exercise that does not necessarily capture useful information.

In addition, some of the self-harm information recorded on the F2052SH is also captured on form F213SH (used to record an incident of self-harm). Some duplication occurs on health and security related forms. Whilst it is necessary to ensure that all staff dealing with ‘at risk’ prisoners are aware of their needs, there is a need to ensure that this is kept to a minimum. Prison Service Order (PSO) 2700 (introduced in January 2003) allows staff greater flexibility around the frequency at which case reviews are carried out for some prisoners. However, further solutions are required to streamline this process.
**Action: Prison staff will no longer be required to duplicate self-harm information resulting in a more effective system for prisoners**

(i) The F213 and F213SH will be reviewed jointly by Her Majesty’s Prison Service (HMPS) and Department for Health (DH). The aim of the review will include: a consideration to merge the forms; improvement of the gender relevance of the forms; better communication of their correct use to front line staff and the best use of the forms in relation to the Inmate Medical Record (IMR) – **June 2004 onwards**.

(ii) A new system (the Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) Plan) to replace the F2052SH will be piloted with a view to rolling it out across HMPS. This will be focused not only on improving the care of ‘at-risk’ prisoners, but integrating implementation with initiatives to care for prisoners with mental health disorders and substance misuse problems. Amongst its aims will be to:

- Ensure that information about why a prisoner is at risk of self-harm/suicide is captured in the paperwork by pro-actively prompting staff to consider this;

- Minimise the length of process by which a full action care plan is developed for at risk prisoners – **January 2004 onwards**.

(iii) In addition, ACCT Plan pilot, will also consider:

- How staff record prisoner observations. The aim is to remove requirements that cause repetitious information entry and to enable more meaningful and useful observations to be captured;

- Inclusion of a process flowchart and brief guidance notes in ACCT Plan folder;

- Improve quality control requirements to ensure that Duty Governors are not unnecessarily involved in the regular administrative checking of self-harm – **January 2004 onwards**.

**Reception Health Checks**

When a prisoner arrives at a prison, they undergo an induction process. This includes a health check that is recorded on a Reception Health Check form. The form contains a gynaecological section, which in prison establishments for male prisoners is irrelevant, and can unnecessarily lengthen the health check process.

Prison staff are also required to ensure that prisoners see a doctor within 24 hours of reception into custody, regardless of the prisoner’s health. This further lengthens the screening process and makes it more onerous.
Actions: Healthcare staff in prisons will administer a shorter health screening process that differentiates between male and female prisoners

(i) A new health screening procedure will be introduced to enable more effective identification of prisoners with clinical needs. As part of this, the automatic requirement for prisoners to see a doctor within 24 hours of reception into custody will be removed. Prisoners, instead, will undergo an initial assessment by trained healthcare staff in prisons. However, they will still have the right to ask to see a doctor if they wish. This will ensure that the doctor’s time can be used more appropriately to see those prisoners, including those ‘at risk’, whose healthcare needs require it – March 2004 (completed).

(ii) Separate reception health screening forms will be introduced for male and female prisoners. This will make the forms more relevant and reduce the time it takes for their completion – March 2004 (completed).

Prisoner Escort Records (PERs)

PERs were introduced in 1998 after a number of high profile deaths in custody, as a way to ensure that relevant information (such as medical notes, security issues, and details of property released) accompany the offender when they are moved between custody establishments. For example, moving from police or prison custody to court custody or during transfers from one prison to another. The PER ensures that the correct level of protection and care is offered to the offender and to the members of staff receiving them, and ensures accountability for care and welfare of the offender that previously did not exist.

Police, courts and prisons are required to complete a PER whenever an offender leaves their current custodial establishment and is moved to another. Staff are required to complete a standardised form, summarising information from sources including:

- Security Information Reports (SIR);
- Inmate Medical Records (IMR);
- Prisoners History Records (F2050).

Completion of PERs

Many receiving prisons have expressed concern that PER forms are not always completed accurately, and that important information is often missing or incomplete. This is particularly evident in busy local prisons where the turnover of offenders is high. Lack of information can lead to offenders not being provided with the most appropriate level of care; duplication of information collated on the offender by staff; or prison staff, prison escorts and/or offenders being inadvertently placed in danger.
Action: Prisons will be issued with clearer guidance on how to complete the PER, leading to a more efficient transfer of offender information and less duplication of records

(i) To promote the effective completion of PERs an awareness-raising campaign will be initiated by Her Majesty’s Prison Service (HMPS) with support from Escort Contractors. This will target all users of the form and will include articles in the Monthly Security Briefing and a ‘model’ PER. The latter will be placed on the HMPS Intranet and will include a visual explanation about how to complete a PER. In addition, a poster will also be available to download from the Intranet to help prison staff complete PERs correctly and consistently – Summer 2004 onwards.

(ii) HMPS will revise the PER Handbook, which is currently issued to all staff. It summarises information contained with Prison Service Order (PSO) 6200 and PSO 1025 and provides prison staff with guidance about the completion of PERs and the level of detail that this form should capture – January 2004 onwards.

(iii) HMPS will consult with police to establish whether they face similar issues with the completion of PERs – March 2004 onwards.

(iv) Dependant on the findings of this consultation, the Cabinet Office and HMPS will jointly approach the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), the Policing and Crime Reduction Group and the Police Forms Editorial Board (soon to be renamed the Police Bureaucracy Gateway) to establish the scale and nature of the problem, subsequently issuing guidance if appropriate – May 2004 onwards.

Referrals to Democratic Therapeutic Communities

Democratic Therapeutic Communities offer a radically different group-based approach to addressing offender behaviour in custody. The treatment approach aims to reduce the risk of re-offending for offenders who have specific emotional and psychological needs, personality disorders and risk factors, which fall into the following categories:

- Emotional management and functioning;
- Interpersonal skills;
- Anti-social beliefs, values and attitudes;
- Self-management, coping and problem solving skills.

The aim of these communities is to enable dedicated multi-disciplinary teams of staff to work together with high risk offenders in an atmosphere where behaviours, attitudes and expressions that would not normally be tolerated in prison, are accepted and used to give feedback to offenders. Residents live as a self-regulating community focused around group therapy and full community meetings, which are tailored to each offender’s specific needs and requirements. These allow offenders to try out different ways of dealing with their frustrations, to develop more positive relationships and to try and change how they relate to others in order to reduce their risk of re-offending. Offenders have to make the decision that they want to be part of such a community and this decision needs to be supported by their current prison establishment.
There are currently six such prison establishments in England and Wales all offering a core therapeutic community model but each with a slightly different target group, for example, women, men and young offenders.

**Referrals to Therapeutic Communities – paperwork**

Not all offenders will be eligible to attend a therapeutic community prison. Offenders need to meet certain requirements and be committed to addressing their offending behaviour. Establishments offering a therapeutic community environment therefore require specific and detailed information upon which an acceptance or rejection is based. Referrals are part of this process, although these are time-consuming for prison staff to prepare. Currently forms are only available in paper copy, making the process even more onerous.

Prison staff have also raised other concerns around the referral process, for example, the lack of national standards regarding referral paperwork, which often causes confusion amongst staff required to complete it. In addition, segments of the paperwork regularly go missing causing further time delays and anxiety for offenders.

**Action: Her Majesty's Prison Service (HMPS) will introduce a national standard that includes referral forms and supporting guidance, both of which will be available electronically**

(i) Referral forms will be made available electronically through the Therapeutic Communities web-site, along with guidance on their use. This will be supported by the creation of individual web pages for each establishment, which will provide additional useful information – **October 2004**.

(ii) The current implementation of a ‘core’ accredited model will introduce standard practices into all therapeutic community establishments, whether they are privately or publicly owned. This will make it easier for prison staff to make referrals, as the element of choice will be limited. The model, provisionally accredited in October 2003 by the Correctional Services Accreditation Panel will be rolled out nationally following full accreditation – **March 2004 (completed)**.

(iii) In addition, internal assessment forms will be standardised and rolled out across all six establishments. There will be a transition period for offenders currently using the previous assessment forms, although all new assessments will be carried out using the standardised forms provided – **April 2004 (completed)**.

(iv) The Therapeutic Community Liaison Committee will continue to focus its attention on the standardisation of the referral and internal assessment forms used by establishments. The committee will continue to review and explore referral issues to ensure that any future restrictions on front line staff are considered in the least burdensome way possible – **June 2003 (ongoing)**.
Release of Offenders

Release on Temporary License (ROTL)

ROTL allows certain categories of sentenced offenders to be granted temporary release. ROTL was introduced in 1995 to allow prisoners to conduct precisely defined activities that could not be undertaken in prison, often as an aid for resettlement back into the community. A temporary release can take the form of a compassionate licence (for urgent personal matters); a facility licence (to enable prisoners who have served over a quarter of their sentence to participate in employment, voluntary work or education); or a resettlement licence (designed to assist an offender to re-adjust by establishing links in the community, pursuing employment and strengthening family ties). The length of the licence is discretionary and therefore subject to the duration and frequency requirements of the particular licence granted.

