

JUDGES' UPDATE

NOVEMBER 2002

Information for the Judiciary

Focus on programmes for offenders

"For disqualified driving a Christchurch man had received a sentence of Periodic Detention and more disqualification. One Saturday morning he missed his bus to Periodic Detention. In spite of his disqualification he decided to drive. He was caught, because while he was at a service station another driver crashed into his car. It was the man's 15th conviction for driving while disqualified. Judge Ryan sentenced him to a one-year term of Supervision, and added a year to the disqualification."

(From Christchurch's The Press, 2 October 2002).

Offenders like the man described in the above report are likely to be eligible for the Making Our Drivers Safe (MODS) programme. MODS is the priority programme for offenders on Supervision, with a conviction for excess breath alcohol, dangerous driving or driving while disqualified.

MODS is available for high-risk offenders of all ages and ethnic groups, with clearly identified rehabilitative needs. The Probation Officer's pre-sentence report establishes these needs as well as the offender's motivation to change, which is a key factor in determining eligibility.

MODS is one of a range of programmes Community Probation Service runs for high-risk offenders. Others include the Violence Prevention Programme and the Substance Abuse Prevention Programme.

As part of an ongoing move to increase Community Probation Service's capability to deliver these programmes, a project has been established to improve the numbers of offenders attending programmes. Head Office staff have been visiting sites around the country to discuss any issues facilitators and other staff may be experiencing in running programmes. An action plan will be developed after the research has been analysed.

This year's targets emphasise providing MODS, as the Government has allocated additional funding for this programme as part of its strategic initiative to improve road safety. As part of this strategy, MODS specifically targets the significant number of repeat disqualified drivers.

Research has shown that sentencing these offenders to a community sentence like Community Work or to prison has not discouraged them from further offending but that rehabilitation can.

Studies also show that the motivations of repeat disqualified drivers suggest that they are a discrete offender type. They often exhibit high levels of anger, anxiety, alcohol dependence and helplessness in relation to controlling their own behaviour. MODS addresses the risk factors which lead to offending but has a specific focus on addressing driving offences.

Offenders on Home Detention and Parole can also attend a MODS programme, however offenders sentenced to Community Work will only be able to attend MODS if they are also sentenced to Supervision.



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YOUR INPUT

Welcome to the November issue of Judges' Update for 2002. If you have any comments or suggestions for this publication, please contact the General Manager Probation and Offender Services.

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From the General Manager

I am the new General Manager of Probation and Offender Services (POS), a new grouping of the Department of Corrections which includes Community Probation Service and the Psychological Service. From next year, POS will also oversee the delivery of programmes to offenders.

The Community Probation Service and the Psychological Service still remain as Services, and my role is to encourage synergies between these groups and with Public Prisons as we seek to achieve our goal to protect the community and to reduce re-offending.

I have been with the Department of Corrections for seven years and prior to this role, I was the General Manager of the Strategic Development Group. Over the last two years I have also had oversight across the Department's implementation of Integrated Offender Management and the project to implement the new sentencing and parole legislation.

I have now been with Probation and Offender Services for almost three months and while still settling into the role, I have learned a lot about the challenges facing the Services as well as identifying some opportunities for development.

I have set up a regular meeting with the Chief District Court Judge David Carruthers to discuss issues relating to our work. However, please feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss anything with me directly.

As this is the last issue of Judges' Update for 2002 I would like to wish you all the best for the upcoming holiday season.



*Katrina Casey
General Manager
Probation and Offender Services
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Pilot project for youth offenders begins

A joint initiative between the Department of Corrections and Child, Youth and Family is underway to establish a pilot intervention programme for young offenders.

The programme will target offenders aged between 14 and 19, who are at high risk of progressing to chronic adult offending.

The project has been established after the Ministerial Taskforce on Youth Offending identified a gap around addressing serious youth offending. Funding for a four-year pilot in two locations was approved in the Government's 2002 Budget.

