



HM Inspectorate of Probation

Performance Inspection Programme

South East Region of the
National Probation Service for
England and Wales

Hampshire
Kent
Surrey
Sussex
Thames Valley

**Report on
Thames Valley**

2001



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Foreword

This report is one of a series that over a 3 year period will cover the probation areas in England and Wales, clustered together on a regional basis to enable comparisons to be made easily and to facilitate the spread of good practice. It follows a performance inspection, undertaken by a team of inspectors, which has placed the emphasis on achievement. Areas have been assessed on:

- how well they have met the requirements of the Home Office's 3 Year Plan for the Probation Service and the key performance indicators it includes
- compliance with national standards and on meeting the demands of the Citizen's Charter and other quality measures
- how well they can demonstrate that the work done has had a real impact on the behaviour of offenders supervised in the community and enhanced public protection
- relative value for money and appropriate management arrangements for planning and reviewing performance.

Assessments have been informed by evidence drawn from a number of sources, including internal audit and inspection reports. Attention has also been given to the views of users. Where performance is weak, associated management arrangements have been examined. The report contains recommendations addressed to the individual areas within the region, which should contribute to improvements in performance and thus promote the confidence the community can find in the work of probation staff.

SIR GRAHAM SMITH CBE
HM Chief Inspector of Probation

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Acknowledgements

We are thankful for the cooperation shown to us by the previous Probation Committees, Probation Boards, our Board members and area staff in the Region. Their assistance helped us to form our judgements, the platform for progress, and enabled the inspection to proceed smoothly.

The individual area inspections also depended on the contribution made by lay inspectors, who assessed community service placements, and local assessors who assisted with the observation of practice. The assistance of both these groups of people is greatly appreciated.

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Glossary of abbreviations

ACO	Assistant chief officer
ACOP	Association of Chief Officers of Probation (ceased to exist 31 March 2001)
ACR	Automatic conditional release
BIR	Bail information reports
BPS	Berkshire Probation Service
CAPCASS	Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (from April 2001)
CHASE	Contact, Health, Accommodation, Substance misuse, Employment
CO	Chief officer (was CPO, Chief Probation Officer)
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service
CRAMS	Case Record Administration and Management System
CS	Community service (community punishment order from April 2001)
DTTO	Drug Treatment and Testing Order
ESF	European Social Fund
ETE	Education, training and employment
GBH	Grievous Bodily Harm
HDC	Home Detention Curfew
HMIP	HM Inspectorate of Probation
IIP	Investor in People
IT	Information technology
JNC	Joint Negotiating Committee
KPI	Key performance indicator
LCD	Lord Chancellor's Department
N/A	Not available
NPD	National Probation Directorate
NPSISS	National Probation Service Information Systems Strategy
OASys	Offender Assessment System
OBPS	Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Probation Service
OCN	Open College Network
OGRS	Offender Group Reconviction Scale
PIP	Performance Inspection Programme
PLC	Probation Liaison Committee
PO	Probation officer
PSA	Public Sector Agreement
PSD	Petty Sessional Division
PSO	Probation services officer
PSR	Pre-sentence report
Q&E	Quality and effectiveness
RMIS	Resource Management Information System
SDA	Service Delivery Agreement (new for KPI from April 2001)
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timed
SPM	Supporting Performance Measures (from April 2001)
SPO	Senior probation officer
SSR	Specific sentence report
TMSG	Transitional Management Steering Group
vfm	value for money

2. REGIONAL OVERVIEW AND INSPECTION ARRANGEMENTS

- 2.1 This chapter provides an overview of the 5 areas in the region and briefly describes the methods used to conduct the inspection.

National context

- 2.2 Probation areas operate within the context of national policy and direction. The following were some of the developments which have impacted upon them in the last 2 years:
- a new strategy for the whole criminal justice system including the 2 overarching aims – to reduce crime and the fear of crime and to dispense justice fairly and efficiently and to promote confidence in the rule of law
 - the modernisation of the probation service including, with effect from April 2001, the establishment of the NPD and consequential major restructuring
 - the transfer of family court welfare services to CAFCASS with effect from April 2001
 - the development of interventions based on What Works to reduce offending including the Pathfinder projects, accreditation of programmes and the development, with the prison service, of a new offender assessment tool (OASys) to be implemented later in 2001
 - the introduction of a number of new initiatives including: victim inquiry work, HDCs, DTTOs, curfew orders, crime and disorder partnerships and the introduction of youth offending teams, an early warning mechanism for the release or discharge of potentially dangerous offenders and involvement in New Deal
 - national initiatives to improve PSR quality and enforcement practice
 - the implementation and further development of NPSISS
 - the introduction of new arrangements for the training of POs including the setting up of regional consortia
 - new occupational standards for administrative and specialist staff
 - the development within the NPD and probation areas of Better Quality Services and the European Excellence Model
 - pressures on many areas in the face of difficulties in recruiting probation staff
 - workloads that have tended to increase.

Regional context

- 2.3 Some of the key descriptive features of the areas in the region are identified in the table below. Crucially the 7 areas in the region became 5 from April 2001 as a result of the amalgamations of the Sussex services and Berkshire with Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire. It also needs to be remembered

that OBPS was still at a point of adjusting to the previous amalgamation between the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire services.

**TABLE 1:
KEY BACKGROUND FACTORS OF THE AREAS INSPECTED (BASED ON LATEST AVAILABLE DATA)**

FACTOR	BERK-SHIRE	HAMP-SHIRE	KENT	OXES & BUCKS	SURREY	EAST SUSSEX	WEST SUSSEX
TOTAL CASH LIMITED REVENUE BUDGET 2000/2001 (INCLUDING DTOS)	6,240	11,818	11,933	8,627	6,281	5,048	3,924
% OF RELATIVE "OVER"/"UNDER"(-) RESOURCING ⁽¹⁾ 2000/2001	+19.4	-8.0	-6.3	+7.5	+12.2	-1.3	-1.2
% CASH LIMIT CHANGE IN 2000/2001	+4.2	+12.1	+8.0	+5.7	+5.4	+7.5	+7.4
% CASH LIMIT CHANGE IN 1999/2000	+3.7	+7.0	+5.9	+4.6	+3.7	+5.4	+6.0
[FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT] STAFF							
SENIOR MANAGERS	3.0	7.8	8.0	4.0	5.0	4.0	4.0
MIDDLE MANAGERS	12.3	32.64	28.6	17.7	11.0	9.0	6.6
POS	62.7	135.0	154.64	84.8	47.0	59.2	50.7
PSOS	49.1	70.0	99.3	37.5	82.0	23.1	14.1
SUPPORT STAFF	74.9	86.02	112.6	78.6	38.3	14.8	36.4
SECONDED PRISON STAFF	4.6	25.54	33.7	40.0	21.5	5.2	6.0
HOSTEL STAFF	21.3	22.89	9.8	31.0	10.7	10.8	0
APPROVED HOSTELS + BEDSPACES	3 65	3 70	1 25	3 50	1 18	1 16	0 0
NUMBER OF CROWN COURT CENTRES	1	4	2	2	1	1	1
NUMBER OF PSDS	3	3	5	7	4	4	3
PRISON DEPARTMENT ESTABLISHMENTS	1	5	10	6	4	1	1
PAYING AUTHORITIES	6	4	2	3	1	2	1
QUALITY AWARDS ⁽²⁾	IP Positive about Disabled People	IP Positive about Disabled People	IP	NONE	IP Charter Mark	IP	IP

(1) I.e. the extent to which the area's revenue budget represents more or less than its share of total resources indicated by the cash limit allocation formula. The formula is based on an area's share of national figures for certain key workload and needs variables, but the allocation mechanism also includes an arrangement to limit the size of a change in share indicated by the formula in a given year, to prevent large sudden changes. Because of this, and of earlier distortions in the allocation process, in most areas the actual allocation differs somewhat from that which would be indicated directly by the formula.

(2) Refers to those nationally recognised awards, such as IP and the Charter Mark, granted to organisations assessed as meeting defined standards of operational excellence.

Commentary

- ▶ The 5 new areas varied considerably in size. The creation of Thames Valley made this the largest area in the region and Surrey the smallest.
- ▶ The degrees of relative under or over-resourcing under the old cash limit allocation formula are shown, although they are now of historic interest only with the introduction of a new cash limit formula from April 2001.
- ▶ All areas, except for OBPS, had achieved at least one quality award. In OBPS a reasonable decision had been taken not to pursue such awards at a time of amalgamation. The ratios of senior managers to middle managers, and of managers to service delivery and support staff showed some quite large variations, a matter that will be of interest to local Boards, as are the proportions of PSO/PO staff. However, it must be emphasised that these ratios need to

be treated with caution as area definitions of senior managers, middle managers and support staff do vary.

Proportion of staff from minority ethnic groups

14. The proportion of staff from minority ethnic groups varied across the region as shown in table 2.

	HAMPSHIRE	KENT	SURREY	SUSSEX	THAMES
- ALL STAFF	3.1	1.0	2.8	1.5	0.1
- MANAGERS	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.4
- MID-GRADE POS/PROS	5.4	1.3	2.1	1.2	9.2
- OTHER STAFF	0.6	0.6	5.0	2.3	9.4
PERCENTAGE IN MINORITY ETHNIC GROUPS AGED 16 TO 54 IN THE LABOUR FORCE SURVEY 1996/1998	2	2	4	3	6

Commentary

- Only Thames Valley and Hampshire employed minority ethnic staff in PO/PSO grades above the proportion in the local population. Thames Valley also employed minority ethnic staff in management grades.

Crime statistics

15. A number of other factors also had a potential bearing on performance, some of which are shown in table 3.

	HAMPSHIRE	KENT	SURREY	SUSSEX	THAMES
RECORDED CRIMES RECORDED BY POLICE PER 100,000 POPULATION	7,277	8,259	5,414	8,767	8,461
POLICE CLEAR-UP RATE- RECORDED CRIME	35%	34%	40%	25%	25%
PERSONS FOUND GUILTY OR CAUTIONED FOR INDICTABLE OFFENCES PER 100,000 POPULATION, 1998	964	1,170	772	789	562

Commentary

- The boundaries of all the areas were co-terminous with those of local constabularies.
- The level of recorded crime was highest in Sussex, where (with Thames Valley) there was also the lowest clear-up rate by the police. Recorded crime was lowest in Surrey who also had the highest police clear-up rate. The number of persons found guilty or cautioned per 100,000 of the population was highest in Kent and lowest in Thames Valley.

Probation Boards

- 1.6 The structure and membership of the new Probation Boards, with effect from April 2001, is shown in table 4.

TABLE 4: COMPOSITION OF PROBATION BOARD SHOWING EXPECTED AGAINST ACTUAL MEMBERSHIP					
	HAMPSHIRE	KENT	SURREY	SUSSEX	THAMES
1 CHAIR	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
1 CO	YES	YES	YES	ACTING	YES
12 COMMUNITY MEMBERS	12	11	11	11	9
INCLUDING					
(2 MAGISTRATES)	2	4	2	2	3
(2 LOCAL AUTHORITY)	2	1	1	2	0
1 LCD NOMINEE	1	1	1	1	1
NUMBER RECORDED AS MINORITY ETHNIC	3	2	2	0	2

Commentary

- Recruitment for the New Boards continued up to April 2001, and not all members had been appointed by the time this report was completed. However, further recruitment was generally in hand.

Inspection scope and methods

- 1.7 The inspection was not an exhaustive examination of all the work of the probation areas but instead focused on certain key aspects and compared the performance of local areas in relation to:
- PSRs
 - supervision of offenders in the community including:
 - probation orders (community rehabilitation orders)
 - CS orders (community punishment orders)
 - combination orders (community punishment and rehabilitation orders)
 - prison licences
 - the introduction of strategies for effective supervision
 - risk assessment and the management of dangerous offenders
 - financial accountability and audit
 - the area's management arrangements and vfm in service delivery.
- 1.8 The assessments made give particular attention to area achievements in meeting national performance indicators and targets, compliance with national standards and the advice contained in relevant probation circulars. The methods employed to inspect the areas were:
- an analysis of written documentation, reference to previous inspections and other reports, and use of Home Office data

- discussions with Board members, managers and staff
- meetings with the Board secretary, treasurer and district auditor
- surveys of sentencers. A questionnaire was sent to all judges sitting regularly at the Crown Court centre(s) in the area concerned, to all stipendiary magistrates in the courts in the area and to lay magistrates on 3 benches in the area. The benches were chosen to provide a representative sample of all benches in the area, having due regard to size of bench, geographical spread and degree of urbanisation. However, the size of benches, and so the number of magistrates approached, did vary somewhat
- a survey of the beneficiaries of CS
- an examination of samples of each area's case files and reports, which enabled an assessment of compliance with national standards. The information obtained therefore depended in part on the quality and completeness of recording. The analysis treated missing or incomplete information about compliance as failure to comply
- observation of offender supervision by staff, both individual and in groups, which provided an opportunity to assess other aspects of the quality and impact of service delivery
- meetings with offenders
- visits to CS work placements, assisted by lay inspectors.