Prior to release, the offender is also subject to a rigorous assessment by prison staff to ensure that their release is not potentially dangerous to members of the public. In particular assessment is made of:

- The risk to public safety;
- The risk to further offending;
- The likelihood of their failure to comply with the licence conditions or to abscond;
- Conformity of the release with the sentence plan.

Whilst staff accept that the risk assessment process is extremely important in ensuring that public confidence in the system is maintained, many prison staff have raised concern at the time-consuming paperwork exercise involved in confirming an offender’s release on temporary licence.

**ROTL paperwork**

ROTL consists of a series of 11 paper forms, some of which duplicate the same information making the process time-consuming and burdensome. Due to the lack of national electronic ROTL forms, some prison establishments have created their own which has led to inconsistencies in the process and confusion and misinterpretation for other stakeholders required to provide information.

**Action: ROTL paperwork will be streamlined and simplified, removing forms that duplicate information and making them more user-friendly**

(i) Her Majesty’s Prison Service (HMPS) will review the ROTL forms currently in existence to remove instances of duplication. This will include the amalgamation of ROTL 1, 2 and 3 as a generic application form. The form will have a group of tick boxes at the top to identify which type of licence the form is being used for. This will reduce the amount of forms within the process as a whole, in addition to making the prospect of completing the form less daunting for prison staff – **June 2004 (completed)**.

(ii) The above review will also include the amalgamation of further ROTL forms, in particular notification of release to outside agencies (ROTL 8 and 9). A generic notification form will lead to time-savings for those staff currently required to read duplicative paperwork – **September 2004**.
(iii) Additionally, ROTL forms have recently been made available electronically for staff to download from HMPS Intranet. This will further promote the use of standardised forms, ensure a uniform approach to their completion and reduce the need to duplicate core offender information across each of the forms – February 2004 (completed).

**ROTL guidance**

Guidance on the ROTL process takes the form of an ‘Instruction to the Governor’, which is currently being reviewed. The document itself is quite lengthy in size and complex for staff to understand. They have also expressed difficulties in navigating through the document, particularly in searching for any amendments made and, as a result of this, inconsistencies in the process have occurred.

**Action: New ROTL guidance will be issued to ensure the process is easier for staff to understand**

HMPS will introduce a Prison Service Order (PSO) on the ROTL process, which will replace the ‘Instruction to Governor’ currently used. This will include a simple flowchart of the ROTL process, together with an explanation of the different stages involved. As a result, staff will be able to quickly ascertain specific reference material without having to access the entire document. In the appendices the new PSO will also have a recommendation on which forms to use – September 2004.

**Home Detention Curfew (HDC)**

HDC was introduced in 1999. The scheme enables short-term offenders serving sentences of between three months and under four years to return to the community up to four and a half months earlier than their normal release date. The offender is subject to an electronically monitored curfew, with considerable restrictions placed on their liberty. If they breach the curfew conditions they are liable to be returned to prison to serve the remaining custodial part of their sentence.

HDC was introduced to provide offenders with a smoother and more effective re-integration back into the community. Although not its primary purpose, HDC also plays an important role in managing the prison population by reducing overcrowding at the same time as improving resettlement opportunities for less serious offenders.

For most eligible offenders, HDC will be a normal part of the progression through their sentence. They will be normally be released on HDC unless there are substantive reasons for retaining the offender in custody until his or her unconditional or conditional release date. However, offenders must pass an in-depth risk assessment, including the approval of suitable accommodation by the probation service, prior to the HDC Board’s confirmation of release.

Whilst prisons recognise the value of HDC in ensuring the smooth integration and resettlement of the offender back into the community, some have expressed concern over the time-consuming process involved in releasing the offender on HDC. In addition, probation staff have also raised concern at the duplication of information provided on HDC forms and those used for resettlement of offenders back into the community.
Reducing burdens on front line staff

**HDC paperwork**
The process involved in confirming an offender’s release on HDC involves the completion of a series of forms. Depending on the circumstances the number of forms completed could vary between 5 and 11 forms. Members of front line staff have raised concerns over the current number of forms in existence, some of which duplicate information. This has made the process of authorising release on HDC time-consuming and burdensome. Whilst forms are available to use on the Local Inmate Database System (LIDS), which has the function to automatically populate generic offender information, some prisons have produced their own forms, leading to confusion amongst front line staff within the prison and probation services, and ultimately inconsistencies in how the paperwork is completed.

**Action:** The number of HDC forms will be reduced and simplified to make the process for confirming release easier for prison staff to complete

(i) Her Majesty’s Prison Service (HMPS) will review all HDC forms with a view to reducing duplicative information. It will consider the amalgamation of the HDC2 and HDC9 and other HDC forms including HDC5 & 6 (notification of provisional acceptance or refusal) and HDC3 & 8 (request for information on proposed HDC) – **September 2004**.

(ii) Following the above review, HDC forms will be made available electronically as Microsoft Word templates for HDC Clerks, prior to the introduction of a service-wide forms database which will enable staff to download forms from HMPS Intranet. This will promote the use of standardised forms and will enable the forms to be e-mailed between departments, the probation service and outside agencies as necessary – **September 2004**.

**Process in obtaining HDC clearance**
Due to the security implications of releasing an offender on HDC, there are numerous stages prison staff need to go through to obtain approval for release. The completion of HDC paperwork may require the signature of a governor on four separate HDC forms at different stages of the process – a suitability assessment for release (HDC1), an enhanced assessment for release (HDC4) (if a Governor feels this is necessary after reviewing the standard assessment) and the notification of acceptance/refusal (HDC 5 & 6). Many Governors feel that this is an unnecessary duplication of effort, particularly in cases where the decision is not altered. They have also expressed concern at the length of time taken for the paperwork to pass through the levels of command, which inevitably slows down the process as a whole.

**Action:** Governors’ role in approving release on HDC will be simplified to ensure that the process is less time-consuming to complete

As part of the above review, HMPS will clarify forms that require a Governor’s signature. It will be sufficient for them to give their approval at the initial confirmation of suitability on form HDC1 unless a case is referred to an enhanced board. Under these circumstances, approval must be given on form HDC4 – **September 2004**.
**HDC guidance**
Guidance on the HDC process and the completion of associated paperwork is contained in Prison Service Order (PSO) 6700. This document is currently quite lengthy in size and onerous for prison staff to read, especially as this may often impinge on time that could better be spent with the offender. Staff have also expressed their difficulty in navigating around the document, particularly for reference purposes or in seeking clarification on any amendments, as information is not clearly labelled and often difficult to find.

**Action: Prisons will benefit from tailored guidance on the HDC process to make it easier to understand**
Following the significant changes to the HDC process, HMPS will review and consolidate the current PSO to ensure that it is more user-friendly. The new PSO will include a flowchart of the HDC process, including an explanation of the stages involved. It will act as a more detailed contents page and include hyperlinks to the chapters contained within the main PSO, helping staff to understand the essential processes and paperwork without having to access the lengthy document – March 2005 onwards.

**Transfer of HDC information**
The current guidance states that offenders should not normally be transferred to another establishment within ten weeks of their planned release on HDC. In practice, due to the pressures of a transient prison population, this does not always happen. As a result, the receiving establishment is often responsible for confirming the final decision for release on HDC. This is particularly problematic due to the slow or incomplete transfer of information from the previous establishment, which often results in the paperwork having to be completed in its entirety again.

**Action: Prison establishments will benefit from improved transfer of HDC information**
HMPS wrote to Governors and Area Managers in December 2003 clarifying the regulations around releasing offenders on HDC. This included the stipulation that the following requirements were followed;

- Offenders eligible for HDC must not be transferred in the week prior to their eligibility date until an HDC assessment has been completed unless there are exceptional operational reasons for doing so;

- Where an assessment for HDC has commenced the documentation must accompany the offender on transfer.

HMPS will continue to monitor that this is implemented effectively and will seek to further address the concern of poor or incomplete transfer of HDC information between prison establishments, ensuring that the completion of HDC paperwork is not unnecessarily duplicated – Ongoing.
Parole Assessment Reports

The Parole Board is the independent body that protects the public by making risk assessments about offenders to decide who may safely be released into the community and who must remain in or be returned to custody.

Parole applies to long term offenders (those serving sentences of four years or more) and is a form of discretionary release, which includes a period of supervision in the community under licence conditions. An offender is eligible for parole at the halfway point of their sentence. Only offenders who are thought to present an acceptable risk to the public will be allowed parole and this is only granted after a paper review by the Parole Board, who determines whether or not the offender is suitable.

The Criminal Justice Act 2003 implements various criminal justice reforms. Included in these reforms is a redefining of the role of the Parole Board. The Parole Board will continue to be responsible for decisions on the release of life-sentence offenders and those serving the new public protection sentences. It will also continue to consider the release of existing Discretionary Conditional Release (DCR) offenders. There will be no parole process for new determinate sentenced offenders, all of whom will be automatically released at the halfway point of their sentence. The Parole Board will have a larger role to play in the process of executive recall decisions on paroled offenders.