The two pilot sites are Auckland and Christchurch. "Towards the middle of next year, judges sentencing young offenders in these areas should start seeing sentencing recommendations coming through for the new programme," says Project Manager Barbara Penney.

The programme, which is based on Multi Systemic Therapy, will provide an intensive home-based intervention where a single therapist delivers services to the whole family. The therapist, the young person and their family will develop a tailored goal-focused programme, with the aim of changing the young person's behaviours and environment.

The programme will be provided in the context of the family's values, beliefs and culture and the service will be available around the clock, seven days a week.

"The therapists, the young person and their family will develop an individualised goal-orientated programme with the focus on holding the offender accountable for their offending and reducing the risk of re-offending by implementing changes in their behaviours and environment."

A project team based in Wellington is managing the launch of the pilot programmes in Auckland and Christchurch and each area will accept clients from both the Department of Corrections and from Child, Youth and Family. Further details about the project will be available in the New Year.

Community Work compliance under the microscope

A group of Probation Officers and Service Managers has been formed to look at the Community Work sentence compliance rates.

Head Office Operations Adviser Kevin Wensor says the possibility of a reduction in compliance rates was raised after comments from field staff came through to Head Office.

"Community Work is a new sentence with different requirements from Periodic Detention. Our staff had noticed some offenders had not fully understood how their hours should be completed."

A compliance survey was sent to all Community Work sites to analyse their compliance rates over two weeks in October, to obtain a snapshot of the current situation.

"Our initial results do suggest that compliance is down considerably from where we anticipate it should be. It is also lower than at the same time last year, when we were managing Periodic Detention," Kevin says.

The group is preparing recommendations for action. These actions will include improving the induction process for offenders on Community Work to better explain their obligations and to reinforce the consequences of not complying with the sentence.

New adviser role supports Maori initiatives

Community Probation Service has appointed Sonya Rimene as National Adviser Maori, a recently-created role that will see her empowering managers to work effectively with Maori.

Katrina Casey, General Manager Probation and Offender Services, says the appointment will help support effective service delivery to Maori offenders.

"Sonya will work with senior managers to help our organisation develop and implement initiatives to improve responsiveness to Maori. I'm confident that this key appointment will bring us a step closer to achieving our goal of

building stronger partnerships and providing a more effective service for Maori."

Sonya (Rangitane, Ngati Kahungunu, Ngai Tahu, Te Arawa) says her role is to ensure Maori and non-Maori staff, particularly senior staff in the field, have the support to work effectively with Maori, "whether they are Maori offenders, whanau or Maori provider organisations".

Sonya has a background in teaching and she has also worked for several government agencies, developing services for Maori.

"I believe that whanau and hapu are an

integral part of the community and can play an important role in helping the Department to reduce re-offending by Maori offenders. That's why I'm here. It's about individuals in a group making a difference and the Department empowering people to do that."

Sonya has been visiting Community Probation Service areas around the country. "I have met a lot of good people, who are very passionate about their work."

Specific projects Sonya will be working on include cultural supervision for staff, cultural assessment for offenders and tikanga Maori programmes.

Corrections launches Pacific Peoples strategy

Corrections Minister Mark Gosche launched the Department's Pacific Strategy last month in Mangere.

The three-year strategy aims to increase the Department's effectiveness in reducing re-offending by Pacific offenders. It will also contribute to the government's goals of reducing disparities for Pacific Peoples and creating safer communities.

The strategy sets out four major goals for the Department and lists a number of objectives for achieving them. The goals include reducing re-offending by Pacific offenders through rehabilitation and reintegration, responding to increased demand to cater for the needs of Pacific Peoples, enhancing organisational capability to address the needs of Pacific Peoples and establishing formal working relationships with Pacific Peoples.

An implementation plan is being developed which details the specific actions that Community Probation Service will put

into place in order to achieve these objectives.

An important aspect of the strategy is the requirement for more involvement of Pacific Peoples in the Department's work and decisions.