120 The report is structured as follows:

- the 4 amalgamating services are generally referred to in their new form, although some specific references will be made to the original services as appropriate
- the service delivery chapters identify relevant SDAs/SPMs/KPIs¹ and targets¹ and present information about regional achievements with succinct commentary. Each chapter concludes with an area specific performance section
- the area specific performance section draws together the key findings for individual areas, identifies good practice and specifies poor performance. Where performance needs to be improved, factors which appear to contribute to shortcomings are addressed, including specific attention to the management arrangements for that area of practice. Particular attention is given to management arrangements for reviewing performance and how well targets for improvement have been established
- Chapter 7 addresses the area's overall management arrangements and vfm
- Chapter 8 outlines the next steps to be taken and identifies the level of follow-up work which HMIP will undertake to ascertain progress with the recommendations in this report.

120 The tables in the following chapters show the most recent Home Office workload data supplemented, where possible, by locally provided data.

¹SDAs/SPMs/KPIs are set for the work of probation areas to monitor performance on certain main pieces of work. The KPIs for a given year, with associated targets, are set in plans for the probation service published by the Home Office, which set out Ministers' priorities and policy aims for the service nationally.

- 1.11 Data on unit costs is also given in the tables. The main information on unit costs that used to be available was that from the RMIS computer system in probation areas. However, there were some doubts about the quality and inter-area comparability of this information. An alternative method of calculating unit costs has now been adopted by HMIP. This uses a calculation on similar lines to that in RMIS, though in less detail and on a more consistent basis between areas. Like RMIS it estimates unit costs by deducing the costs of the main items of work using national averages timings for those items from activity sampling exercises in 1997 and 1998. This alternative methodology is not precise but should provide a clear, general picture on differences in unit costs. It has been used for the figures on unit costs shown in tables in this report, although the table on PSRs (table 7) also shows information derived from RMIS. It needs to be noted though that with the introduction of the new National Probation Service from April 2001 there was also a new cash limit formula.
- 1.12 The application of the new formula, based predominantly on needs rather than workload variables, would alter a number of relative costs. To this end the more important dimension in the vfm charts in chapter 7 is the performance one.
- 1.13 The tables also include information on reconviction rates (for "standard list" offences) within 2 years of commencement of community orders. The information shown is the difference between the actual rate and the predicted rate, i.e. that which might be expected for a similar group of offenders in that area. (A negative figure therefore indicates an actual rate below the predicted rate; a positive, above.) The tables indicate where difference between the actual and predicted rate was greater than the range, which might be expected to be due to chance variation. It should be noted that for small areas the analysis is based on a relatively small sample, and so the predicted range is relatively large. This may to some extent affect comparisons of the results because for a small area a result would need to differ proportionately from the predicted figure by a larger amount than for a larger area in order to be significantly different. It should also be noted that, bearing in mind factors such as police clear-up rates, social conditions and CPS success in prosecuting cases – which are likely to affect variations in reconviction rates – the results should not be interpreted as proving that a particular probation area has "good" or "bad" performance. In considering an area's performance, they do however raise important issues warranting further explanation or investigation when the rates are particularly high or low relative to those predicted.

2. PRE-SENTENCE REPORTS

- 2.1 This chapter examines performance in the provision of PSRs to the criminal courts and the views of users about their timeliness and quality.

Key performance indicators and national targets

- 2.2 The following KPIs for the preparation of PSRs were set for 1999/2000:

KPI 4:	Target	<i>90% of PSRs to be completed within the national standard timescale of 15 working days.</i>
KPI 6:	Target	<i>90% of judges and magistrates to be satisfied with: a) the overall usefulness of PSRs; and b) the objectivity of PSRs.</i>
KPI 7:	Target	<i>Unit cost per PSR to be lower than £360.</i>
KPI 9:	Target	<i>The proportion of prosecutors who consider that: a) bail information actually makes a difference to their recommendations to court (80%); b) BIRs cover everything needed (90%); and c) are satisfied that BIRs are objective, including information on risk where relevant (90%).</i>

- 2.3 The following KPIs for the preparation of PSRs were set for 2000/2001:

KPI 4:	Target	<i>90% of PSRs to be completed within the national standard timescale of 15 working days.</i>
	(a)	
KPI 5:	Target	<i>20% of the total reports to be SSRs.</i>
	(b)	
KPI 6:	Target	<i>90% of judges and magistrates to be satisfied with: a) the overall usefulness of PSRs and SSRs; and b) the objectivity of PSRs and SSRs.</i>
KPI 7:	Target	<i>Unit cost per PSR to be lower than £380.</i>
KPI 9:	Target	<i>The proportion of prosecutors who consider that: a) bail information actually makes a difference to their recommendations to court (80%); b) BIRs cover everything needed (90%); and c) are satisfied that BIRs are objective, including information on risk where relevant (90%).</i>

- 2.4 To support the government's high level objectives (the PSAs), for 2001/2002 the following SDAs and SPMs were established:

Target	<i>90% of PSRs to be completed within the national standard timescale of 15 working days.</i>
(a)	
Target	<i>20% of the total reports to be SSRs, to increase to 25% in 2003/2004.</i>
(b)	
Target	<i>90% of judges and magistrates to be satisfied with: a) the overall usefulness of PSRs and SSRs; and b) the objectivity of PSRs and SSRs.</i>
Measure	<i>Unit cost per PSR.</i>

Use of pre-sentence reports

- 2.5 PSRs are requested by courts to assist with sentencing. Table 5 shows the number of reports prepared for the courts in 1996, 1997, 1998 and 1999 for each of the areas in the region.

		BERK-SHIRE	HAMP-SHIRE	KENT	OXES & BUCKS	SURREY	EAST SUSSEX	WEST SUSSEX
CROWN COURT	1996	465	1,420	1,322	751	627	701	425
	1997	490	1,738	1,432	870	608	633	451
	1998	405	1,307	1,537	786	595	628	424
	1999	442	1,289	1,488	761	486	496	375
MAGISTRATES' COURTS	1996	1,596	3,952	3,712	2,546	1,540	1,783	1,242
	1997	1,644	4,292	4,205	2,664	1,376	1,736	1,306
	1998	1,552	5,326	4,452	2,937	2,110	1,785	1,437
	1999	1,884	4,991	4,803	2,988	1,736	1,867	1,300
YOUTH COURTS	1996	48	521	182	115	341	64	142
	1997	82	692	229	168	343	86	204
	1998	98	394	162	99	292	88	176
	1999	103	421	205	92	269	57	116
TOTAL	1996	2,109	5,893	5,216	3,412	2,508	2,549	1,809
	1997	2,216	6,722	5,866	3,642	2,327	2,455	1,961
	1998	2,055	7,027	6,151	3,842	2,997	2,501	2,037
	1999	2,429	6,701	6,496	3,841	2,491	2,420	1,791

Commentary

- ▶ Four areas had seen increases in total reports requested by all the courts between 1996 and 1999, although the trends between years varied somewhat, with Hampshire and Kent experiencing particularly large rises in magistrates' courts. With the introduction of youth offending teams, from April 2000 probation areas no longer produced PSRs for youth courts.
- ▶ The increased use of SSRs should have an impact on the number of PSRs.

- 2.6 Table 6 gives information about the use of PSRs and custodial sentencing.

	BERK-SHIRE	HAMP-SHIRE	KENT	OXES & BUCKS	SURREY	EAST SUSSEX	WEST SUSSEX	ENGLAND & WALES
MAGISTRATES' COURTS:								
% PSRS/ADULTS SENTENCED FOR INDICTABLE OFFENCES	70.2	76.3	67.3	78.4	89.1	66.6	73.2	67.8
% CUSTODIAL SENTENCING FOR INDICTABLE OFFENCES	8.3	8.4	11.5	7.2	7.1	14.4	11.0	12.1
CROWN COURT:								
% CUSTODIAL SENTENCING	61.9	57.7	59.1	65.1	58.3	61.6	68.6	61.4

Commentary

- ▶ The proportionate use of PSRs in magistrates' courts was considerably higher in Surrey than in most of the other areas.

- The rate of custodial sentencing in magistrates' courts varied considerably between the areas, from around 7% in Surrey and OBPS to 14% in East Sussex.
- The rate of custodial sentencing in the Crown Court was broadly similar across the areas and to the national average.

Costs of pre-sentence reports

- Table 7: The costs of PSRs across the region are identified in table 7.

YEAR	HAMPSHIRE	KENT	SURREY	SUSSEX	THAMES	ENGLAND & WALES
1997/1998*	N/A	365	455	N/A	N/A	365
1998/1999 ALTERNATIVE METHODOLOGY*	355	400	515	400	495	420
1999/2000 ALTERNATIVE METHODOLOGY*	350	430	545	425	515	415

* See paragraph 1.11.

Commentary

- The most recent PSR costs for each of the areas varied between £350 in Hampshire and £545 in Surrey, with Hampshire being the only area to be below the national average and the Home Office target of £360.

Timeliness of pre-sentence reports

- Table 8 shows the proportion of PSRs prepared within the national standard requirement of 15 working days.

	HAMPSHIRE	KENT	SURREY	SUSSEX	THAMES	ENGLAND & WALES
MAGISTRATES' COURTS						
1997/1998	(60.0%)	52.1%	(55.6%)	N/A	N/A	58.5
1998/1999	61%	55.5%	60.2%	(66.8%)	(63.9%)	62.8
1999/2000	51%	65.2%	60.9%	65.2%	N/A	68.1
CROWN COURT						
1997/1998	(59.1%)	53.9%	(43.1%)	46.9%	N/A	50.6
1998/1999	63%	53.4%	52.5%	(46.2%)	(42.4%)	47.9
1999/2000	57%	55.8%	53.7%	44.5%	N/A	49.4

N/A = Not available from area.
Figures in brackets are based on data for only part of the year.

Commentary

- ▶ All areas had scope to make improvements in meeting this target. However, in some areas the incentive to achieve the target was undermined by adjournment times that exceeded 15 days, even when managers had encouraged courts to shorten them.

Outcomes of pre-sentence reports

- 2.9 Proposals made in PSRs are intended to assist the court in reaching a sentencing decision and they should, therefore, influence the extent to which courts make use of different community sentences and custody. PSRs are also the first assessment stage for offenders and a crucial component of the targeting processes used to include offenders in the most effective programme of intervention. One indicator of the quality and impact of PSRs is therefore the extent of concordance between proposals and actual sentencing. Such information is also very useful when set into the context of data about race and gender. While it may be legitimate for a proposal to vary from a sentence, low levels of concordance could point to problems in relation to how realistic POs were being in their proposals or how well they communicated through the PSR. The proportion of PSRs that proposed community sentences, compared with the proportion of PSRs where a community sentence was made by the court, is shown in the following tables. Table 9 is based on information forwarded to the Home Office by areas and table 10 is derived from the inspection PSR reading event and shows the actual concordance. It should also be noted that areas can and do propose custodial sentences, a move away from a previous ideological position held by some never to do this.

TABLE 9: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PSR PROPOSALS AND SENTENCING OUTCOMES, 1998						
	HAMPSHIRE	KENT	SURREY	SUSSEX	THAMES	ENGLAND & WALES AVERAGE
% PSRS PROPOSING COMMUNITY SENTENCES	64.0	69.3	58.1	65.7	74.0	68.3
% OF PSRS WHERE COMMUNITY SENTENCE MADE	58.2	56.3	55.6	56.3	61.1	53.1
% PSRS PROPOSING PROBATION ORDER	33.5	31.7	25.0	32.1	31.7	36.2
% OF PSRS WHERE PROBATION ORDER MADE	27.2	21.5	21.3	24.2	21.5	23.9
% PSRS PROPOSING CS ORDER	24.0	29.7	24.6	28.1	31.2	23.6
% OF PSRS WHERE CS ORDER MADE	23.3	24.9	23.5	24.6	27.3	20.5
% PSRS PROPOSING COMBINATION ORDER	6.5	7.9	8.5	5.5	11.2	8.5
% OF PSRS WHERE COMBINATION ORDER MADE	7.7	9.9	10.8	7.5	12.3	8.7

Note: Actual concordance rates would require data about specific PSRs, i.e. which specific reports proposed which sentences and the outcome in respect of each report compared. The above table refers to PSR and outcome proportions; thus, for example, some probation orders may have been made where no probation order was proposed.