Parole Assessment Reports – paperwork

Parole is considered on the basis of a range of reports made about the offender whilst in prison, known as a Parole Dossier. These are collated from several sources, including police, court, prison and probation staff. They provide extensive information on the offender including the nature of their offence, home circumstances, plans for release, behaviour in prison, and progress made in addressing their offending behaviour. On the basis of this material, the Parole Board will make an assessment of risk to public protection and this assessment will determine whether the offender is released on parole.

Prison parole report assessments are currently paper-based and complex for staff to complete, particularly as a substantial amount of information is required by the Parole Board. In addition, many staff believe that the information they provide is duplicative and already centrally available elsewhere as part of the offender’s core case file.

**Action:** Prison parole assessment reports will be completed electronically, thereby reducing the duplication of information collated elsewhere

Prison parole assessment reports will no longer be completed separately. The entire assessment process will be conducted via the Offender Assessment System (OASys), which is currently being rolled out across the prison and probation services. Staff will be able to draw on additional information provided as part of OASys for the compilation of their assessment. This will reduce the manual duplication of information being collected elsewhere and help speed up the decision-making process as a whole – **December 2004**.
Prioritisation of parole assessment reports

Completion of parole assessment reports by home area probation staff is essential in facilitating effective decision-making by the Parole Board. These parole assessments are used to aid the Parole Board in determining the offender’s likelihood of re-offending. There has been some confusion as to the priority that should be attached to the completion of these reports. The National Probation Directorate (NPD) has developed a Workload Prioritisation Framework, issued in early 2003. This was designed to give guidance on the prioritisation of the work completed by probation staff. The framework overlooked parole assessment reports, and as such these have been given a lower priority in some probation areas. This, coupled with other pressures, has led to inconsistencies in the quality of parole assessment reports across the probation service.

Action: The importance of completing parole assessment reports will be highlighted through revisions made to the Workload Prioritisation Framework

The Workload Prioritisation Framework is currently being revised. The new version of the framework will include a reference to parole assessment reports and will attach an appropriate level of priority to them. This will help facilitate better decision making by the Parole Board and ultimately improve the efficiency of the process as a whole – July 2004.

Timing of parole assessment reports

Parole assessment reports must be completed 17 weeks prior to the offender’s parole eligibility date to allow sufficient time for the Parole Board to reach their decision. As part of this process, probation staff are required to provide specific information on the progress made by the offender on any educational course or offender programme they have undertaken. However, due to the timing of the courses within prisons, it is often the case that offenders have not finished their course at the time at which the report is compiled. Probation staff are therefore asked to complete these reports and assessments without having sufficient information available at the time.

Action: New guidance will be issued to probation staff regarding offenders who do not complete courses 17 weeks prior to release

NPD will issue guidance to probation areas outlining what information they should provide in instances where offenders have not completed their assigned course by the 17 week deadline for the completion of parole assessment reports – April 2004 (completed).

Parole Assessment guidance

Guidance surrounding the completion of a parole assessment report is complex and often confusing for staff. In particular, it is unclear what information is required by ‘home’ and ‘seconded’ probation staff. This can lead to duplication by probation staff, or forms being completed without the necessary information. In addition, there is also confusion, particularly amongst prison staff, regarding the amount of detail they need to provide and uncertainty as to how and why the information is being used.
**Action: Prison and probation staff will be provided with guidance to better support them in the parole process**

(i) In order to improve support for staff in the completion of parole assessment reports, a ‘draft example’ will be made available. This will help clarify the amount of information staff should provide in their report and will be distributed through various media including relevant professional circulars – **June 2004 (completed)**.

(ii) The NPD will also issue guidance to probation staff outlining their roles and responsibilities in completing parole assessment reports. This will include: detailing areas that are discretionary; information that staff are expected to provide and a clear distinction between what areas the home and seconded staff are expected to complete. It will stress that the focus of the report must be upon assessing risk – **April 2004 (completed)**.

(iii) In addition, the Early Release and Recall Section within the Home Office (HO) will provide feedback to prison staff highlighting how parole assessments are used in the parole process and why the information is requested. This will ensure that staff have a clearer understanding of the information required and recognise the value of their contribution to the process as a whole – **July 2004 (completed)**.

(iv) To further support staff in the completion of parole assessment reports, the Parole Board will clarify the standardised requirements in a probation circular – **March 2004 (completed)**.
Supervision of Offenders in the Community

Community Sentence Orders and Post Custodial Licences

As an alternative to a custodial sentence, the court can sentence an offender to a period of supervision within the community. This is commonly known as a ‘community sentence’ and is enforced by the National Probation Service (NPS) through a period of supervision. The ethos of community punishment is to ensure the offender pays something back to the local community in reparation for their crime. This can be a constructive sentence, combining a restriction in liberty with tangible results for the community. Currently there are three main community orders in existence:

- **Community Punishment Order** – involving practical or manual work in the community. Offenders are closely supervised at all times to ensure good standards of work and behaviour;

- **Community Rehabilitation Order** – specifically targeted to challenge offending behaviour and change the way the offender thinks and acts. A carefully targeted supervision plan is devised to tackle any anti-social behaviour such as drug or alcohol abuse;

- **Community Punishment and Rehabilitation Order** – a combination of both community punishment and rehabilitation for more serious crimes, involving significant restrictions of liberty.

**Community sentence orders – paperwork**

Probation staff are required to enforce the above orders through continuing assessments of the offender throughout their period of supervision. Currently, the paperwork required for completion is very lengthy and complex for probation staff to understand. Additionally, the paperwork is not standardised across the different orders leading to inconsistencies in how the process is handled, and misinterpretation by front line members of staff.

**Action: Probation staff will benefit from a standardised approach in the execution of community sentences**

(i) The National Probation Directorate (NPD) will review the current paperwork procedures surrounding community punishment orders, to remove instances of duplication and ensure a more standardised approach is adopted across areas. This will include abolishing referral forms for Enhanced Community Punishment and will be reflected in a revised manual and guidance due for publication in **October 2004**.

(ii) As part of the current roll-out of new technology (‘Interim IT solutions for Enhanced Community Punishment’) across the NPD, an assessment will be conducted to ensure that assessment forms wherever possible are pre-populated using existing data sources available – **June 2004 (completed)**.

(iii) Additionally, a Generic Community Sentence (GCS) will be introduced as part of the Criminal Justice Act 2003. This will replace all adult community orders currently in existence allowing greater flexibility to tailor supervision to the individual offender and removing the inconsistent handling of orders currently experienced – **December 2004**.
Reducing burdens on front line staff

(iv) As part of the new generic order, a national framework will be introduced to ensure any supporting documentation is produced in a standardised format. Consideration will be given to the design and layout of paperwork to ensure that information is as clear and concise as possible – **December 2004**.

(v) As part of the wider development of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS), a computerised case management system will be introduced. This will ensure that case file formats are standardised and will further ensure that any paperwork introduced as part of the new community sentence is relevant and necessary – **Summer 2005**.

**Community sentence orders – guidance**

Guidance on the execution of community punishment orders is currently issued to probation staff in the form of a manual. These manuals are lengthy in size, making it hard for staff to read and quickly absorb. Staff have also raised concern about the clarity of instructions, in particular the lack of indication of changes when revised versions are issued. This often results in staff having to read through the entire document to ascertain where amendments arise.

**Action: A review of documentation will ensure probation staff are provided with simplified guidance for community sentences**

Future community sentence manuals, including any editions of the GCS Order, will contain a front-page summary of any changes made. This will allow staff to quickly ascertain where amendments are within the document and what part of the process they relate to – **March 2004 onwards**.

**Post-custodial licences**

Courts may choose to impose a prison custodial sentence for an offender as opposed to a community sentence. The NPS supervises offenders sentenced for more than 12 months in prison custody on their release. This period of their sentence spent in the community is referred to as a ‘licence’ and involves the offender keeping to the minimum enforced levels of contact with their supervising staff. Currently licences can take the form of:

- **Automatic Conditional Release** – this applies to all offenders serving between 12 months and four years and occurs half way through the original sentence length. Direct supervision of the offender continues on licence until three-quarters of their sentence is served;

- **Discretionary Conditional Release** – this applies to offenders serving more than four years and occurs between half and two-thirds of the way through the sentence. Direct supervision of the offender continues on licence until three-quarters of their sentence is served;

- **Life Licence** – this applies to all offenders serving a life sentence. Offenders are required to live under licence conditions including supervision until a decision by the Home Office (HO) is made otherwise. Some offenders for example, will remain on a licence for the remainder of their life.
Offenders released from prison are required to keep all the conditions specified in the licence whilst under the supervision of their probation officer. Failure to do so leads to breach proceedings being taken against the offender through the Courts or revocation of licence and recall to prison (see page 43).

Many probation staff have raised concern about the current structure in which these licences are set, in particular the inconsistencies in handling across the different conditions imposed. Staff have therefore asked that a review of licences take place to ensure a greater degree of consistency in how the process is handled.