One of the initiatives of the strategy is the introduction of the Fautua Pasefika policy, which was also launched by the Minister on the same day.

A Fautua Pasefika is a community leader of Pacific descent who has been nominated by his or her community or organisation to be granted improved access to prisons, and Pacific inmates. The Fautua Pasefika's role includes advocating on issues around the well-being of inmates, advising inmates about cultural issues and helping them establish community links and assisting them with returning to the community, through their extended family and community.

Copies of the Pacific Strategy 2002-2005 are available from the Department's Planning Unit, phone 04 460-3395.

Encouraging results after a busy year

After a busy year spent preparing for and consolidating major changes, the Department of Corrections has tabled in Parliament its Annual Report for 2001-2002. This issue of Judges' Update provides a brief overview of some of the key areas where Community Probation Service staff work.

The Department of Corrections has broadly achieved all its targets for the 2001-2002 year. Probation and Offender Services General Manager Katrina Casey says it was a significant year, during which a considerable amount of work took place to prepare for the introduction of the Sentencing and Parole Acts 2002. During the year, the Department also consolidated the considerable changes to the management and assessment of offenders as a result of the four-year Integrated Offender Management project.

Court reports

Some key results for Community Probation Service included the number of reports prepared for the courts, 31,509, of which 93 percent were provided to the quality standards outlined in Community Probation Service's operational manual. Ninety one percent of reports were produced to the required timeliness standards, slightly below target. This result reflects the variance in requirements in different courts across the country, where the staff may meet the local standard, but not the national standard. The Department of Corrections is currently negotiating its national Service Level Agreement with the Department for Courts.

Community Probation Service managed 18,635 community-based sentences at any one time during last year. This is in addition to the Public Prisons Service, which managed 5,765 custodial sentences.

The Annual Report breaks down these community-based sentences into sentence type and provides information on the number of successful completions. These include:

Supervision

- 6796 sentences of Supervision were managed. This was about a quarter less than forecast.
- 67% of offenders complied with special conditions of their sentence.

Periodic Detention

- 20,404 sentences of Periodic Detention were managed
- 70% of offenders successfully completed their sentence.

Home Detention

- 861 offenders were directed to complete a Home Detention order.
- 91% of offenders on Home Detention were on programmes to address their rehabilitative needs or were in employment.

Community Service

- 7,557 offenders were sentenced to Community Service.
- 67% successfully completed the sentence.

Rehabilitative programmes

The number of offenders taking part in Straight Thinking or programmes such as Making Our Drivers Safe (MODS) was below target for the 2001-2002 year. Reasons for this include a reduced availability of programme facilitators, the requirements of IOM training and the availability of offenders assessed as suitable for attendance. The Department is working on streamlining these processes, including increasing its capacity to deliver programmes.

Recidivism

The Department has adopted standards to measure the outcomes of its work towards its goal of reducing re-offending. The Recidivism Index (RI) measures the rate of re-offending over a period of time. The latest figures in the Annual Report indicate that:

- Males are re-imprisoned at a higher rate than females (25% compared to 14%) and reconvicted at a higher rate (42% to 30%).
- Reimprisonment rates are reduced by about two thirds as offenders age.
- The rates of reconviction vary between different types of offending, the highest being for property offences and the lowest for sex offences.

Copies of the Annual Report are available from the Department's Planning Unit, phone 04 460-3395.

Heard on Circuit

A 21-year-old Christchurch offender's excuse in court for not going to Periodic Detention showed a lamentable lack of research.

He had started PD last year and told the court that he went back after the Christmas break to find that the Pages Road PD Centre had been demolished and had become a construction site. In the way of some young men, he

just carried on with his life and left this mystery unsolved.

Unfortunately, the Probation Officer in court was able to say that the demolition had begun in July rather than January.

Then Judge Murray Abbott voiced his views about the other warrants that had been issued because the 21-year-old had failed to turn up at court and

remanded him in custody.

From Christchurch's The Press, 25 September, 2002



DEPARTMENT
OF CORRECTIONS