TABLE 1 PROPOSALS AND CONCORDANCE					
	HAMPSHIRE	KENT	SURREY	SUSSEX	THAMES
PROPOSAL WAS:					
PROBATION ORDER	19 of 61 (31%)	6 of 60 (10%)	5 of 61 (8%)	6 of 81 (7%)	25 of 85 (29%)
PROBATION ORDER WITH CONDITIONS	9 of 61 (15%)	13 of 60 (22%)	18 of 61 (30%)	19 of 81 (23%)	9 of 85 (11%)
COMBINATION ORDER	10 of 61 (16%)	6 of 60 (10%)	6 of 61 (10%)	4 of 81 (5%)	3 of 85 (4%)
FINES	9 of 61 (15%)	14 of 60 (23%)	11 of 61 (18%)	16 of 81 (20%)	25 of 85 (29%)
ALL COMBINATION PROPOSALS	47 of 61 (77%)	39 of 60 (65%)	40 of 61 (66%)	45 of 81 (56%)	62 of 85 (73%)
ORDER PROPOSED/CLEARLY IMPLIED	5 of 61 (8%)	9 of 60 (15%)	2 of 61 (3%)	6 of 81 (7%)	4 of 85 (5%)
ORDER PROPOSAL	4 of 61 (7%)	8 of 60 (13%)	5 of 61 (8%)	18 of 81 (22%)	11 of 85 (13%)
ORDER PROPOSAL AND THIS WAS UNDERSTANDABLE	1 of 61 (2%)	3 of 60 (5%)	12 of 61 (20%)	10 of 81 (12%)	4 of 85 (5%)
ORDER PROPOSAL AND SHOULD BE ORDERED	4 of 61 (7%)	1 of 60 (2%)	2 of 61 (3%)	2 of 81 (2%)	4 of 85 (5%)
IN OTHER PROPOSALS WHERE THERE WAS CONCORDANCE WITH ACTUAL SENTENCE					
PROBATION ORDER					
PROBATION ORDER	12 of 17 (71%)	5 of 6 (83%)	4 of 5 (80%)	3 of 6 (50%)	10 of 25 (40%)
PROBATION ORDER WITH CONDITIONS	4 of 9 (44%)	4 of 12 (33%)	8 of 17 (47%)	6 of 19 (32%)	4 of 9 (44%)
COMBINATION ORDER	7 of 9 (78%)	2 of 6 (33%)	2 of 5 (40%)	0 of 4 (0%)	1 of 3 (33%)
FINES	8 of 9 (89%)	11 of 14 (79%)	6 of 10 (60%)	13 of 15 (87%)	12 of 25 (48%)
ORDER PROPOSED/CLEARLY IMPLIED	4 of 5 (80%)	9 of 9 (100%)	1 of 2 (50%)	6 of 6 (100%)	3 of 4 (75%)
ORDER PROPOSAL AND THIS WAS UNDERSTANDABLE					
ORDER PROPOSAL AND SHOULD BE ORDERED					
OVERALL CONCORDANCE RATE FOR PROPOSALS FOR COMMUNITY SENTENCE OR CUSTODY	35 of 49 (71%)	31 of 47 (66%)	21 of 39 (54%)	28 of 50 (56%)	30 of 66 (45%)

Commentary

- Assuming some degree of similarity between the offenders and offences dealt with in the PSRs assessed, the patterns of proposals varied considerably between the areas. For example, in Hampshire there was a higher proportion of probation proposals but fewer with conditions when compared with Surrey. The proportion of CS proposals was also lower in Hampshire when compared with Thames Valley. Custody was either proposed or implied in Kent more frequently. In Surrey there was a higher proportion without a clear proposal, although this was usually understandable.
- Overall concordance rates were higher in Hampshire and lower in Thames Valley. The concordance rate for probation orders was very low in Thames Valley and generally low for combination orders, except for Hampshire.
- From these samples areas can undertake further analyses to see what the actual sentences were when proposals were not followed and also examine concordance against race and gender variables.

Sentencer satisfaction

- 2.10 Judges sitting regularly at the Crown Court locations in the region were surveyed regarding their satisfaction with PSRs, as were magistrates from a number of benches in each area in the region. The results of the survey are summarised in tables 11 and 12.

	HAMPSHIRE	KENT	SURREY	SUSSEX	THAMES
NUMBER OF RESPONSES	9	8	3	7	6
NUMBER "SATISFIED" OR "VERY SATISFIED" WITH:					
- CLARITY OF PSRS	9 out of 9	8 out of 8	3 out of 3	7 out of 7	6 out of 6
- APPROPRIATENESS OF PSR PROPOSAL	4 out of 9	5 out of 7	3 out of 3	4 out of 7	3 out of 6
- PSR OBJECTIVITY	7 out of 9	7 out of 7	3 out of 3	7 out of 7	3 out of 6
- TIME NEEDED TO PREPARE PSR	6 out of 9	7 out of 8	2 out of 3	6 out of 7	3 out of 4
- OVERALL USEFULNESS OF PSRS IN REACHING SENTENCING DECISION	7 out of 9	8 out of 8	3 out of 3	7 out of 7	5 out of 6
- AVAILABILITY OF SSRS	3 out of 3	6 out of 6	2 out of 3	3 out of 3	2 out of 3
- OVERALL USEFULNESS OF SSRS	4 out of 4	5 out of 6	3 out of 3	3 out of 3	1 out of 2
- TIME NEEDED TO PREPARE SSRS	3 out of 4	5 out of 6	2 out of 3	3 out of 3	1 out of 2
- WORK OF THE AREA OVERALL	7 out of 8	8 out of 8	3 out of 3	7 out of 7	5 out of 5

	HAMPSHIRE	KENT	SURREY	SUSSEX	THAMES
NUMBER OF RESPONSES	184	107	116	174	82
RESPONSE RATE	34%	30%	36%	34%	34%
PROPORTION * "SATISFIED" OR "VERY SATISFIED" WITH:					
- CLARITY OF PSRS	90%	96%	100%	99%	93%
- APPROPRIATENESS OF PSR PROPOSAL	59%	82%	89%	81%	80%
- PSR OBJECTIVITY	73%	91%	93%	82%	84%
- TIME NEEDED TO PREPARE PSRS	45%	56%	70%	42%	46%
- OVERALL USEFULNESS OF PSRS IN REACHING SENTENCING DECISION	79%	91%	96%	92%	88%
- AVAILABILITY OF SSRS	82%	83%	81%	69%	73%
- OVERALL USEFULNESS OF SSRS	81%	95%	83%	92%	90%
- TIME NEEDED TO PREPARE SSRS	77%	79%	89%	78%	76%
- WORK OF THE AREA OVERALL	82%	97%	98%	95%	88%

* Proportions exclude cases where respondents said they did not see sufficient work to form a view.

Commentary

- » Judges generally found PSRs helpful in reaching a sentencing decision, but a number of them expressed concerns about the appropriateness of PSR proposals and some were not satisfied with the time taken to prepare reports.
- » Magistrates generally thought that PSRs were clear, but in Hampshire (where concordance was better) over 40% were not satisfied with the proposals. Here there was also greater concern about PSR objectivity. All areas were criticised for the timeliness of PSRs.

- Levels of satisfaction with SSRs were generally reasonable and they were usually considered to be useful, especially in Kent.
- Magistrates were less satisfied with the service overall in Hampshire.

Quality of pre-sentence reports

20. A sample of 60 PSRs was examined in each area as part of the inspection process (larger samples were drawn from the amalgamating services, Sussex and Thames Valley), the inspectors being assisted by reading teams of local staff. The results on the overall assessment of the quality of PSRs from that activity are shown in table 13, together with corresponding results from the ACOP/HMIP national PSR quality improvement exercises² for 1996, 1997 and 1999. Other relevant findings are included in the area specific section of the report.

TABLE 13 OVERALL QUALITY OF PSRS							
	HAMPSHIRE	KENT	SURREY	SUSSEX	THAMES	AVERAGE FROM FIRST 6 PIP REGIONAL INSPECTIONS	PERFORMANCE RANGE IN FIRST 6 PIP REGIONS
THE INSPECTION 2000							
EXCELLENT	7%	13%	8%	14%	16%	9%	0-17%
SATISFACTORY/ GOOD ENOUGH	63%	52%	75%	79%	55%	63%	40-82%
NOT SATISFACTORY/ NOT GOOD ENOUGH	30%	30%	16%	6%	25%	25%	3-48%
VERY POOR	0%	5%	0%	1%	5%	3%	0-15%
						ENGLAND & WALES AVERAGE	
NATIONAL EXERCISE 2000							
EXCELLENT	12%	10%	8%	17%	8%	11%	
SATISFACTORY/ GOOD ENOUGH	71%	61%	71%	63%	63%	62%	
NOT SATISFACTORY/ NOT GOOD ENOUGH	17%	28%	17%	20%	26%	25%	
VERY POOR	0%	2%	3%	0%	3%	3%	
NATIONAL EXERCISE 1997							
EXCELLENT	17%	5%	12%	15%	7%	10%	
SATISFACTORY/ GOOD ENOUGH	52%	64%	78%	66%	69%	63%	
NOT SATISFACTORY/ NOT GOOD ENOUGH	29%	27%	10%	18%	24%	25%	
VERY POOR	2%	3%	0%	2%	1%	2%	
NATIONAL EXERCISE 1996							
EXCELLENT	10%	10%	7%	14%	16%*	12%	
SATISFACTORY/ GOOD ENOUGH	52%	66%	63%	46%	50%*	61%	
NOT SATISFACTORY/ NOT GOOD ENOUGH	37%	20%	27%	34%	25%*	24%	
VERY POOR	0%	3%	3%	6%	0%*	3%	

* Berkshire only. OBPS did not participate in the 1996 exercise.

² The exercises were run jointly by ACOP and HMIP and were aimed at improving the quality of PSRs. In the exercises a sample of PSRs from most of the areas in England and Wales were assessed against the requirements of national standards using a standard *pro forma*.

Commentary

- ▶ The quality of PSRs was much better in Sussex and somewhat better in Surrey than in the other areas. However, for Thames Valley the poor result was skewed by very different performances between Berkshire and OBPS, with the PSRs from Berkshire being the best overall in the region. The higher number of excellent PSRs for Thames Valley was also a result of the Berkshire sample, which also included the highest proportion of "excellent" PSRs and none that were "very poor". In addition to PSRs in OBPS needing considerable attention, managers in Kent and Hampshire also needed to refocus in the light of these results.
- ▶ The figures from the previous national exercises are given to enable comparisons to be made over time.

2.12 Tables 14, 15, 16 and 17 show more detailed results from the scrutiny of PSRs undertaken during the performance inspection.

TABLE 14: QUALITY OF PSRS: OFFENCE ANALYSIS					
	HAMPSHIRE	KENT	SURREY	SUSSEX	THAMES
EXCELLENT	7%	17%	7%	18%	16%
SATISFACTORY/GOOD ENOUGH	67%	57%	83%	75%	55%
NOT SATISFACTORY/NOT GOOD ENOUGH	25%	23%	8%	6%	26%
VERY POOR	2%	3%	2%	1%	3%

TABLE 15: QUALITY OF PSRS: OFFENDER ASSESSMENT					
	HAMPSHIRE	KENT	SURREY	SUSSEX	THAMES
EXCELLENT	7%	15%	12%	11%	22%
SATISFACTORY/GOOD ENOUGH	77%	68%	72%	81%	56%
NOT SATISFACTORY/NOT GOOD ENOUGH	16%	12%	16%	7%	23%
VERY POOR	0%	5%	0%	1%	0%

TABLE 16: QUALITY OF PSRS: ASSESSMENT OF THE RISK OF HARM TO THE PUBLIC AND LIKELIHOOD OF REOFFENDING					
	HAMPSHIRE	KENT	SURREY	SUSSEX	THAMES
EXCELLENT	7%	20%	18%	15%	18%
SATISFACTORY/GOOD ENOUGH	74%	62%	73%	76%	61%
NOT SATISFACTORY/NOT GOOD ENOUGH	18%	17%	8%	7%	17%
VERY POOR	2%	2%	0%	1%	3%

TABLE 17: QUALITY OF PSRS: CONCLUSION					
	HAMPSHIRE	KENT	SURREY	SUSSEX	THAMES
EXCELLENT	7%	7%	3%	16%	15%
SATISFACTORY/GOOD ENOUGH	67%	62%	80%	75%	58%
NOT SATISFACTORY/NOT GOOD ENOUGH	26%	27%	16%	7%	25%
VERY POOR	0%	5%	0%	1%	2%

Commentary

- Poorer quality PSRs tended to have weak offence analysis and unsatisfactory conclusions. Offender assessments tended to be better, except for Thames Valley, and generally risk assessments had showed an improvement compared with the overall results. Sussex reports were consistently good in all the sections.
- A common finding, discussed with teams which assisted HMIP with the PSR assessment exercise, was that proposals for probation orders were too often not sufficiently specific in defining what was to be achieved during the course of supervision, the programme the offender would be expected to complete and how progress would be measured.