**Action: Regulations governing the new licences will be designed to ensure that processes are consistent as far as possible**

(i) Under the Criminal Justice Act 2003, all offenders will be subject to a post-custodial licence on release regardless of their length of sentence. This will ensure that a consistent approach towards enforcement is applied to all offenders – **December 2004 onwards**.

(ii) Additionally, as part of the ongoing implementation of the Act, the existing structure of licences will be replaced by two determinate sentences, both of which will include periods on licence:

* Custody Plus – this will replace the current custodial sentence of less than 12 months. The licence period must be a least six months and is subject to conditions. If the offender breaches the licence conditions, they will be recalled to custody for a period, which may extend for the rest of their supervision period. Pilots will be undertaken from **December 2005** with a view to rolling out the process from **June 2006 onwards**;

* Intermittent Custody – this will enable the offender to serve the custodial element of a Custody Plus sentence intermittently at weekend or weekdays. Between periods of custody, the offender will be on licence and subject to conditions that may continue after the custodial period has been exhausted. Pilots are currently being undertaken at two prison establishments and across 11 areas. Subject to the success of these pilots, the process will be rolled out nationwide – **March 2004 onwards**.

**Supervision Plans**

The National Probation Service (NPS) is also responsible for the effective supervision of an offender once they have been released on a post-custodial licence or are placed on a community sentence order as a requirement from the court\(^1\). The length of supervision will vary depending on the order/licence imposed. It may include a number of conditions but supervision will always include a requirement for regular face-to-face contact between the offender and their supervising probation staff. As a result of supervision, probation staff endeavour to assess and reduce the offending behaviour, assisting them towards a greater sense of motivation and aid re-integration and resettlement back into the community.

\(^1\) As set out in the National Standards for the Supervision of Offenders, 2002
Reducing burdens on front line staff

Supervision paperwork requirements
All supervised offenders are subject to regular written assessments, which are completed by their supervising officer. These assessments endeavour to ascertain:

- The risk of the offender causing serious harm to victims of the offence, the public, to staff or themselves;
- The causes and patterns of their offending behaviour including the likelihood of re-offending;
- Their offence-related needs and circumstances;
- Their motivation to change their behaviour to address the risks they present and resolve any offence-related needs or circumstances.

Where the offender is subject to a community punishment order, or a community punishment and rehabilitation order, the assessment must also include further information relevant to any possible community work proposals. The assessment supports the preparation of a supervision plan which sets out for the offender and his supervising officer the key actions to be taken to manage the assessed risks to the public and of re-offending and to address any offending, rehabilitation or other identified needs. It will also set out clear targets for progress and how compliance will be achieved. The plan, which is triggered by various sections of the Offender Assessment System (OASys), is also agreed with the offender and is subject to review every 16 weeks when, dependent on progress made, objectives may be amended or removed.

Many probation staff have expressed concern at the current supervision plan, in particular the unwieldy format and complex content, which makes it difficult for offenders to fully understand and absorb. In addition to this, not all probation areas currently have access to e-OASys, which has resulted in the production of localised paper-based forms across the different areas. The absence of a standardised format has therefore resulted in disparities in the recording of information and ultimately inconsistencies in how offenders are supervised.

Action: Probation staff will be provided with a more concisely formatted supervision plan ensuring the process is more relevant for both staff and offenders to understand

(i) The NPS will review the current information required for the supervision plan to ensure the information recorded remains relevant and up-to-date. In addition to this, a review will be undertaken of the formatting of the plan to make it more user-friendly and easy for the offender to understand – Summer 2004.

(ii) In addition to this, the introduction of the new Generic Community Sentence (GCS) (see page 38) will ensure that any associated documentation, including supervision of the new order, will be standardised. In particular, consideration will be given to the length and format of forms to ensure that they are as less burdensome as possible for staff to complete – December 2004.
Review of supervision

Currently, the requirement to review a supervision plan at least every 16 weeks is set out in the National Standards for the Supervision of Offenders 2002. Regular reviews are intended to provide a formal structure within which supervision plans can be tested and objectives reassessed in the light of any progress made. They provide a vital check that the supervision plan remains valid and is effective. However, the length of supervision can vary considerably depending on the particular Order or Licence conditions imposed. As a result of this, an in-depth review is conducted on every case. Probation staff have expressed reservations that the rigidity of the National Standards in requiring a full and in-depth review is not appropriate where the period of supervision may be relatively short.

**Action: The frequency of supervision reviews will be assessed to allow for distinction between short and long term supervision**

The timing of regular reviews on supervision will be considered with a view to reducing the frequency in which reviews take place for short-term community sentences, taking into consideration any associated risk factors. This will be reflected in the new National Standards for the Supervision of Offenders, which is due to be published in Autumn 2004.

**Supervision information requirements**

It is often necessary to provide the courts with regular progress on the supervision of some Orders, in particular the Drug Treatment and Testing Order (DTTO) or Intensive Control and Change Programme (ICCP). Guidance on the key information required by sentencers has been issued to probation staff. However, it is often the case that this information is also required for a supervision plan review. Probation staff can therefore find themselves required to repeat information on both documents. This is time-consuming and duplicative and staff have expressed their need for a single document that could be used for both supervision and court purposes.

**Action: A review of information required for supervision plans and progress reports will ensure that duplication of information is removed**

(i) A review of the current information provided on both progress reports and supervision plans will be undertaken with a view to standardise requirements and remove unnecessary duplication across both forms. This will also include the possible amalgamation of the two forms so only one document is necessary – Summer 2004.

(ii) The Cabinet Office and the NPS will continue to work collaboratively with sentencers to broker agreement on these changes, ensuring that any introduction of a combined form is implemented in the most user-friendly way possible – August 2004 onwards.
Breaches

The National Probation Service (NPS) is also responsible for enforcing compliance with the conditions of a community sentence whilst an offender is under their supervision. An offender’s second unacceptable failure to comply with supervision or third unacceptable failure in relation to a parole licence should prompt the supervising officer to initiate breach action against the offender. This can result in the offender being re-sentenced at court or recalled to prison. At the beginning of their period of supervision, all offenders are given an oral and written explanation of the consequences of their failure to comply with the conditions of their licence or order and this is reinforced orally as appropriate throughout the period of supervision.

Given the importance of enforcement and compliance in ensuring that offenders have the opportunity to readdress their behaviour effectively, the breach process is prescriptive in its requirements of both the offender and supervising officer, while retaining a measure of discretion around what is deemed to be an ‘unacceptable’ failure. Taking action against a suspected breach involves rigid time-scales which are set out in the National Standards for the Supervision of Offenders 2002 and the supervising officer is required to follow these stringently. However, whilst probation staff recognise their duty to ensure effective enforcement, they have expressed concern about the overly complex process involved in complying with these instructions.

Breach paperwork – enforcement letters

The first stage in instigating breach proceedings against an offender requires the supervising officer to send a formal warning letter to the offender. The letter requests an ‘acceptable’ explanation as to why the offender failed to attend their appointment. Standard templates and model letters are available electronically for staff to use for this specific process. However, they are concerned that the language used in these model letters is complex and insensitive, making offenders resistant to act on the instructions stated or unsure about what the letter means.

Action: Enforcement letters will be reviewed to ensure that they are less complex and easier for the offender to understand

(i) The National Probation Directorate (NPD) will invite comments from stakeholders and probation practitioners on the current format and language of enforcement letters. The NPD will act on any recommendations made following this consultation with a view to ensuring any future letters are less complex and easier for the offender to understand – July 2004.

(ii) On the commencement of Schedules 8 and 12 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003, the warning letter process will become a statutory requirement in respect of breach of community sentence orders. Should any overriding legal advice be received in respect of the Act, the format of the enforcement letters will be amended in a user-friendly manner – December 2004.
**Breach paperwork – breach report**

When a breach occurs, supervising staff are required to complete a breach report for production at court within 10 working days. Currently, the report is lengthy to complete and analyse, particularly within the tight time-scales required.

**Action:** Probation staff will be provided with standardised national framework for the handling of breaches to support consistency across all probation areas

(i) A joint action plan is currently being drafted between the NPS and the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA) to improve enforcement performance across probation and court services. As part of this, a Breach Enforcement National Framework will be introduced including a review of documentation currently used, with a view to implementing a more standardised process including reports – **August 2004**.

(ii) In addition to this, the introduction of the new Generic Community Sentence (GCS) will be used to ensure that any associated documentation, including enforcement paperwork, will be standardised (see page 38) – **December 2004**.

**Breach paperwork – requirements from court**

The court requires a considerable amount of information before a breach hearing can take place. The supervising probation staff are required to lay before the court various documentation, including duplicate copies of the breach report, Pre Sentence Report (PSR), pre-convictions, and statement-of-fact sheet within 10 working days of the qualifying breach. Staff have expressed concern at the amount of paperwork required by the court and the time-scales in which this is requested.

