

Not for publication before 00.01hrs Wednesday, 20 August

18 August 2008

News release

Challenge and change for the better: new handbook reveals scale of excellent work in community sentencing

The Howard League for Penal Reform has published today (Wednesday, 20 August) a groundbreaking compendium of positive practice in community sentencing.

The handbook reveals how community sentencing provides a tailored approach, addressing in a practical way the causes of offending behaviour. Features, with case studies, are included that focus on over 20 community programmes from up and down the UK, involving a whole range of different types of community sentence:

- Early interventions with young people
- Community programmes dealing with factors that contribute to offending (such as alcohol-related crimes, street sex working and domestic abuse)
- Restorative justice and mediation
- Community sentences and programmes for young people
- Education, training, employment and mentoring
- Unpaid work and training
- High-risk offenders
- Resettlement

Director of the Howard League for Penal Reform, Frances Crook, said: "This handbook reveals the extent of excellent work being done across the country in community sentencing.

"Community programmes are tailored to individuals and their circumstances, tackling the underlying causes of crime and seeking to challenge and change people for the better.

"Spending all day lounging on a cell bunk on the other hand, particularly for those on short sentences, is the real 'soft' option. For too many people, the only

activities available in prison involve criminal gangs and hard drug use. It should be no surprise that over two thirds leaving custody go on to reoffend, rising to over three quarters among under-18s.

“Community programmes such as the ones highlighted in this handbook are fundamental if we are to make a concerted effort to find lasting solutions to crime.”

Further information

Thomasin Pritchard 020 7249 7373 ext. 104
Andrew Neilson 020 7249 7373 ext. 119
07918 681 094

ISDN line available on 020 7923 4196 - uses a G722 system

Research has demonstrated that community sentencing has achieved a 13% reduction in reoffending in the last five years. Government statistics show that re-offending over one year by those on community sentences has declined by 13% over the last five years (based on comparing 2000 and 2005 cohorts; Number of re-offences per 100 offenders: 2000 cohort, 158.8; 2005 cohort, 138.1).

The Handbook contains features on the winners of three annual rounds of the Howard League's Community Programmes Awards. Part of a partnership campaign with the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, the awards are aimed at increasing public protection by recognising outstanding community programmes that help to reduce the seriousness and frequency of re-offending.

Brief introductory essays are included by Frances Crook, Professor David Wilson (Vice Chair, The Howard League), Rob Allen (Director, International Centre for Prison Studies and Co-ordinator of Rethinking Crime and Punishment), Kevin Lockyer (NOMS, Chief Operating Officer, South West), Mary Anne McFarlane (Chief Officer, Devon and Cornwall Probation Area), His Honour Judge John Samuels QC and John Thornhill (Deputy Chair, The Magistrates' Association).

To purchase a copy of the handbook, please visit our website:
www.howardleague.org

The community programmes featured are:

Early interventions with young people

Rapid Action Project, Rainer, Essex
Y-Pac (Young People Affected by Crime and Confidence), Newham Youth Offending Team

Short-Term Interventions Project, Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Youth Offending Service
Interventions Team Mentoring Project, Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Youth Offending Service
Osmaston On-Track, Derby Youth Offending Service

Community programmes dealing with factors that contribute to offending

Alcohol Education Probation Service, Sacro, Edinburgh
Another Way Service, Sacro, Edinburgh
Domestic Abuse Group, Sacro, Falkirk

Restorative justice and mediation processes

Remedi – Victim Offender Mediation Service (Adult), South Yorkshire
Suffolk Reparation and Mediation Service, Crime Concern

Community sentences and programmes for young people

Lodge Hill Challenge, Lodge Hill Trust and West Sussex Youth Offending Service
A New Direction Project, Sunderland Youth Offending Service and South Tyne
Intensive Surveillance and Supervision Programme (ISSP)
White Gold Project, Cornwall Youth Offending Team
IMPACT – Inclusive Model of Partnership Against Car Theft, Belfast

Education, training, employment and mentoring

Warbarth Project, Working Links and Devon and Cornwall Probation Area
Access Team, Nottinghamshire Probation Area
Resettlement and Aftercare Provisio, Sandwell Youth Offending Service

Unpaid work and training

Offenders and Nature Schemes, Forestry Commission
The Community Service Unit Team, Dorset Probation Area

High-risk offenders

Intensive Floating Support Scheme for High-Risk Offenders, Staffordshire Probation Area and Heantun Housing Association
Circles of Support and Accountability, Hampshire and Thames Valley, Oxfordshire

Resettlement

Transitional Support Scheme, Group 4 Justice Services, South Wales and Gwent Areas