FINDINGS FOR THAMES VALLEY

Home Office targets

- Tables 7, 8, 11 and 12 show data on the performance in relation to the main KPIs specified in the Home Office Plans for the Probation Service 1998/1999 and 1999/2000. The following results were achieved for KPIs in 1999/2000:
- KPI 4: 59% of PSRs in OBPS and 71% in BPS were completed within the national standard timescale of 15 working days compared to the national target of 90%
 - KPI 6: in a survey carried out for the inspection 5 out of 6 of judges and 88% of magistrates were satisfied with the overall usefulness of PSRs. Three out of 6 judges and 84% of magistrates were satisfied with the objectivity of PSRs
 - KPI 7: the unit cost of £515 per PSR for 1999/2000 was above the KPI target and well above the national average
 - KPI 9: the performance monitoring information for this KPI was not available.

Local targets and monitoring arrangements

- Table 5 shows the workload trends over a 4-year period. Overall there had been about a 12% increase in report requests, with similar increases in both services.
- Both services had broadly similar arrangements for staffing courts and preparing reports. Each had one senior manager with responsibility for all adult courts. Local SPOs were responsible for managing the staffing of court duties and liaison. Reading was the exception where a central specialist SPO managed both the Crown and magistrates' courts. PSO's were employed to cover courts and PO's were only required for occasional duties. Both services liaised closely with court clerks and sentencers, involving a range of activities such as PLCs, joint training initiatives and regular executive meetings. An area of difference where the services were considering convergence was the provision of bail information. In OBPS bail information was solely prison-based, although the service did respond to specific requests from the CPS. In BPS there was a well-established court-based scheme. Discussions

were well advanced towards a common approach and negotiations were planned with other key players in the criminal courts environment.

2.16 Both services had introduced SSRs to all courts in their areas and had agreed protocols with the relevant clerks. Take-up had been disappointing, although both services had made efforts to inform the courts of their purpose and availability. There were some minor differences in their policies that were being addressed in the run up to amalgamation. At the time of the inspection meetings with the Thames Valley chief clerks were taking place with a view to harmonising this and other protocols.

2.17 For 1999/2000 the services had set the following targets and reported their achievement as set out below:

OBPS	Results	BPS	Results
Undertake a risk assessment in all reports	79%	85% of reports to be assessed as satisfactory or better in May 1999 inspection	67%
All reports to contain specific probation programme proposal	N/A	At least 60% of reports with OGRS of over 50 will receive a community sentence	52%
90% of reports completed within 15 days (KPI 5)	N/A	85% of reports submitted within courts' timescale	91%
90% of magistrates and judges satisfied with the overall usefulness of PSRs (KPI 6)	88% (PIP survey)	At least an 85% level of magistrates' satisfaction with overall court service and PSRs will be achieved in BPS's 1999 survey of sentencers	86%
Take appropriate managerial or training action relating to the inclusion of the "victim perspective" in PSRs	Not achieved	At least an 85% level of CPS satisfaction with the bail information service provided by BPS in 1999 will be achieved	N/A
To have in place a service level agreement in each court	Achieved	Average cost of PSR not to exceed £360	£196

2.18 Sentencer and CPS satisfaction was due to be measured by a national survey and therefore local information was not available. It was notable that OBPS did not have a target to improve PSR quality. OBPS achievements were reported in a progress report to the previous committee dated February 2000.

2.19 For 2000/2001 the services had set the following targets:

OBPS	Results	BPS	Results
80% of reports to be satisfactory or better	49%	85% of reports to be assessed as satisfactory or better in HMIP inspection in 2000	89%
Undertake a risk assessment in all reports	66%	To deliver training and communications to magistrates in Berkshire as agreed within the Magistrates' Probation Forum	N/A
75% of reports completed within 15 days (KPI 5)	58% (April-June)	90% of reports submitted within 15 working days	68% (April-June)
20% of reports to be SSRs	N/A	Average cost of PSR not to exceed £380	N/A

- 220 The data showing the achievement of targets was taken from the results of those PSRs read during the inspection and from the services' own monitoring part-way through 2000/2001. The above tables highlight some significant differences in target setting and monitoring between the services and also significant changes in objectives between the years for OBPS. Successful amalgamation will require harmonisation of these matters, guided by the plans for the area as set by the NPD. This observation applies to the following sections of the report also.

Quality of reports

- 221 The services had taken part in the PSR Quality Improvement Programme initiated by ACOP and HMIP in 1996. Table 13 shows the results of the national exercises in 1996, 1997 and 1999 and compares them to the overall quality of reports read for this inspection. The trend for Thames Valley was slightly downward. However, when looked at as individual services 2 very different profiles emerged from this inspection, with Berkshire showing considerable improvement more recently and OBPS performance declining notably.
- 222 The critical difference between the 2 services appeared to have been the introduction in BPS of a template for preparing PSRs, introduced to address the weaknesses identified in the 1999 ACOP audit. The team who read PSRs for the inspection commented on the evident impact that the use of the template made on quality as defined by national standards. Following its introduction, the CO carried out an audit of 78 PSRs in June 2000. Feedback on each PSR was given to the report writers and their managers. This senior management involvement in quality monitoring appeared to have been effective in keeping PSR quality improvement high on the agenda. The individual feedback was considered helpful.
- 223 At the time of the inspection OBPS had already gone some way towards adopting the template which had been updated to meet the 2000 National Standards and had subsequently been further updated. To date, in OBPS, local SPOs had assessed PSR quality and quality audit reports were published in February and July 2000. The weakness of this model was the lack of independence and that not all reports identified appeared in the results. For instance, in the February 2000 reports only 22 out of a possible 51 reports were audited. These audit reports showed improvements in the quality of PSRs in that well over 80% were assessed to be satisfactory or better. OBPS had continued to use inspection tools which did not reflect changes in national standards and so did not get an accurate picture of performance.
- 224 Both services operated simple gatekeeping procedures at team level, with the court-based staff operating a final quality assurance check before presentation of the report to sentencers. It seemed likely that the use of the template made this stage less crucial and, as 29% of reports made it through the gatekeeping procedures and were still deemed in the inspection to be unsatisfactory, this calls into question its value.
- 225 Tables 14, 15, 16 and 17 show the performance on individual sections of reports. Offence analysis was the weakest section and assessment of risk the strongest section. During the report reading exercise the reading team commented:
- reports contained too much description rather than analysis

- reports on excess alcohol offenders would have improved if the officer made the links between the blood/alcohol reading and what the offender was saying
- the victim perspective was one-sided but some excellent reports picked up discrepancies between what the offender said and witness versions of events
- the content of outline supervision plans needed improving but report writers were getting better at describing methods of supervision
- there was evidence of some stereotyping in reports and, overall, reports tended to ignore race issues
- PSRs on domestic violence cases needed improving.

2.26 Tables 9 and 10 show the broad and specific relationships between PSR proposals and outcomes and actual concordance. The extent to which the sentencing court followed proposals is called concordance. In Thames Valley the overall concordance rate was the lowest in the region. For example, high rates of proposals for community penalties (73%) were very often not followed by the courts. Only 40% of probation proposals were converted into probation orders. This information should prompt the area to review the quality and appropriateness of proposals and to analyse the quality of reports against such variables as race and gender. OBPS had begun to include concordance information in recent performance reports. Local monitoring showed that concordance rates were variable for different courts.

Sentencer satisfaction

2.27 The extent to which judges and magistrates were satisfied with the work of the area was surveyed as part of the inspection. Tables 11 and 12 show that 6 judges and 82 magistrates responded to a questionnaire. Overall, the majority of judges and magistrates were satisfied with the overall usefulness of PSRs and particularly with their clarity and with the work of the area as a whole. However, judges were less satisfied with PSR proposals and objectivity, and SSRs in general. Magistrates were less satisfied with the time taken to prepare both PSRs and SSRs. The pattern of sentencer satisfaction in both services was broadly similar. In view of the good liaison arrangements in both services, the area should use these channels to establish the reasons behind the few areas of dissatisfaction and plan to improve upon current performance.

Summary and recommendations

2.28 In relation to the preparation of PSRs and SSRs, the services' strengths were:

- the improved quality of PSRs and the use of the PSR template in BPS and its planned use in OBPS
- the joint approach in both services to harmonising policies and procedures
- sentencer satisfaction with PSRs and the work of the area in general
- good liaison with sentencers.

229 There were also matters which needed attention:

- the quality of all aspects of PSRs in OBPS
- PSR timeliness
- the consistent use of PSR concordance data, especially in relation to race and gender
- levels of sentencer satisfaction with timeliness of PSRs and SSRs in general.

230 Issues that needed attention to enhance the success of amalgamation were:

- overall, the area had approached amalgamation and the harmonisation of procedures well and there was little that needed to be given attention that was not in the implementation plan
- a consistent approach to target setting, monitoring and reporting the results
- consistent arrangements to monitor PSR quality.
- a joint review of gatekeeping procedures and their value.

231 It is therefore recommended that:

- ① *The Probation Board should ensure that the timeliness of PSRs is improved in order to meet the required Home Office target.*
- ② *The Probation Board should ensure that the quality of PSRs is improved or where it is already satisfactory those levels are maintained.*
- ③ *The Probation Board should ensure that levels of sentencer satisfaction with the timeliness of PSRs and with SSR provision are improved.*
- ④ *The Probation Board should ensure that concordance data between PSR proposals and results is used routinely by middle managers, paying attention particularly to race and gender equality, and that levels of concordance rise.*

2. EFFECTIVE SUPERVISION OF PROBATION ORDERS (COMMUNITY REHABILITATION ORDERS)

- 2.1 This chapter examines the supervision of offenders subject to probation orders and the programmes and partnerships established to support the supervision of offenders in the community. Probation orders became known as community rehabilitation orders from April 2001.

Key performance indicators and national targets

- 2.2 The Home Office Plan for the Probation Service 1999/2000 contained 4 KPIs for probation order work, namely:

KPI 1:	Target:	<i>To lower the actual reconviction rates for all types of order and achieve rates lower than predicted.</i>
KPI 2:	Target:	<i>80% of those on probation supervision to be seen within 5 working days of the order being made.</i>
KPI 3:	Target:	<i>Breach action to be taken in 90% of cases on or before a third unacceptable failure.</i>
KPI 7:	Target:	<i>Annual unit cost per probation order to be below £1,790.</i>

- 2.3 The following 4 KPIs for probation order work were set for 2000/2001:

KPI 1:	Target:	<i>As for 1999/2000.</i>
KPI 2:	Target:	<i>90% of those on probation supervision to have arrangements to be seen within 5 working days of the order being made.</i>
KPI 3:	Target:	<i>Breach action to be taken in 90% of cases on or before a second unacceptable failure.</i>
KPI 7:	Target:	<i>Annual unit cost per probation order to be below £1,875.</i>

- 2.4 For 2001/2002 the following SDAs and SPMs were established:

Target	<i>Breach action to be taken in 90% of cases on or before a second unacceptable failure.</i>
Target	<i>To lower the actual reconviction rates for all types of order and achieve rates lower than predicted.</i>
Measure	<i>Compliance with the requirements of national standards on:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>making arrangements for contact throughout the order</i> • <i>timeliness of supervision plans and reviews</i> • <i>timeliness of plans to manage risks posed by offenders assessed as high risk of harm.</i>
Measure	<i>Differences between proportions of offenders in employment, education or training and settled accommodation at start and finish of order.</i>
Measure	<i>Unit cost of probation order.</i>

For 2002/2003 targets have been set for completion of accredited programmes and of basic skills awards.

Probation orders – statistics and KPI performance

- 3.5 Table 18 shows the number of new probation orders across the region in 1996, 1997, 1998 and 1999, and performance on KPIs, based on information provided by areas to the Home Office.