**Action:** Probation staff will benefit from reduced information requirements from court

(i) NPS will work jointly with DCA to reduce the amount of information currently required for production at a breach hearing. This will include utilising information already provided or available from other central sources (i.e. PSRs and pre-convictions) – **August 2004**.

(ii) To further reduce the burden of information demands, probation staff will no longer be required to send duplicate copies of documentation to the court before a breach hearing – **Autumn 2004**.
Reducing burdens on front line staff

Notification of breaches
Poor data sharing and lack of access to information often inhibits and restricts the effectiveness of the breach process. This is particularly evident when an offender has re-offended and been arrested whilst on a period of supervision. Due to poor channels of communication, information is not readily shared between the two organisations which often results in the offender being breached. It is often the case that offenders are arrested, and in some cases imprisoned, for a separate offence elsewhere without the supervising staff’s knowledge. This has serious implications for sharing of information and has impacted on the efficiency of the breach process as a whole.

**Action: Probation staff will benefit from increased sharing of breach information**

(i) A pilot will be conducted with Northumbria Probation, to allow probation staff direct access to the Police National Computer (PNC). This will allow staff to ascertain quickly and effectively whether an offender is in custody, facilitating greater sharing of information and ultimately speeding up the breach process as a whole. Subject to the success of the above pilot, access to the PNC will be increased to cover the remaining 41 probation areas – **June 2004 onwards**.

(ii) The Cabinet Office will continue to work with NPS to improve the transfer of breach information between probation areas – **August 2004 onwards**.
Managing and Monitoring Information

Regime Monitoring in Prisons

Prisons are measured against Key Performance Targets (KPTs) and report their progress at predefined monthly intervals to Her Majesty’s Prison Service (HMPS) headquarters. The KPTs are set using current and past performance primarily but with a view of comparative performance in similar establishments. Of the 17 different KPTs relating to prisoner regimes, front line staff have voiced concern about the ‘purposeful activity’ KPT.

Prisons are required to collate data about the quantity of purposeful activity hours that they provide to offenders within their establishment. Purposeful activity can be divided into four categories that include:

- Education — basic and key skills, vocational training, other accredited education, etc.;
- Work — maintenance, cleaning, prison workshops, horticulture, kitchens etc.;
- Resettlement — pre-release programmes, family or social visits, Accredited Offending Behaviour Programmes, job clubs, etc.;
- Other — voluntary work, chaplaincy, recreational sporting activities etc.

It is essential that staff use a systematic approach when capturing this data, so that governors, local and area managers and directors are better able to monitor their performance effectively and measure it accurately against this KPT.

Regime Monitoring – formatting of paperwork

Currently, there is a lack of standardisation in the forms used to capture the activities undertaken by the offender as part of their daily regime. As a result, localised forms have been created and, on some occasions, this has meant that different forms have been used for each activity. An example of this resulted in one establishment having over 19 separate forms to monitor various activities.

Action: Prison staff will be provided with National Standards and templates to use for the recording of purposeful activity

An awareness-raising campaign will be undertaken to promote the use of recommended templates contained within the Prison Service Order (PSO). This campaign will include:

- Providing a standard template for use throughout the prison estate;
- An example of a completed form, outlining the information that should be captured.

This will form the basis of standard Regime Monitoring training instructions – January 2005.

Regime Monitoring – Completion of forms

Due to the wide variety of forms in existence, there is some confusion amongst staff as to how they should be completed.
Reducing burdens on front line staff

The data captured on these forms is used by regime monitoring clerks to calculate the prison’s performance against its KPTs. If data is incorrectly captured, through either under- or over-recording of data, it ultimately presents a misleading picture of the amount of purposeful activity taking place in prison.

Despite the fact that information is already available online within PSO 7100 under section 3 ‘Collecting Regime Monitoring Data’, there is still a great deal of confusion as to how information should be captured, recorded and used.

**Action: Prison staff will be provided with more effective and streamlined methods of recording purposeful activity**

(i) HMPS will introduce the process of sampling for regime monitoring. It is anticipated that rather than capturing information 52 weeks of the year, sampling will only take place six times a year, substantially reducing the burden placed on front line staff and improving the quality of information captured. The streamlined process will initially be piloted in **July 2004** and, depending on the success of the pilot will be rolled out nation wide – **Spring 2005**.

(ii) HMPS will also create a handbook that will provide a simple, easy to read, abridged version of the PSO and will be developed in conjunction with the introduction of the standard documentation. This guidance will be presented in three sections for the following types of staff engaged with regime monitoring:

- Reporting point staff (Prison staff or Activity Leaders) – how the form should be completed, what information should be captured;
- Regime monitoring clerk – how the information captured should be entered onto the IT systems, how to provide feedback on the completed forms to the reporting point staff;
- Management – how the information captured should be used to measure performance against KPTs and as a management information tool – **September 2004**.

(iii) To ensure that all staff are aware of changes within the PSO 7100, a “What’s Changed” section will be included in future PSOs which will outline the amendments made since the publication of the previous edition – **July 2004**.

**Duplication of information captured**

The recording of purposeful activity often means that front line staff are required to duplicate information on activities across a number of different activity forms. The typical process for this requires:

- The reporting point staff (whether it be educational, work, resettlement etc.) to capture the time offenders are engaged with the activity in a diary;
- Prison staff then check this prior to transferral to a Regime Monitoring form;
- Administrative staff then input the data into an IT system.
Despite the introduction of better guidance and examples of how the forms should be completed, staff are still experiencing difficulties, particularly in the duplication of information, and further action is still needed.

**Action: HMPS will enable other staff to complete regime monitoring forms**

HMPS will change the process of monitoring activities. Reporting point staff will now be given the authority to complete the regime monitoring forms themselves, which will then be directly handed to administrative staff prior to entering them onto the IT system. This process will reduce duplication, minimise the risk of error and help speed up the data collection process for each activity – **November 2004**.

**Prison Governors’ Journals**

Historically, governing Governors have been required to keep a journal as part of their daily routine. The journal is designed to account for key events and thoughts throughout the day and to note the daily prison population. Due to the increased need to record information for auditing purposes, the journal entry duplicates information held elsewhere. In addition, the journal is neither monitored nor audited.

Whilst Governors’ Journals have proved a useful tool in the past, some governors feel that it would reduce burdens and save time on their average working day to have the formality removed and to have the practice as an optional task.

**Action: Clarification will be issued to ensure Governors’ Journals only record the most relevant hand-over information**

Governors’ Journals should no longer hold detailed statistical data, which is available from other sources within the establishment. Instead, it should be used to provide daily hand-over information such as general prisoner management information, incident reporting or industrial relation issues. This will be clarified in a revised Prison Service Instruction, which will be issued in **August 2004**.

**National Probation Service (NPS) – Standardised Paperwork**

In April 2001, the NPS was re-organised into 42 local probation areas across England and Wales under the umbrella of the National Probation Directorate (NPD). Prior to this, 54 probation areas existed separately, each with their individual processes and paperwork in place. As a result, the majority of documentation was not standardised across areas despite it being a national service. This has lead to difficulties when either an offender or a member of staff moves from one area to another. It also makes it difficult for the NPD to give a clear direction in relation to the use of paperwork and computer based applications.
Tension exists between the centre and local areas on standardisation. This is apparent in the different local arrangements that exist for functions such as accommodation, drug provision and public protection, where either the providers of facilities dictate the information they require or authority has been given by Government to localities to make decisions on the local service within broad guidelines.

**Action: Local probation areas will be provided with nationally standardised documentation**

(i) The NPS will review the documentation currently in existence, with a view to standardise forms used across local probation areas. This will include, amongst others:

- Breach enforcement paperwork (see page 43);
- Accredited programme forms;
- Enhanced Community Punishment forms;
- Short Format Reports/Specific Sentence Reports (see page 16);
- Referral to drug provision forms;
- Referrals to approved premises forms;
- Accommodation referral forms;
- Schedule One and Multi-Agency Public Protection Panel (MAPPP) paperwork (see page 20);
- Personnel forms including appraisals and travel & subsistence paperwork;
- Ethnic monitoring forms.

As a result of this review forms will be removed and discontinued from use. Better use will be made of existing centrally held information and data, in particular information stored electronically on the Offender Assessment System (OASys) – September 2004.

(ii) Following the above review, the standardised forms will be made available electronically as Microsoft Word templates. This will allow staff to download forms from the NPS Intranet and will ensure that a standardised approach is applied across every probation area – October 2004.

(iii) Additionally, the NPD will review the current National Standards monitoring forms with a view to making them shorter and more concise – March 2004 (completed).

**National Probation Service (NPS) – Information Storage**

Probation staff are required to keep a paper copy of an offender’s case file after their supervision has been terminated and the case has been closed. Currently, there is no policy on the storage of these files, including what information should be kept and for how long. Current guidance has not been updated to take account of the Freedom of Information Act and Data Protection Act and
therefore there is no consistent approach applied across the country. As a result, probation staff feel it necessary to keep all files indefinitely and are unwilling to dispose of any information that they hold. This in turn has resource implications, particularly on administrative staff who are responsible for ensuring that these files are archived and stored.

**Action: Probation staff will be provided with greater clarity on the sifting of case files**

The National Probation Directorate (NPD) will provide staff with explicit guidance on closed case files. This will include a detailed explanation of what documentation is required to be kept, what can be disposed of, and how long the information needs to be stored for – **September 2004**.

**Communicating with the National Probation Directorate (NPD)**

Probation areas receive communications from a variety of different sources including the NPD, housing agencies, prisons and other probation areas. It is therefore essential that the information they receive is effective, targeted and in a form that is easy to use and understand.

The National Probation Service (NPS) does not have a national intranet, nor do staff have access to the Internet, except in a very limited number of offices. Due to the structure of the service (42 local boards with Chairs and Chief Officers), information is channelled through head offices for onward relay to relevant staff, although this process is not always as effective as it should be.

**Length of guidance and documentation**

Guidance and documentation distributed to probation areas is often lengthy in size and onerous to read and these burdensome communications impinge on both staff time and administrative capacity. Guidance from the NPD is often overly complicated and difficult for staff to interpret. As a result of this, staff have to read through the entire document to ascertain whether there are any amendments or relevant pieces of information which is time-consuming and not an effective use of staff resources.

While all information needs to be concise and readable, particular attention should be paid to technical or complicated practice directions that are intended for non-technical audiences or staff without relevant training or professional background.

**Action: Probation areas will receive more streamlined and tailored guidance**

(i) The NPD will undertake an audit of their current internal communications channels and methods to further promote the use of effective communication. This will include a quality check of the circulation, use and effectiveness of materials sent out to probation areas. This evaluation will act as a review of the current Communications Strategy and help to ensure that future communications are as clear and concise as possible – **July 2004 (completed)**.

(ii) The NPD will introduce an ‘Information Reader Box’ summary on documents within the formal internal communications framework. This will help staff ascertain quickly what the documentation is, who it is for and what action is needed – **July 2004 onwards**.
Reducing burdens on front line staff

(iii) Any future nationally produced guidance or manuals (including the National Standards), where re-printed, will also include a front summary sheet detailing where amendments have been made. This will help staff access the most up-to-date information without having to refer to the whole document – April 2004 onwards.

(iv) In addition to the above, the NPD Communications Team will act as a ‘gateway’ within the Directorate to help ensure that nationally produced documentation is as streamlined as possible. Its role will be to provide clear guidance for best practice communications, with the aim of ensuring that methods of communication are effective, accessible, timely and co-ordinated but without creating any further bureaucracy or time delay in the communications process – August 2004.

Documentation across other probation areas
Locally produced documentation and leaflets for offenders vary considerably across the different probation areas. The lack of standardised templates has financial inefficiencies for probation areas and has sometimes resulted in inconsistent messages being relayed to offenders across a national service. This has had a detrimental impact on their continuity of supervision, especially if offenders are required to transfer from one area to another. The NPD has identified this as a particular problem and has already produced several standardised leaflets. However, they have also recognised that further progress needs to be made to ensure that a more consistent approach is applied.

Action: All areas will be provided with standardised information and materials for key audiences, including sentencers and offenders

(i) National leaflets will be produced by NPD in printed format and issued to all probation areas for use locally. In addition, files from the desktop publishing application ‘QuarkXPress’ will be available for individual areas to use should documents need to be tailored to meet local requirements (e.g. local contact details). This will ensure that the same message and corporate image is promoted nationally across the different geographic areas (with tailoring permitted only when necessary) – March 2004 onwards.

(ii) To further promote consistency in the production of leaflets, the national materials will be periodically reviewed to ensure all the information remains relevant and up-to-date – April 2004 onwards.
Prison Staffing Issues

Security Checking Procedures for Prison Staff

All applicants and staff working for Her Majesty’s Prison Service (HMPS) are required to undergo some sort of security vetting including an identity check as outlined in Prison Service Order (PSO) 8100. Vetting not only applies to people directly employed, including staff on casual and fixed term contracts, but also to those not directly employed such as consultants, contractors, fee paid and agency staff. In 2003, additional checks were deemed necessary and were subsequently introduced.

In addition to these identity checks, people working for HMPS are also subject to wider Government national security vetting arrangements, which the Home Office (HO) conducts. The purpose of this arrangement is to prevent those who may have connections with, or be influenced by, terrorist organisations, from gaining access to certain posts or the premises themselves and exploiting these positions to further the aims of the organisation.

National Security Vetting procedures

Until recently the procedures for undertaking national security vetting were contained in a restricted PSO 1210. Under these arrangements anyone directly employed by HMPS was required to complete a Security Questionnaire. At the HMPS Headquarters (HQ) and the High Security Estate all applicants were required to be vetted. At all other establishments, a check was only necessary where an applicant met certain risk criteria. For those not directly employed, such as contractors, consultants and agency staff, national security vetting was determined by a risk matrix. There has been some confusion locally about what the correct procedures were, and there was also a general consensus that the vetting process was overly bureaucratic and led to delays in the recruiting process.

Action: National security vetting levels will be reviewed and new guidance produced and issued

(i) A review of national security vetting levels has recently been undertaken. Prisons outside the High Security Estate will only be required to security clear Governors, Deputy Governors, and visiting ministers of religion. At Headquarters all staff are now subject to a risk analysis matrix to determine clearance levels. At the High Security Estate HQ all non-directly employed staff will be subject to a risk analysis matrix to determine the clearance levels required. These new vetting procedures will reduce bureaucracy and in the majority of cases will help to speed up the recruitment process allowing vacant posts to be filled in shorter time-scales – December 2003 (completed).

(ii) New guidance on the national security vetting procedures will be distributed to prison staff. The provision of simplified guidance will address the issue of uncertainty amongst staff and will include:

- The provision of recruitment checklists;
- The removal of the restricted marking of PSO 1210;
- The elimination of duplication across forms.

The new guidance will be integrated into the new HMPS Recruitment Policy Intranet web-site – February 2004 (completed).
Additional checking procedures

To further enhance security within prisons, an additional checking procedure was introduced in 2003. This process is now mandatory and decrees that everyone employed by HMPS, whether directly employed or not, must have their identity and current address verified. All directly employed staff must have their application for employment counter-signed by a professional person who will also act as a personal referee. Checks are made on the applicant’s current address and on the referee’s business address. In some cases, where a referee does not have a business address, these checks must also be carried out on their personal address. Initially, prison staff could conduct these checks through a telephone identity verification service, but this was unexpectedly withdrawn. This level of identity verification is necessary to avoid security breaches, but is considered by recruiting prisons to be time-consuming, delaying the recruitment process as a whole. It is in part hindered by a lack of appropriate tools to conduct these additional checks, leading to further time delays.

Action: The introduction of the Quick Address System (QAS) software will speed up, simplify and provide an audit trail for the identity checking process

(i) In order to speed up the process of verifying referee names and addresses, prisons will be able to contact a call centre in HMPS HQ who will undertake a name and address search using the software provided by the QAS. This software ‘tool’ will save a considerable amount of time in verifying processes and will make the recruitment process faster and more efficient – January 2004 (completed).

(ii) To further reduce the amount of time taken to verify the identities of applicants and referees, a Business Case will be developed to assess options for conducting such checks through a QAS across HMPS establishments – Summer 2004.

(iii) Subject to the success of the above Business Case, HMPS will roll-out the QAS across the prison estate. This will allow staff to access vital information directly from management systems within their own establishments – Autumn 2004.

Staff Performance and Development Record (SPDR)

As part of the continuing commitment to staff development and progression, all prison staff are required to complete an objective setting exercise, which is subsequently reviewed on an annual basis. This takes the form of a SPDR that is completed by individual staff members and their line managers. The form contains various sections detailing information specific to that member of staff and their responsibilities, job competencies and development objectives, linking these to the business plan for the forthcoming year. The process aims to assess the individual’s performance throughout the year against their set objectives and competencies.

Purpose of SPDRs

SPDRs are designed to ensure that roles undertaken within the prison environment allow the effective execution of sentences of the court, reducing re-offending and protecting the public, while obtaining best value from available resources and valuing and supporting each other’s contribution.
Prison staff however, are unsure about what the process means to them and how they benefit from the completion and review of the form. This in part is due to the form often not being used in the promotion process, or developmental needs often not being met because budgets for training within the prison environment are insufficient. Consequently, many prison staff and line managers see SPDRs as burdensome and unnecessary.

**Action: The importance of SPDRs and further development of staff will be highlighted and guidance issued**

(i) Guidance will be available on the Prison Service Intranet with information regarding the use of SPDRs in the promotion process – **July 2004**.

(ii) In addition, an awareness-raising campaign will be conducted to highlight the importance of SPDRs to all staff. The campaign will be issued through the Her Majesty’s Prison Service (HMPS) Intranet and will include ideas about how the document can be used to meet the needs of staff and business – **August 2004**.