TABLE 18 PROBATION ORDER COMMENCEMENTS BY YEAR, COSTS (KPI4 1997/1998), RATES FOR COMPLETION WITHOUT EARLY TERMINATION FOR BREACH OR FURTHER OFFENCE (KPI2 1997/1998), PROPORTION OF CASES WHERE FIRST CONTACT WAS WITHIN THE NATIONAL STANDARD TIME LIMITS (KPI2 1998/1999), PROPORTION OF RELEVANT CASES WHERE BREACH ACTION WAS TAKEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH NATIONAL STANDARDS REQUIREMENTS (KPI3 1998/1999), AND RECONVICTION RATES (KPI1).								
	BERK-SHIRE	HAMP-SHIRE	KENT	OXF & BUCKS	SURREY	EAST SUSSEX	WEST SUSSEX	ENGLAND & WALES
COMMENCEMENTS:								
1996	578	1,271	1,161	787	551	513	370	49,105
1997	533	1,409	1,132	777	515	556	426	51,509
1998	490	1,555	1,202	852	553	603	469	55,514
1999	506	1,640	1,201	876	519	594	474	55,570
MOST RECENT COST/ORDER (1)	2,580	1,660	2,035	2,270	2,590	2,035	1,980	1,970
COMPLETION RATES 1997	86%	90%	82%	86%	85%	84%	86%	85%
OFFENDER CONTACT WAS WITHIN 5 WORKING DAYS:								
1996/1999 (JULY-DECEMBER)	78%	N/A	90%	87%	68%	79%	N/A	81%
1999/2000	N/A	N/A	88%	85%	85%	79%	82%	81%
RELEVANT CASES IN WHICH BREACH ACTION WAS TAKEN ON OR BEFORE A THIRD UNACCEPTABLE FAILURE:								
1998/1999 (JULY-DECEMBER)	21% (4 of 19)	N/A	72% (18 of 25)	65% (13 of 20)	86% (6 of 7)	50% (5 of 10)	N/A	47% (P)
1999/2000	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
2-YEAR RECONVICTION RATE: ACTUAL MINUS PREDICTED RATE [***INDICATES OUTSIDE PREDICTED RANGE.] (2)								
	-5%	+0%	+3%	+0%	+1%	+2%	-3%	-1%

(1) Annual unit cost figures for 1999/2000, based on alternative methodology described in paragraph 1.11.
 (2) Data based on commencements in the first quarter of 1997.
 (P) Provisional.
 ** Breakdown of results not readily available for probation orders separately.

Commentary

- ▶ Apart from Berkshire and Surrey, all areas had seen an increase in the number of probation orders made between 1996 and 1999. The increases were the greatest in Hampshire and West Sussex.
- ▶ The unit costs of probation orders was the lowest in Hampshire, the only area below the national average and the Home Office KPI target.
- ▶ For the 5 areas where information was available for 1999/2000, they all achieved the target that at least 80% of offenders were seen within 5 days of the probation order being made (East Sussex at 79% is included), a statistic broadly supported by the inspection findings.
- ▶ The 5 areas, where data was available, showed significant variation in relation to taking appropriate breach action. Surrey at 86% showed the strongest performance and Berkshire the poorest (21%). This data was not supported by the inspection findings which showed

performance in Hampshire to be very much worse (12%) and that of Sussex to be the best (6%). The national standard was made more rigorous in April 2000.

- As shown, area figures concerning compliance with the national standard need to be set against the inspection findings, reported more fully in the second half of this chapter. The inspection findings are the more reliable.
- Reconviction rates indicated that areas were having insufficient impact on reoffending, although reconviction rates need to be seen in the context of police clear-up rates and other variables.

Minority ethnic composition of probation order commencements

Table 19 shows the minority ethnic composition of probation order commencements, along with the percentage in minority ethnic groups in the general population aged 16-44 in the 1991 Census.

	HAMPSHIRE	KENT	SURREY	SUSSEX	THAMES
- BLACK	1.7	1.1	3.0	2.0	4.6
- SOUTH ASIAN*	0.0	0.7	0.3	0.2	3.6
- OTHER MINORITY ETHNIC GROUPS	0.7	0.1	0.3	1.6	1.3
TOTAL	2.4	1.9	3.6	3.8	9.4
PERCENTAGE IN MINORITY ETHNIC GROUPS AGED 18 TO 54 IN THE LABOUR FORCE SURVEY 1996/1998.	2	2	4	3	6

* Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi.

Commentary

- The proportion of offenders from minority ethnic groups being placed on probation was broadly similar to their proportion in the local population, though somewhat higher in Thames Valley. However, this data needs to be treated with some caution because census data was old and percentages applied to small numbers can be misleading.

Probation orders with additional requirements

Table 20 shows the number of orders with additional requirements (S1A2 and S1A3, i.e. to participate in certain specified activities or to attend a probation centre) commencing in each of the last 3 years, and the proportion of probation orders with such requirements. Information on completion rates (without early termination for breach or further offence) is thought not to be sufficiently reliable to use here.

**TABLE 20:
PROBATION ORDER COMMENCEMENTS WITH ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS (S1A2 AND S1A3)**

YEAR	HAMPSHIRE	KENT	SURREY	SUSSEX	THAMES
1996	265	282	147	173	337
1997	297	353	120	180	235
1998	327	334	115	231	181
1999	359	291	106	180	253
% OF TOTAL PROBATION ORDERS 1999	22%	24%	20%	26%	18%

Commentary

» The proportionate use of additional requirements was broadly similar, the extremes being 26% in Sussex and 18% in Thames Valley.

3.8 Table 21 shows the number of orders commencing in each of the last 3 years with a requirement of residence at an approved probation hostel.

**TABLE 21:
PROBATION ORDER COMMENCEMENTS WITH A REQUIREMENT OF RESIDENCE IN AN APPROVED PROBATION HOSTEL**

YEAR	HAMPSHIRE	KENT	SURREY	SUSSEX	THAMES
1996	7	15	9	1	41
1997	9	5	14	1	45
1998	7	4	14	0	26
1999	5	3	12	2	31
% OF TOTAL PROBATION ORDERS 1999	0.3%	0.2%	2.3%	0.2%	2.2%

Commentary

» Proportionately the use of hostels to augment community supervision varied between the areas and was much higher in Surrey and Thames Valley. Impressions from PSR assessments suggested that the value of hostel placements was often overlooked by those who wrote PSRs, perhaps related to the proximity of hostels to particular areas. These observations are not a reflection on the hostel occupancy rates.

Compliance with national standards

3.9 A sample of approximately 60 probation case files (over 80 in Sussex and Thames Valley), including the probation element of some combination orders, was examined in each area with the aid of a reading team drawn from the area concerned. The following tables 22-25 identify levels of compliance with key aspects of national standards, including the effectiveness of supervision.

TABLE 22:
PROBATION ORDERS - COMPLIANCE WITH NATIONAL STANDARDS - CONTACT

	HAMPSHIRE	KENT	SURREY	SUSSEX	THAMES	AVERAGE FROM FIRST 6 PIP REGIONAL INSPECTIONS	PERFORMANCE RANGE IN FIRST 6 PIP REGIONS
NUMBER OF CASES OF WHICH	60	60	61	84	102	N/A	N/A
- SECURITY ETHNIC	5	1	2	2	7	*	*
- FOREIGN	8	8	13	20	12	*	*
FIRST APPOINTMENT ARRANGED TO TAKE PLACE WITHIN 5 WORKING DAYS	90%	93%	90%	98%	94%	85%	70-98%
FIRST APPOINTMENT TOOK PLACE WITHIN 5 WORKING DAYS	78%	82%	77%	87%	80%	76%	63-92%
12 APPOINTMENTS ARRANGED TO TAKE PLACE IN FIRST 12 WEEKS	78%	82%	82%	76%	78%	*	*
12 APPOINTMENTS TOOK PLACE IN FIRST 12 WEEKS	43%	54%	54%	49%	50%	35%	13-75%
6 APPOINTMENTS ARRANGED TO TAKE PLACE IN SECOND 12 WEEKS	78%	68%	70%	72%	71%	*	*
6 APPOINTMENTS TOOK PLACE IN SECOND 12 WEEKS	58%	59%	63%	64%	43%	53%	28-80%
ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS IMPLEMENTED WITHIN 12 WEEKS	54%	39%	70%	78%	63%	*	*

* Information not available on same basis.

TABLE 23:
PROBATION ORDERS - COMPLIANCE WITH NATIONAL STANDARDS - ENFORCEMENT

	HAMPSHIRE	KENT	SURREY	SUSSEX	THAMES	AVERAGE FROM FIRST 6 PIP REGIONAL INSPECTIONS	PERFORMANCE RANGE IN FIRST 6 PIP REGIONS
ACTION ALWAYS TAKEN WITHIN 2 DAYS TO OBTAIN EXPLANATION FOR FAILURES TO ATTEND	51%	71%	73%	61%	51%	50%	29-80%
OFFENDER'S EXPLANATION (OR LACK) ALWAYS CLEARLY RECORDED	63%	72%	65%	65%	58%	50%	22-70%
PO'S VIEW OF ACCEPTABLE/ UNACCEPTABLE FAILURES ALWAYS CLEARLY RECORDED	65%	64%	58%	64%	57%	47%	23-70%
PO'S VIEW ABOUT ACCEPTABILITY APPROPRIATE	25 of 39 (64%)	29 of 45 (64%)	29 of 44 (66%)	45 of 61 (74%)	46 of 65 (68%)	*	*
APPROPRIATE WARNING GIVEN ON FIRST UNACCEPTABLE FAILURE (WHERE NOT BREACHED)	9 of 26 (35%)	32 of 44 (73%)	10 of 34 (29%)	21 of 38 (55%)	40 of 62 (65%)	*	*
BREACH ACTION CLEARLY TAKEN AS A RESULT OF, OR BEFORE, SECOND UNACCEPTABLE FAILURE	2 of 15 (13%)	14 of 29 (48%)	11 of 27 (41%)	18 of 27 (67%)	20 of 42 (48%)	36%	4-62%
MANAGER'S AUTHORISATION NOT TO BREACH ON SECOND FAILURE RECORDED	2 of 13 (15%)	4 of 15 (27%)	2 of 14 (14%)	7 of 9 (78%)	0 of 20 (0%)	17%	0-52%

* Information not available on same basis.

Commentary

- All the areas performed better than the average from previous inspections in the proportion of offenders who were seen within 5 days of the order being made. However, levels of

contact during the first 3 months of supervision fell well below those required by the national standard in each area.

- ▶ Staff in Surrey and Kent were the most prompt in dealing with any failures by offenders to attend their appointments. Staff in Kent most often clearly recorded the offender's reasons for any absences and most often followed this with a warning, too rarely done in Hampshire and Surrey.
- ▶ Analysing the data on contact and enforcement by ethnicity and gender did not reveal differences. As the HMIP database grows, and samples get larger, trends may emerge.
- ▶ All areas had considerable scope to improve their performance in relation to ensuring that appropriate enforcement took place, most especially Hampshire and Surrey. In at least 25% of cases the officer's decision to define an absence as acceptable did not appear to be appropriate. Breach action was more often appropriately undertaken in Sussex, especially if linked to the frequency of manager authorisation not to breach following offender failures to attend. In this sample manager authorisation never took place in Thames Valley, where there was also the highest level of offender failures to attend. Staff generally needed to achieve better offender compliance.

**TABLE 24:
PROBATION ORDERS - COMPLIANCE WITH NATIONAL STANDARDS - ASSESSMENT AND SUPERVISION PLANNING**

	HAMPSHIRE	KENT	SURREY	SUSSEX	THAMES	AVERAGE FROM FIRST 6 PIP REGIONAL INSPECTIONS	PERFORMANCE RANGE IN FIRST 6 PIP REGIONS
SUPERVISION PLAN PREPARED	98%	92%	100%	98%	90%	93%	82-100%
PROPORTION OF ASSESSMENTS AND PLANS WHICH MET ALL THE CONTENT REQUIREMENTS OF THE NATIONAL STANDARD	22%	40%	21%	28%	27%	*	*
PROPORTION OF PLANS WITH CLEAR TARGETS FOR PROGRESS	44%	60%	26%	64%	40%	*	*
RISK ASSESSMENT OF HARM TO VICTIM OR PUBLIC	18%	78%	43%	20%	75%	*	*
4-MONTHLY REVIEW OF SUPERVISION PLAN	75%	70%	77%	71%	60%	57%	29-88%

* Information not available on same basis.