(iii) As part of the above, bullet point guidance will be issued outlining suggestions and examples of how staff developmental needs can be met without them following the more traditional route of costly training courses – **August 2004**.

**Completion of SPDRs**

Prison staff and line managers are uncertain about the effective completion of the SPDR form. Certain parts of this form are optional although many staff seem unaware of this. As a consequence, the process is time-consuming, especially as the form is not being used as efficiently as it could be in identifying staff development needs and solutions.

**Action: Prison staff will have access to a ‘model’ SPDR form explaining how to complete it more effectively**

HMPS will develop a ‘model’ SPDR form detailing areas that are compulsory, those that are optional and outlining how the form should be completed. This will help staff and line managers make the process more efficient and effective. The new guidance will be posted on the HMPS Intranet and will form part of the awareness-raising campaign (as outlined above) – **Summer 2004**.

**Countersigning of SPDRs**

There is a requirement for both staff and line manager to agree the review text and then to sign-off the form. The current process for signing-off the completed SPDR form can take weeks and sometimes months due to the unique nature of shift patterns in prisons. This can be frustrating, time-consuming and leads to the entire process being prolonged.
Reducing the burdens on front line staff

Action: The process for counter-signatories will be made more efficient, resulting in the speedier completion of the SPDR process

(i) The SPDR form will be revised to remove duplicative and unnecessary counter-signatures – **May 2004 (completed)**.

(ii) Additionally, prison staff will be able to sign SPDR forms electronically. This will speed up the entire process by allowing staff and managers to sign off the forms without the inefficient back and forth process now evident with the use of paper copies – **Autumn 2004**.

Promotion Paperwork

Prison staff wishing to gain promotion to either Senior Officer or Operational Manager are required to go through a two-stage process. Initially, they are required to demonstrate competence for the higher grade through successful completion of a Job Simulation and Assessment Centre (JSAC). The JSAC is delivered at area level for Senior Officer posts and at national level for Operational Manager posts. If successful, staff are given assessment centre accreditation and are then eligible to apply for jobs at the approved promotion level through advertised vacancies.

Applications for JSAC

The JSAC application procedure is based around the demonstration of specific competencies. As part of this process, both the applicant and their line manager are expected to provide evidence demonstrating that they meet the requirements against these set competencies. This is done through the completion of a 16-page application form and a subsequent interview process. This process is time-consuming not only for the applicant, but perhaps more so for the line manager who is required to provide additional evidence and examples of how staff may or may not meet the requirements. Some managers have estimated that each application form requires about four hours of work.

Action: JSAC application forms will be shorter and simpler to complete for both the applicant and their line manager

A simpler, two page JSAC application form has recently been introduced to replace the existing 16-page form. This will reduce the amount of line management input and make it simpler and less time-consuming for applicants to complete. This new application form is available on Her Majesty’s Prison Service (HMPS) Intranet as NTS 04/2004 – **January 2004 (completed)**.

Applications for advertised jobs in HMPS

The advertising of vacancies in HMPS is managed using one of two procedures. One includes an advertised promotion opportunity and is open to those already in the grade; those with assessment centre accreditation or those in a lower grade who are eligible for promotion. The other is for
advertised moves on level transfer or for progression between pay bands within a grade and is open only to those already in the grade or with assessment centre accreditation for this grade. One of three application forms must be completed, two of which require detailed line manager’s assessment of each of the advertised competencies. Prison staff find these assessments time-consuming and burdensome and are confused about the link to SPDRs.

**Action: HMPS application forms will be streamlined and made less time-consuming**

Applicants wishing to apply for jobs advertised in HMPS will benefit from a more streamlined application procedure, namely the Vacancy Advertising Scheme. Individual prison establishments selecting staff will be able to choose from one of two forms, both of which require minimal input from applicants’ line managers thus minimising the amount of time spent verifying applicants’ competencies. In addition, selection panels will be able to request previous SPDRs if they wish – **July 2004**.
CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The Government is dedicated to the reduction of the unnecessary bureaucracy burdening many areas of the public sector. This has been demonstrated over the last five years through the publication of various “Making a Difference” reports. Full and effective implementation of the outcomes from this particular project will further endorse the Government’s commitment to ensure a more effective criminal justice system, particularly regarding the management of offenders.

Through working closely with the Home Office, prison and probation services, the Regulatory Impact Unit’s Public Sector Team (PST) within the Cabinet Office have been able to identify solutions which will remove unnecessary burdens, all of which have had time scales agreed for implementation.

However, this is by no means the end. Identifying solutions is only the first step in this process; ensuring that they are effectively implemented is a much longer and harder task. This will be achieved through continued stakeholder support and involvement in the dissemination of these solutions back to the front line.

Responsibility for delivering the changes outlined in this report remains with the lead policy officials within the two services. However, over the next two years, the PST will continue to work in partnership with the key stakeholders to ensure that the solutions identified by front line staff, policy owners and the project team are delivered successfully and on time.

Post-implementation monitoring will be achieved through continued collaborative working and site visits carried out by stakeholders and the PST, so that evidence from the front line is collected and progress reported periodically to Ministers. This will be carried out through the preparation of a strategy plan, including an implementation schedule, and an evaluation and communications log, to identify how each change has been delivered and communicated to front line staff.
ANNEX 1
PARTICIPANTS


- HMYOI Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire
- HMP Bullingdon, Oxfordshire
- HMP & YOI Bullwood Hall, Essex
- HMP Elmley, Kent
- HMP Ford, West Sussex
- HMP Full Sutton, Yorkshire
- HMP Gartree, Leicestershire
- HMYOI & RC Glen Parva, Leicestershire
- HMP Grendon, Buckinghamshire
- HMP Highpoint North, Suffolk
- HMP Highpoint South, Suffolk
- HMYOI Huntercombe, Oxfordshire
- HMPLatchmere House, Surrey
- HMP Lowdham Grange, Nottinghamshire
- HMYOI New Hall, West Yorkshire
- HMP Springhill, Buckinghamshire
- HMP Swansea, South Wales
- HMP The Mount, Hertfordshire
- HMP Wakefield, West Yorkshire
- HMP Wandsworth, London
- HMP Woodhill, Buckinghamshire


- Avon and Somerset Probation Area
- Cheshire Probation Area
- Dyfed-Powys Probation Area
- Essex Probation Area
- Hertfordshire Probation Area
- Lincolnshire Probation Area
- London Probation Area
- Merseyside Probation Area
- North Wales Probation Area
- North Yorkshire Probation Area
- Northamptonshire Probation Area
- Northumbria Probation Area
- Nottinghamshire Probation Area
- South Wales Probation Area
- Staffordshire Probation Area
- Sussex Probation Area
• Teeside Probation Area
• West Yorkshire Probation Area
• Wandsworth Probation Area

Stakeholders consulted (August 2003 – June 2004)

• Home Office
• Her Majesty’s Prison Service
• National Offender Management Service
• National Probation Service

Regulatory Impact Units (RIU) Public Sector Team’s (PST) Post Sentencing Project Team

If you require any further information or clarification on the points raised in this report, please contact one of the Project Team:

• Tanya Otley (Project Manager) – psinfo@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk
• Grace Kuhepa
• Michaela Holledge
• Mark Hammond
• Ian Livingstone
• Joel Baynes
• Gillian Overton
• Tim Courtney

Alternatively please telephone us: 020 7276 1712. Our fax number is 020 7276 2577.

Our address is: Regulatory Impact Unit, Public Sector Team, Cabinet Office, 4th Floor, Kirkland House, 22 Whitehall, London SW1A 2WH.
# ANNEX 2

## GLOSSARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACCT</td>
<td>Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACP0</td>
<td>Association of Chief Police Officers</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACR</td>
<td>Automatic Conditional Release</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPO</td>
<td>Community Punishment Order</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPS</td>
<td>Crown Prosecution Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>CRAMS</td>
<td>Case Record and Management System</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCA</td>
<td>Department for Constitutional Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCR</td>
<td>Discretionary Conditional Release</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIbES</td>
<td>Department for Educational Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>DH</td>
<td>Department of Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>DTO</td>
<td>Detention Training Order</td>
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<tr>
<td>DTTO</td>
<td>Drug Treatment and Testing Order</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECP</td>
<td>Enhanced Community Punishment</td>
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<tr>
<td>e-OASys</td>
<td>Electronic Offender Assessment System</td>
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<tr>
<td>ERRS</td>
<td>Early Release and Recall Section</td>
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<tr>
<td>ETS</td>
<td>Enhanced Thinking Skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>F1150/F2050</td>
<td>Offender’s File/Dossier</td>
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<tr>
<td>F2052SH</td>
<td>Form to alert staff to an offender’s potential to self-harm</td>
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<tr>
<td>F213SH</td>
<td>Record of self-harm/attempted suicide</td>
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<tr>
<td>GCS</td>
<td>Generic Community Sentence</td>
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<tr>
<td>HDC</td>
<td>Home Detention Curfew</td>
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<tr>
<td>HMP</td>
<td>Her Majesty’s Prison</td>
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<tr>
<td>HMPS</td>
<td>Her Majesty’s Prison Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>HMYOI</td>
<td>Her Majesty’s Young Offender Institution</td>
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<tr>
<td>HO</td>
<td>Home Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>HQ</td>
<td>Headquarters</td>
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<tr>
<td>IAPS</td>
<td>Interim Accredited Programmes Software</td>
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<td>ICCP</td>
<td>Intensive Control and Change Programme</td>
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<td>IEP</td>
<td>Incentives and Earned Privileges</td>
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<tr>
<td>IG</td>
<td>Instructions to Governors</td>
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<tr>
<td>IMB</td>
<td>Independent Monitoring Board</td>
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<td>IMR</td>
<td>Inmate Medical Records</td>
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<tr>
<td>JSAC</td>
<td>Job Simulation and Assessment Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>KPT</td>
<td>Key Performance Targets</td>
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<tr>
<td>LIDS</td>
<td>Local Inmate Database System</td>
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<tr>
<td>LMU</td>
<td>Lifer Management Unit now LRRS</td>
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<td>LRRS</td>
<td>Lifer Review and Recall Section</td>
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<tr>
<td>LSP</td>
<td>Life Sentence Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAPPP</td>
<td>Multi-Agency Public Protection Panel</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAPPA</td>
<td>Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDT</td>
<td>Mandatory Drug Treatment</td>
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<tr>
<td>NHS</td>
<td>National Health Service</td>
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</table>
Annex 2: Glossary