**TABLE 25:
PROBATION ORDERS - EFFECTIVENESS OF SUPERVISION**

	HAMPSHIRE	KENT	SURREY	SUSSEX	THAMES	AVERAGE FROM FIRST 6 PIP REGIONAL INSPECTIONS	PERFORMANCE RANGE IN FIRST 6 PIP REGIONS
EXTENT TO WHICH OFFENDING BEHAVIOUR APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN CHALLENGED: <u>ALL OFFENDERS</u>							
"CLEARLY SUFFICIENT"	16%	47%	45%	23%	34%	38%	7-69%
"LIMITED BUT SUFFICIENT IN CIRCUMSTANCES"	41%	33%	20%	39%	21%	34%	19-56%
<u>MINORITY ETHNIC OFFENDERS</u>							
"CLEARLY SUFFICIENT"	1 of 5 (20%)	1 of 1 (100%)	1 of 2 (50%)	0 of 2 (0%)	1 of 6 (17%)	*	*
"LIMITED BUT SUFFICIENT IN CIRCUMSTANCES"	3 of 5 (60%)	0 of 1 (0%)	0 of 2 (0%)	2 of 2 (100%)	1 of 6 (17%)	*	*

EXTENT TO WHICH OFFENCE RELATED PROBLEMS APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN ADDRESSED:							
ALL OFFENDERS							
"CLEARLY SUFFICIENT"	39%	51%	45%	46%	52%	47%	12-75%
"LIMITED BUT SUFFICIENT IN CIRCUMSTANCES"	45%	30%	29%	45%	19%	33%	14-57%
MINORITY ETHNIC OFFENDERS							
"CLEARLY SUFFICIENT"	3 of 5 (60%)	1 of 1 (100%)	2 of 2 (100%)	1 of 2 (50%)	1 of 7 (14%)	*	*
"LIMITED BUT SUFFICIENT IN CIRCUMSTANCES"	1 of 5 (20%)	0 of 1 (0%)	0 of 2 (0%)	1 of 2 (50%)	2 of 7 (28%)	*	*
EXTENT TO WHICH THE OFFENDER WAS MADE AWARE OF EFFECT ON VICTIM AND OTHERS:							
ALL OFFENDERS							
"CLEARLY SUFFICIENT"	19%	23%	31%	18%	25%	32%	3-50%
"LIMITED BUT SUFFICIENT IN CIRCUMSTANCES"	10%	40%	17%	32%	20%	32%	19-55%
MINORITY ETHNIC OFFENDERS							
"CLEARLY SUFFICIENT"	N/A	N/A	1 of 1 (100%)	0 of 2 (0%)	0 of 6 (0%)	*	*
"LIMITED BUT SUFFICIENT IN CIRCUMSTANCES"	N/A	N/A	0 of 1 (0%)	1 of 2 (50%)	3 of 6 (50%)	*	*
* Information not available on same basis.							

Commentary

- Supervision plans were prepared either in all or most cases, but in all areas there needed to be much better coverage of the key issues. Plans in Kent were a little better, not least because they more often set out clearer targets, coupled with more frequent attention to the risk of harm to the public presented by the offender.
- Supervision plan reviews were generally completed in over 70% of cases.
- From the records, the degree to which offending behaviour was challenged needed to be more evident, although this was at least sufficient in 80% of cases in Kent compared to a low 55 and 57% in Thames Valley and Hampshire. Offence related problems were addressed in a higher proportion of cases in each area. There was generally less evidence that offenders were being made aware of the impact of their offending on others, performance again being better in Kent (63%) compared with a poor 29% in Hampshire.
- In Thames Valley too many of the 6 minority ethnic offenders were not worked with sufficiently effectively in any of the categories of work assessed.

Observation of practice

- 3.10 A number of interviews with offenders on probation and combination orders were observed directly in order to assess further the quality and potential impact of supervision. The results are shown in tables 26-29. Care has to be taken with interpreting the percentage figures as numbers are small hence the actual numbers are also included in the tables.

TABLE 26:
OBSERVATION OF PRACTICE: PROBATION AND COMBINATION ORDERS: ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING

	HAMPSHIRE	KENT	SURREY	SUSSEX	THAMES
NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS WHICH TOOK PLACE, OF WHICH:	77	50	28	50	44
- SUPERVISOR WAS PSO	16 of 77	14 of 50	12 of 28	2 of 50	12 of 44
- MINORITY ETHNIC OFFENDER	3 of 72	1 of 48	0 of 27	2 of 49	3 of 40
- FEMALE OFFENDER	16 of 77	9 of 47	2 of 28	9 of 49	7 of 44
SUPERVISION PLAN THAT ADDRESSED ADEQUATELY THE RISK FACTORS AND OFFENDERS' CRIMINOGENIC NEEDS	43 of 68 (63%)	32 of 37 (86%)	10 of 27 (37%)	37 of 42 (88%)	23 of 37 (62%)
SUPERVISION PLAN SET SMART OBJECTIVES	8 of 69 (12%)	18 of 37 (49%)	0 of 28 (0%)	20 of 41 (49%)	4 of 40 (10%)
SUPERVISOR DEFINITELY CLEAR ABOUT WHAT SHE/HE WANTED TO GET OUT OF THE SESSION	56 of 74 (76%)	41 of 45 (91%)	12 of 23 (52%)	38 of 45 (84%)	31 of 40 (78%)

TABLE 27:
OBSERVATION OF PRACTICE: PROBATION AND COMBINATION ORDERS: CONTENT OF INTERVIEW

	HAMPSHIRE	KENT	SURREY	SUSSEX	THAMES
NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS WHICH TOOK PLACE	77	50	28	50	44
WHERE ENFORCEMENT ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED ON DAY OF INTERVIEW,* HANDLED WELL	11 of 20 (55%)	12 of 13 (92%)	6 of 10 (60%)	5 of 10 (50%)	6 of 10 (60%)
WHERE CURRENT PUBLIC PROTECTION ISSUES INVOLVED, INTERVIEW LIKELY TO CONTRIBUTE TO REDUCTION IN RISK:					
- VERY WELL	6 of 14 (43%)	6 of 16 (38%)	3 of 17 (18%)	1 of 8 (12%)	3 of 7 (43%)
- WELL ENOUGH	6 of 14 (43%)	9 of 16 (56%)	11 of 17 (65%)	7 of 8 (88%)	4 of 7 (57%)
OFFENDING RELATED FACTORS DEALT WITH IN WAY THAT WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO REDUCTION IN REOFFENDING:*					
- ALL OFFENDERS					
VERY WELL	12 of 72 (17%)	29 of 47 (62%)	6 of 26 (23%)	14 of 49 (29%)	10 of 43 (23%)
WELL ENOUGH	50 of 72 (69%)	16 of 47 (34%)	14 of 26 (54%)	21 of 49 (43%)	31 of 43 (72%)
- MINORITY ETHNIC OFFENDERS					
VERY WELL	0 of 2 (0%)	1 of 1 (100%)	N/A	1 of 2 (50%)	2 of 3 (67%)
WELL ENOUGH	2 of 2 (100%)	0 of 1 (0%)	N/A	0 of 2 (0%)	1 of 3 (33%)
OFFENDERS' SOCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES DEALT WITH:*					
- VERY WELL	11 of 70 (16%)	23 of 44 (52%)	3 of 24 (12%)	16 of 46 (35%)	9 of 40 (22%)
- WELL ENOUGH	56 of 70 (80%)	20 of 44 (45%)	20 of 24 (83%)	23 of 46 (50%)	29 of 40 (72%)
VICTIM ISSUES DEALT WITH IN WAY THAT WOULD INCREASE OFFENDERS' AWARENESS OF IMPACT OF OFFENDING ON OTHERS:*					
- VERY WELL	3 of 39 (8%)	11 of 28 (39%)	5 of 13 (38%)	2 of 26 (8%)	0 of 17 (0%)
- WELL ENOUGH	14 of 39 (36%)	15 of 28 (54%)	3 of 13 (23%)	7 of 26 (27%)	9 of 17 (53%)
INTERVIEW SATISFACTORILY CONSISTENT WITH SUPERVISION PLAN	51 of 63 (81%)	34 of 35 (97%)	22 of 22 (100%)	34 of 42 (81%)	36 of 37 (97%)
INTERVIEW CONSISTENT WITH SUPERVISORS' ADVANCED PLANNING	71 of 77 (92%)	45 of 46 (98%)	22 of 24 (92%)	41 of 47 (87%)	39 of 41 (95%)
OVERALL QUALITY OF INTERVIEW:					
- ALL OFFENDERS					
VERY GOOD	9 of 77 (12%)	30 of 50 (60%)	5 of 28 (18%)	13 of 50 (26%)	9 of 44 (20%)
SATISFACTORY	58 of 77 (75%)	18 of 50 (36%)	20 of 28 (71%)	27 of 50 (54%)	33 of 44 (75%)
NOT SATISFACTORY	10 of 77 (13%)	2 of 50 (4%)	3 of 28 (11%)	9 of 50 (18%)	2 of 44 (4%)
VERY POOR	0 of 77 (0%)	0 of 50 (0%)	0 of 28 (0%)	1 of 50 (2%)	0 of 44 (0%)
- MINORITY ETHNIC OFFENDERS					
VERY GOOD	0 of 3 (0%)	1 of 1 (100%)	N/A	1 of 2 (50%)	0 of 3 (0%)
SATISFACTORY	3 of 3 (100%)	0 of 1 (0%)	N/A	0 of 2 (0%)	3 of 3 (100%)
NOT SATISFACTORY	0 of 3 (0%)	0 of 1 (0%)	N/A	1 of 2 (50%)	0 of 3 (0%)
VERY POOR	0 of 3 (0%)	0 of 1 (0%)	N/A	0 of 2 (0%)	0 of 3 (0%)

* This proportion is of cases where this issue was relevant/current on the day of the interview (as assessed by the inspector). These and the other proportions in the tables exclude cases where not relevant/current.

TABLE 28:
OBSERVATION OF PRACTICE: PROBATION AND COMBINATION ORDERS: CONDUCT OF INTERVIEW

	HAMPSHIRE	KENT	SURREY	SUSSEX	THAMES
NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS WHICH TOOK PLACE	77	50	28	50	44
SUPERVISOR ABLE TO REINFORCE WORK BEING DONE BY OTHERS INVOLVED IN DELIVERING SUPERVISION PLAN OBJECTIVES (WHERE RELEVANT):					
- VERY WELL	24 of 63 (38%)	29 of 40 (72%)	3 of 15 (20%)	17 of 41 (41%)	8 of 34 (24%)
- WELL ENOUGH	36 of 63 (57%)	9 of 40 (22%)	10 of 15 (67%)	19 of 41 (46%)	23 of 34 (68%)
SUPERVISOR ACTIVELY INVOLVED OFFENDER IN DISCUSSION:					
- VERY WELL	26 of 77 (34%)	33 of 50 (66%)	4 of 28 (14%)	20 of 50 (40%)	13 of 44 (30%)
- WELL ENOUGH	46 of 77 (60%)	16 of 50 (32%)	17 of 28 (61%)	25 of 50 (50%)	28 of 44 (64%)
METHODS USED BY SUPERVISORS GENERALLY APPROPRIATE TO WHAT THEY WERE TRYING TO ACHIEVE:					
- VERY WELL	16 of 75 (21%)	34 of 50 (68%)	7 of 26 (27%)	19 of 50 (38%)	10 of 44 (23%)
- WELL ENOUGH	50 of 75 (67%)	13 of 50 (26%)	14 of 26 (54%)	20 of 50 (40%)	31 of 44 (70%)
INTERVIEWER SENSITIVE TO OFFENDERS' RACE, GENDER OR OTHER POTENTIALLY DISCRIMINATORY FACTOR (WHERE RELEVANT):					
- VERY WELL	7 of 43 (16%)	12 of 21 (57%)	1 of 3 (33%)	5 of 21 (24%)	1 of 15 (7%)
- WELL ENOUGH	32 of 43 (74%)	9 of 21 (43%)	2 of 3 (67%)	16 of 21 (76%)	10 of 15 (67%)

TABLE 29:
OBSERVATION OF PRACTICE: PROBATION AND COMBINATION ORDERS: OFFENDER VIEWS

	HAMPSHIRE	KENT	SURREY	SUSSEX	THAMES
NUMBER OF OFFENDERS INTERVIEWED BY INSPECTOR/LOCAL ASSESSOR	74	48	27	45	44
OFFENDER UNDERSTOOD WHAT WAS TRYING TO BE ACHIEVED DURING THE INTERVIEW THAT DAY:					
- CLEARLY	37 of 74 (50%)	33 of 48 (69%)	18 of 27 (67%)	30 of 45 (67%)	33 of 44 (75%)
- TO SOME EXTENT	35 of 74 (47%)	13 of 48 (27%)	8 of 27 (30%)	15 of 45 (33%)	10 of 44 (23%)
WHERE PUBLIC PROTECTION ISSUES INVOLVED, OFFENDER CONSIDERED THAT WORK THAT DAY WOULD HELP REDUCE RISKS PRESENTED:					
- CLEARLY	5 of 16 (31%)	6 of 16 (38%)	8 of 16 (50%)	3 of 8 (38%)	5 of 11 (45%)
- TO SOME EXTENT	11 of 16 (69%)	7 of 16 (44%)	7 of 16 (44%)	5 of 8 (62%)	6 of 11 (55%)
OFFENDERS CONSIDERED THAT WORK THAT DAY WOULD HELP THEM STOP REOFFENDING:					
- ALL OFFENDERS					
CLEARLY	35 of 72 (49%)	30 of 48 (62%)	10 of 27 (37%)	22 of 45 (49%)	25 of 44 (57%)
TO SOME EXTENT	29 of 72 (40%)	16 of 48 (33%)	13 of 27 (48%)	22 of 45 (49%)	16 of 44 (36%)
- MINORITY ETHNIC OFFENDERS					
CLEARLY	1 of 3 (33%)	1 of 1 (100%)	N/A	1 of 2 (50%)	1 of 3 (33%)
TO SOME EXTENT	2 of 3 (67%)	0 of 1 (0%)	N/A	1 of 2 (50%)	2 of 3 (67%)
OFFENDERS CONSIDERED THAT WORK THAT DAY WOULD HELP WITH THEIR SPECIFIC NEEDS AND CIRCUMSTANCES:					
- CLEARLY	34 of 71 (48%)	33 of 47 (70%)	13 of 27 (48%)	24 of 44 (55%)	24 of 43 (56%)
- TO SOME EXTENT	29 of 71 (41%)	10 of 47 (21%)	13 of 27 (48%)	19 of 44 (43%)	16 of 43 (37%)
OFFENDERS CONSIDERED THAT THEY HAD BEEN TREATED FAIRLY DURING ORDER IN GENERAL:					
- ALL OFFENDERS	70 of 73 (96%)	47 of 47 (100%)	25 of 27 (93%)	43 of 44 (98%)	43 of 44 (98%)
- MINORITY ETHNIC OFFENDERS	2 of 2 (100%)	1 of 1 (100%)	N/A	2 of 2 (100%)	2 of 3 (67%)

Commentary

- ▶▶ These tables show a range of practice issues, but comments need to be seen in the context of a single observation within a longer period of supervision. Inspectors will increasingly seek to find evidence of practice grounded in the principles of What Works in the supervision of offenders. Key points to note are:
- little practice was observed with minority ethnic offenders
 - supervision plans were generally better than those seen during the file reading. SMART objectives were included in about a half of the Kent and Sussex plans, but only in a low proportion in the other 3 areas (0% in Surrey)
 - interviews were generally planned
 - where there were public protection issues to address, this was generally well done though less well in Surrey
 - offending behaviour was generally tackled well in Kent and Thames Valley, but less so in Surrey and Sussex. It was generally tackled well for minority ethnic offenders (though numbers were small)
 - interviews were generally well aligned with the supervision plan, best demonstrated in Surrey, Kent and Thames Valley and consistent with the supervisor's advance planning
 - although the offender's social circumstances were generally well addressed, there was considerable scope to improve the degree to which offenders were made aware of their offending on others in all the areas except for Kent
 - where issues of enforcement were relevant, these were handled well in Kent but less so in the other 4 areas
 - offenders were generally actively involved in their interviews – though less so in Surrey than in the other areas – and the methods used by supervisors were usually appropriate to what they were seeking to achieve
 - where relevant, supervisors were nearly always sensitive to the offender's race or gender except, on occasions, in Hampshire and Thames Valley
 - offenders nearly always understood what the supervisor was trying to achieve and thought that supervision would make a difference to the risks they presented. Nearly all thought that the work undertaken that day would help them. Nearly all offenders considered that they had been treated fairly, and all but one minority ethnic offender thought this.
- ▶▶ The overall quality of the observed sessions with offenders indicated that better work was being undertaken by staff than that which they recorded, especially so in Hampshire and Thames Valley. The overall quality of the observed work was particularly high in Kent and also in Thames Valley.

Sentencer satisfaction

- 3.11 Table 30 shows the proportion of magistrates and judges surveyed that were satisfied with the way in which areas supervised all community orders.

TABLE 30:
SENTENCER SATISFACTION WITH THE SUPERVISION OF COMMUNITY ORDERS

	HAMPSHIRE	KENT	SURREY	SUSSEX	THAMES
NUMBER OF RESPONSES	193	116	119	181	88
RESPONSE RATE	36%	32%	37%	35%	36%
OF THOSE SEEING SUFFICIENT WORK TO FORM A VIEW,* PROPORTION "SATISFIED" OR "VERY SATISFIED" WITH:					
- THE WAY IN WHICH COMMUNITY PENALTIES ARE SUPERVISED	82% (43%)	94% (21%)	98% (21%)	96% (20%)	95% (24%)
- THE ABILITY OF THE AREA TO SUPERVISE MORE SERIOUS OFFENDERS	66% (47%)	82% (29%)	86% (33%)	77% (38%)	84% (34%)
- THE RANGE OF PROGRAMMES THE AREA PROVIDES TO ADDRESS DIFFERENT TYPES OF OFFENDING	75% (12%)	88% (16%)	91% (3%)	85% (11%)	81% (10%)
- THE WAY THE AREA IS COMPLYING WITH NATIONAL STANDARDS	92% (46%)	94% (40%)	96% (23%)	98% (34%)	92% (27%)
- THE EXTENT TO WHICH BREACH ACTION IS TAKEN WHEN APPROPRIATE	75% (11%)	87% (7%)	91% (3%)	88% (9%)	76% (3%)
THE AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION WHEN REQUIRED ON THE OUTCOME OF COMMUNITY SENTENCES:					
- PARTICULAR OFFENDERS	44% (42%)	66% (29%)	53% (31%)	66% (42%)	51% (26%)
- IN GENERAL	49% (42%)	72% (30%)	66% (28%)	73% (35%)	57% (24%)

* i.e. proportion is of those who did see sufficient work to form a view. The proportion of total responses who stated they did not see sufficient work to form a view is shown in bracketed italics.

Commentary

- ▶▶ Quite large proportions of sentencers did not feel sufficiently well equipped to form a view about the various aspects of their area's work on which they were asked to comment, especially so in Hampshire.
- ▶▶ Sentencers were generally least confident about the area's ability to supervise more serious offenders, although confidence levels were higher in Surrey, linked possibly to higher levels of satisfaction with and knowledge of the range of programmes available.
- ▶▶ Sentencers' views about compliance with national standards did not necessarily correlate well with the findings from the inspection, although there were concerns expressed more frequently in Hampshire and Thames Valley concerning enforcement.
- ▶▶ All areas had scope to inform sentencers more fully concerning the results of offender supervision, this being better in Kent and Sussex.

FINDINGS FOR THAMES VALLEY

Home Office targets

- 3.12 Table 18 shows data on the area's performance in relation to the main KPIs for probation orders specified in the Home Office Plans for the Probation Service 1998/1999 and 1999/2000.

3.13 The following results were achieved for KPIs in 1999/2000:

- KPI 2: local monitoring showed that 83% of offenders in BPS and 71% in OBPS were seen within 5 days of the order being made, compared to the national target of 90%. For KPIs 2 and 3 BPS figures were from the 1999 ACOP enforcement audit and OBPS figures from their own monitoring. The BPS figure was for all types of community supervision. The file reading showed that in Thames Valley 88% of offenders were seen within the national standard time limit nearly meeting the KPI
- KPI 3: local monitoring showed that in 91% of cases in BPS and 83% for OBPS, where there had been a third unacceptable failure, breach action had been taken. The file reading exercise showed a less positive finding of 48% breached in line with national standards
- KPI 7: local monitoring showed that a unit cost for probation orders of £2,580 in BPS and £2,270 in OBPS were both more than the national target unit cost of £1,790.

3.14 The 2-year reconviction rate (KPI 1) for probation orders was minus 5% for BPS and 0% for OBPS, which was within the predicted range for orders made in the first quarter of 1997. This meant that the services had not met the target to reduce reoffending, although the data was based on very small numbers of offenders followed up. Overall, BPS showed improved performance and OBPS did not. The probation caseload had risen in OBPS and reduced in BPS.

Local targets and monitoring arrangements

3.15 The annual performance plans for the 2 services for 1999/2000 included a number targets that were relevant to the supervision of probation orders. These covered:

OBPS	Results	BPS	Results
90% breach in line with national standards	83%	National standards compliance: 85% will achieve first contact 80% maintain frequency of contact in first 3 months 85% breached as required	83% 59% 91%
100% of supervision plans should include specific programme proposals	N/A	At least 80% of offenders found supervision "helpful" in dealing with their offending behaviour	92%
100% of offenders screened for basic skills needs	N/A	At least 85% of terminated orders will have achieved at least 3 positive outcomes during supervision	55%
		At least 75% of cases will terminate because of satisfactory completion or good progress	83%
		The annual cost of a probation order will not exceed £1,790	£2,052

3.16 Targets for 2000/2001 included:

OBPS	Results	BPS	Results
National standards compliance 80% of first contacts in 5 days 85% enforcement of probation and combination orders	86% 82%	National standards compliance 90% will achieve first contact 80% will maintain frequency of contact during first 3 months 90% will be breached when required	86% 59% took place 82%
75% screening of offender commencements for basic skills	N/A		
30% of all probation order commencements to include 1A2 requirement	N/A	At least 85% of terminated orders will have achieved at least 3 positive outcomes during supervision	65%
100 accredited programme completions	N/A	At least 75% of cases will terminate because of satisfactory completion or for good progress	89%
Provision of relapse prevention re sex offenders in all localities	N/A	The annual cost of a probation order will not exceed £1,790	N/A
Provision of DTTOs from October 2000	N/A		
90% of sentencers satisfied overall with the work of the service	N/A		

3.17 It was difficult to compare the results for OBPS and BPS because of the major differences in strategic planning and monitoring arrangements. Whereas the BPS plan was slimmed down to objectives mainly relating to KPIs and national standards and were reported as such, the OBPS plan contained a set of process oriented tasks and some targets that were not directly related to KPIs and national standards. OBPS senior managers reported on progress against their tasks in a separate report which did not show progress against their measurable targets.

Compliance with the national standard

3.18 Tables 22-24 provide data on compliance with the national standard for the supervision of probation orders. They are based on an examination of a sample of over 102 case files, drawn equally from the 2 services. Table 22 provides details of performance in relation to national standards on contact levels. The key findings were:

- first appointments met the national standard time limit in 94% of cases, above the national average and meeting the 2000/2001 KPI. They took place in 88% of cases, a positive finding
- 78% of cases had 12 appointments arranged in the first 12 weeks of the order and 50% of cases were actually seen that many times, higher than the average so far. Contact after the first quarter followed a similar pattern
- there were considerable variations between the 2 services, with BPS showing significantly better performance, e.g. 91% of cases had 12 appointments arranged in the first 12 weeks compared to 61% of cases in OBPS.

3.19 Table 23 provides details of performance in relation to enforcement. The key findings were:

- 51% of failures to attend were followed up within in 2 days, not a good result

- the offender's explanation was clearly recorded in 58% of cases and the officer's opinion of acceptability in 57% of cases
- on the first unacceptable absence appropriate warnings were given in 65% of cases
- breach action was taken as a result of the second unacceptable absence in 48% of cases and in 20 cases, where a decision had been taken not to breach, the decision had not been authorised by a manager
- clearly there was a lot of room for improvement but again in most categories the BPS performance was better, e.g. warnings were given in 43% of cases in OBPS compared to 81% of cases in BPS. On breach action both services' performance was comparable.

3.20 Table 24 provides details of performance in relation to supervision planning. The key findings were:

- supervision plans were prepared in 96% of cases but only met the national standard on content in 27% of cases
- 46% of the plans had clear targets for progress
- a risk assessment of harm to the victim or to the public was done in 75% of cases
- 4-monthly reviews were completed in 66% of cases
- there was less difference between the 2 services on supervision planning, with OBPS doing better (35%) on the content of plans than BPS (21%). There was need for improvement in most categories in both services
- a more detailed analysis showed that the 2 services had different strengths and weaknesses in supervision planning, e.g. BPS was stronger on the use of programmes and partnerships in plans, whereas OBPS was stronger on the causes and patterns of offending and how the likelihood of offending was to be reduced
- the extent to which the plan was followed through tended to be stronger in BPS than in OBPS. Where there were strengths in planning these were more likely to be followed through in the work done with the offender.