NAO National Audit Office
NOMS National Offender Management System
NPD National Probation Directorate
NPS National Probation Service
OASys Offender Assessment System
OCA Observation, Classification and Allocation
O-DEAT OASys Data Evaluation and Assessment Team
OGRS Offender Group Reconviction Scale
OLSU Offender Learning Support Unit
PD1 Pre Discharge report
PER Prisoner Escort Record
PITO Police IT Organisation
PNC Police National Computer
PRIME Prisoner Records and Integrated Management Environment
PSI Prison Service Instruction
PSO Prison Service Order
PSR Pre-Sentence Report
PST Public Sector Team
QAS Quick Address System
RC forms Re-categorisation forms
RFI Report For Information
RM Regime Monitoring
ROTL Release On Temporary Licence
RIU Regulatory Impact Unit
SEU Sentence Enforcement Unit now the ERRS
SIR Security Information Report
SLA Service Level Agreement
SPDR Staff Performance Development Record
SSR Specific Sentence Report
ViSOR Violent and Sexual Offenders Register
VLU Victim Liaison Unit
YJB Youth Justice Board
YOI Youth Offender Institute
YOT Youth Offending Teams
ANNEX 3
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ANNEX 4
PUBLIC SECTOR TEAM (PST),
REGULATORY IMPACT UNIT (RIU)

Background:

Unnecessary requirements, processes and paperwork erode the time front line staff have to deliver good quality, responsive public services. The Public Sector Team (PST), part of the Cabinet Office’s Regulatory Impact Unit (RIU), was established in November 1999 in response to the Government’s concern about the increased bureaucratic burden on the public sector. It specialises in focused projects to improve the delivery of public services by agreeing creative solutions to remove red tape and unnecessary bureaucracy and help front line staff concentrate on delivering a better service to the public.

The PST:

- Works with front line staff to identify bureaucratic and regulatory burdens;
- Develops and agrees solutions in partnership with departments and stakeholders to reduce these burdens;
- Achieves tangible results that free up staff to deliver more efficient and higher quality public services.

Methodology:

At the heart of its work are ‘Making a Difference’ projects. The PST believes that the best people to solve the problems of red tape in our public services are front line staff. When we want to make a difference in the targeted service, our first step is to go into service areas to get the real story from people whose job it is to provide the services. The majority of the ideas in the report and many of the solutions came directly from front line staff, through consultation and interviews with representatives from a cross-section of service-providers.

The approach adopted focuses on:

- **Listening and responding to front line staff**: the ideas in the report, and many of the solutions, come directly from front line staff;
- **Freeing up front line staff time to focus on service delivery**: less bureaucracy allows more time for staff to complete their core duties;
- **Making practical changes**: gaining commitments from process-owners and stakeholders to implement the changes to a timescale, none are recommendations;
- **Measures that will make a difference now as well as linking with longer-term changes**: some immediate actions have already been implemented and others will continue to be implemented over a period of two years.
Previous Reports:

The RIU has completed ‘Making a Difference’ projects in the following areas:

- **The Healthcare Inspection Concordat (June 2004)** – Action 1 in the ‘Making a Difference’ Reducing Burdens in Healthcare Inspection Monitoring report concerned the development of a Healthcare Inspection Concordat to improve co-operation between reviewing bodies. Following an agreement with the Department for Health and the Cabinet Office, the Healthcare Commission has worked closely with front line staff and managers in the NHS and key stakeholders across health services in developing the Concordat. It provides a code of objectives and practices for both Government and independent inspectorates to deliver smarter, more joined up inspection programmes that reduce the burdens of inspection on healthcare staff.

- **Reducing Burdens on Network Rail (April 2004)** – This latest report is a collaborative project with the Department for Transport. It delivers 15 practical changes to reduce or remove unnecessary bureaucratic or administrative burdens relating to data and information requirements placed on Network Rail’s front line staff by a range of key rail stakeholders. These changes will free up staff time to concentrate on the important role of delivering a better rail service.

- **Reducing Bureaucracy in Central Civil Government Procurement (December 2003)** – This report aimed to drive improvements in Central Civil Government procurement processes thereby achieving better outcomes. The report delivers 24 actions in the following five broad areas; speeding up procurement processes and reducing costs, improving leadership and client capability, improving communication with the market and in government, focussing on project outcomes, and more consistent use of best practice. These actions will in the long-term speed up the process for front line staff and save businesses time and money when bidding for government work.

- **Reducing Burdens in Healthcare Inspection & Monitoring (July 2003)** – This report delivers 54 new outcomes to ensure that inspection supports improvement and reduces the burdens on healthcare professionals. The areas covered were: joining up inspections, Data and Information Flows, Healthcare Systems and Clinical Education and Training.

- **Reducing Bureaucracy and Red Tape in the Criminal Justice System (May 2003)** – This report aimed to re-balance the system in favour of victims, witnesses and communities, to deliver justice for all by building greater trust and credibility. The actions will free up front line staff, giving them more time to deliver swift, high quality justice. The report delivers 31 new outcomes in the following areas: Encounters Involving Police, Preparing For Courts, Prosecution, and Post Verdict Processes. They complement and integrate with the work of the Policing Bureaucracy Task Force.

- **Reducing Burdens in Hospitals (July 2002)** – This report identifies 40 changes to reduce or remove burdens affecting a range of hospital professionals. These changes are presented as three key themes: the patient journey, information flows and quality.

- **Reducing Burdens on General Practitioners – Second report (June 2002)** – Outlines fifteen new outcomes; savings are estimated as being a further 3.2 million GP appointments, an additional 2.7 million hours and the removal of up to 80,000 requests for medical information.

- **Reducing Red Tape and Bureaucracy in Local Government (February 2002)** – This report includes greater freedoms for local administrations on statutory planning, legal consents from central government, children’s services, and wider flexibility in the ways services are provided and paid for.

- **Reducing General Practitioner (GP) Paperwork (March 2001)** – 36 actions freeing up approximately 750,000 hours of GPs time, as well as eliminating 7.2 million GP unnecessary appointments.

- **Reducing School Paperwork (December 2000)** – Reporting on measures to save an estimated 4.5 million hours for primary school head teachers per year.

- **Reducing Police Paperwork (April 2000)** – Reporting on measures to save an estimated 166,000 hours of police time, equivalent to 90 police officers.

All of these reports can be downloaded free of charge from the RIU web-site, at the following web address:

http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/regulation/PublicSector/reports.htm

**Current Projects:**

In addition to previous reports, work is being undertaken on a further four ‘Making a Difference’ projects to tackle other topics where bureaucratic burdens exist:

- **Children, Young People and Families (CYPF)** – is a new project with the CYPF Directorate within the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). This collaborative Making a Difference project will be conducted as a three-stage study, supplementing the work currently undertaken by the Children, Young People and Families Directorate to prepare for the implementation of reforms that have been proposed by the recent Green Paper “Every Child Matters”.

- **The Review of Controls Assurance** – is a new project being undertaken by PST and the Department of Health (DH). Controls Assurance is a process that provides evidence that NHS organisations are doing their reasonable best to manage themselves so as to meet their objectives and protect patients, staff, the public and other stakeholders against risks of all kinds. The project aims to identify and reduce the unnecessary bureaucratic burdens associated with the Controls Assurance process. An interim announcement of early achievements will be made in June, followed by a final report in the autumn.
In addition an internal consultancy project on **Special Education Needs (SEN)** has recently been undertaken with the SEN Directorate within the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). The project focuses on streamlining the paperwork and procedures surrounding the implementation of SEN requirements at the front line.