Effective practice

3.21 Both services had developed What Works strategies focusing on the delivery of accredited programmes and the supporting framework for delivering effective interventions with offenders. They had also begun to plan for the harmonisation of the strategies. The amalgamation implementation plan covered the alignment of the plans for accredited programmes, case management, training and offender assessment. A provisional service delivery plan had been presented to the TMSG and managers in both services. This covered all aspects of service delivery and addressed specifically the resource that would be needed to deliver the What Works strategy e.g. an increase in staffing in order to meet the requirement to deliver 300 programme completions. There was also a spreadsheet setting out the area's calculations for resourcing case management. Work still needed to be done on the line management structures needed.

Offender assessment

- 3.22 Both services had designed their own assessment tools. BPS, in response to the need to improve their assessment and management of cases, had designed an integrated assessment and case management framework. This succinct document combined an initial risk of reoffending and risk of harm assessment with a supervision planning and review tool. It provided a highly structured tool for practitioners. This had some advantages in that assessments tended to be more consistent, focused and timely but it also had disadvantages because of its brevity, e.g. a significant number of offenders would have found it very difficult to understand. It relied heavily on the presence of a good quality PSR, which was not always the case.
- 3.23 OBPS had developed a more traditional framework and had recognised that improvements needed to be made but was rightly awaiting, as was BPS, the introduction of OASys. Assessments relied much more on the skills and competence of the practitioner. If implemented well OASys should address the shortcomings of existing assessment practices.

Case management

- 3.24 There were differences between the 2 services on the definition and application of case management. OBPS had made a distinction between youth and young adult offenders and so each locality had teams focusing on both age groups. In addition there was some specialisation in resettlement work. There did not appear to be a strong identity for the case manager role, which was described by managers as "a rudimentary system". There had been a stronger focus on the delivery of programmes. Case managers were involved in the delivery of some programmes as a second tutor.
- 3.25 In BPS there was a stronger sense of the role of the case manager which could be partly attributed to the development of the integrated assessment and planning framework. BPS had defined case management as having 3 components: compliance, reduction of the likelihood of reoffending, and the management of risk of serious harm. There had been an early strategy paper that set out clearly the approach taken by the service. PSOs had been appointed to deal with offence-related problems and were commissioned to do specific pieces of work by case managers. CHASE workers provided advice and assistance mainly in relation to housing, ETE and substance misuse.
- 3.26 Final decisions were still to be made about the precise nature of case management in the new Thames Valley area. This may be an advantage to the area as work was being done nationally on different models of case management which the area should take advantage of. The chosen model will need to be able to cope with a large geographical spread with urban centres and large rural tracts.

Programme delivery

- 3.27 In response to Probation Circular 32/2000, which required services to submit a joint plan for the implementation of accredited programmes, OBPS and BPS had wisely taken a decision to devise a plan for the new area. A strategy paper set out the history of developments and began to identify a joint action plan. A core programme reference group had been set up to coordinate developments. At that point OBPS had already taken a decision to stop running non-accredited programmes on the understanding that they would be able to replace most of them with accredited programmes. When the national timetable slipped the service was left with some gaps in provision. BPS had continued to run some non-accredited programmes as a continuing interim measure.

- 3.28 There was a long history of programme development and delivery in both services including collaborative efforts. The Thames Valley Sex Offender Project had been a Pathfinder and had been accredited. OBPS had also been involved in the early stages of Think First and had contributed to the development of the programme nationally. Both services should be commended for their innovative work.
- 3.29 During the inspection 2 non-accredited groups were observed. The **Anti-Violence Group Work Programme** had been running in BPS since 1994. It was based on a gender related theoretical model of violence and it was co-led by 2 POs, with a third one acting as observer. The session observed followed the model as planned, was well delivered and had very positive feedback from the offenders. The group had not been evaluated and it was not possible to assess its long-term impact. The second group was the **Drink Impaired Drivers Group**. The group had been running since 1996 with about two-thirds of offenders successfully completing it. It was described as having a cognitive-behavioural base, although there were still educational components. Offenders were required to attend 8 sessions. Success was defined as completion of the group rather than a reduction in the likelihood of reoffending. The group was co-led by 2 POs and was observed by a PSO. The service acknowledged that the group would need to change to fit the new requirements for accredited programmes.

Community reintegration

- 3.30 **ETE** were well provided for in both services. The CO of BPS had a national leadership role for employment issues, had written widely on the subject, which was reflected in the priority given to ETE. Both services participated in the Thames Valley Offender Employment Forum, which was about to develop a new strategy addressing offender employment issues across the whole area. The original strategy had aimed, over a 3 year period (1997/2000) to ensure that less than 25% of offenders at the end of their period of supervision would be unemployed. In May 2000 the chair of the forum was able to report that the latest figures showed that 38% were unemployed. This represented an improvement from figures at the beginning of the period. The report highlighted the difficulty in maintaining an accurate database of employment status at the end of supervision.
- 3.31 In OBPS there was a group of ETE specialists, some employed by the service and some by Careers Guidance with whom the service had a partnership contract. In BPS there was also a group of staff providing assessment, development and placement opportunities for offenders. Case managers spoke very highly of the work done by these staff in both services and referral rates were high as a result. It was disappointing that the monitoring information available about these services did not do justice to the work being done. When the new strategy for Thames Valley is developed priority must be given to setting up a monitoring system that will track progress against specified outcomes.
- 3.32 **Basic Skills** services had been delivered through the Breakthrough Project which had been funded by the ESF, from January 1999 to June 2000. The 2 services continued to support the project after the funding period. The basic skills work had also become a national Pathfinder. A new strategy document had been developed setting out objectives and an action plan. The aim included:
- to increase screening rates from 26-28% to 75%
 - to increase referral rates after screening to 40% of those with an identified need
 - to improve mentoring retention rates to 50%.

The 2 services had been innovative and committed to developing basic skills services and continued to do this purposefully.

- 3.33 **Accommodation for offenders** had been a particular focus for OBPS. The service had taken a lead in bringing together agencies across Thames Valley with the aim of ensuring that the resettlement of offenders remained a high priority.
- 3.34 **Substance Misuse** services were developed in collaboration with other agencies under the auspices of the local drug action team. The amalgamation implementation plan was well advanced, focusing particularly on the development of services to support DTTOs. The intention was to develop a Thames Valley substance misuse strategy but managers were awaiting national guidance on alcohol misusing offenders. Work on developing a Thames Valley strategy for DTTOs had resulted in the production of a draft framework. Two DTTO managers had been appointed. There was still work to be done on developing a range of services to support the DTTOs, but this was in hand. The services were dependent, to an extent, on the cooperation of other agencies in the development of the services. Historically there appeared to be a fuller range of services in BPS than in OBPS. It did appear that case managers in BPS were more confident about accessing assessment and treatment within reasonable time limits. This was facilitated by the work of the CHASE officers. Even so officers in BPS pointed to gaps in provision such as a day treatment programme for drug users. In OBPS there was a day programme for drug and alcohol users (Libra) and a relapse prevention group, which had been forced to close because of difficulty recruiting.

Monitoring and evaluation

- 3.35 OBPS had a well-established research and evaluation unit with a history of producing research papers on many aspects of practice, e.g. one was planned on drug services. Some of this work fitted with the internal inspection programme, whereas other work fitted more with a research function e.g. evaluating reconviction data for those finishing programmes. This resource will stand the area in good stead in the further development of accredited programmes and their monitoring and evaluation. It already did some evaluation work jointly for both services.

Quality of work

- 3.36 Table 25 shows the area's performance on the effectiveness of supervision determined during the examination of case files. The following are the key points:
- only 55% of offenders had been sufficiently challenged in relation to their offending behaviour, including only 2 out of the 6 minority ethnic offenders
 - offending related problems were dealt with sufficiently in 71% of cases, an improvement but even so the poorest performance in the region. Weak performance was in evidence for the small number of minority ethnic offenders
 - offenders were made aware of the impact of their offending sufficiently in a disappointing 45% of cases, similar for minority ethnic offenders.

3.37 Tables 26-29 show the results of the observation of 44 one-to-one interviews. Overall 95% of interviews were considered either satisfactory or very good, a very positive result. The quality of interviews with minority ethnic offenders was generally comparable with the whole sample. The following were the key findings:

- 62% of supervision plans adequately addressed the risk factors and criminogenic (offending-related) needs, although only 10% contained SMART objectives
- there were 4 out of 10 cases where enforcement issues were not dealt with well, an unacceptably high proportion
- in all cases where there were public protection issues the interviews were considered likely to contribute to reduction in the risk although, as can be seen from some of the comments below, this contribution was not always as good as it should have been
- offending related factors and the offender's social circumstances were dealt with well but work on victim issues needed considerable improvement
- 92% of interviews demonstrated that the supervisor was reinforcing work done by others
- offenders were actively involved in discussion in 94% of cases and appropriate methods were used in 93% of cases
- 4 out of the 15 relevant interviews did not demonstrate sufficient sensitivity to race, gender or other potentially discriminatory factors. It was particularly disappointing to note that in only one case was this done very well
- feedback from offenders was generally very positive.

3.38 Inspectors and service assessors made positive comments about individual interviews, including the following:

- "Interview discussing revocation for good progress - very positive outcome."
- "The interview included a skilled piece of intervention."
- "Issue of confidentiality handled extremely well."
- "Excellent range of skills demonstrated."
- "PO aware of offenders avoidance techniques and challenged them well."

3.39 More critical comments included:

- "Likelihood of reoffending considered in detail at the expense of the risk of harm."
- "The practice was of a good standard but sadly the record keeping did not reflect this."
- "The PO failed to take the missed appointment seriously enough."
- "There were public protection issues and the worker missed these."
- "There were child protection issues involved in this case which were not being sufficiently addressed."

Sentencer satisfaction

- 3.40 Table 30 shows the proportion of magistrates and judges surveyed who were satisfied with the way in which the area supervised all community orders. Key findings were:
- sentencers in Thames Valley were very satisfied with the way in which community penalties were supervised (95%) and the way in which the area was complying with national standards (92%)
 - they were less satisfied with the availability of information about particular offenders (51%) and in general about the outcomes of community sentences (57%) and also the extent to which breach action was taken when appropriate (76%).

Summary and recommendations

- 3.41 In relation to the effective supervision of probation orders, the area's main strengths were:
- first appointments were prompt
 - joint planning for the delivery of accredited programmes was well advanced
 - ETE and basic skills provision
 - the culture of researching practice in OBPS
 - the quality of a number of the face-to-face contacts observed with offenders, especially on offending related problems
 - in the assessment framework BPS had a structured interim system for assessing and reviewing offenders, pending the introduction of OASys.
- 3.42 Areas for improvement or weaknesses were:
- contact levels needed improving
 - enforcement practice was variable
 - the quality of work with minority ethnic offenders needed to improve – addressed in Chapter 7
 - supervision plan timeliness and content
 - there needed to be a greater focus on offending behaviour in supervision.
- 3.43 Issues that needed attention to enhance the success of amalgamation were:
- a consistent approach to target setting, performance monitoring and reporting
 - managers should identify pockets of good practice and build on them
 - the need to ensure that adequate resources were identified to enable the successful implementation of OASys
 - the outcomes for ETE and basic skills needed to be monitored more systematically
 - developing consistent interventions for substance misusers.

3.44 It is therefore recommended that:

- ❶ *The Probation Board should ensure that national standards compliance improves for those subject to community rehabilitation orders, paying particular attention to:*
 - (a) *levels of contact;*
 - (b) *enforcement;*
 - (c) *supervision planning, content and timeliness.*

- ❷ *The Probation Board should receive, as part of regular performance monitoring, the outcomes of ETE and basic skills work with offenders.*

4. COMMUNITY SERVICE AND COMBINATION ORDERS (COMMUNITY PUNISHMENT AND COMMUNITY PUNISHMENT AND REHABILITATION ORDERS)

- 4.1 This chapter examines the supervision of offenders on CS orders and combination orders and the management of CS work.

Key performance indicators and national targets

- 4.2 The Home Office Plan for the Probation Service 1999/2000 contained 4 KPIs for CS orders, namely:

- KPI 1: Target:** *To lower the actual reconviction rates for all types of order, and achieve rates lower than those predicted.*
- KPI 2: Target:** *80% of those on CS being assessed within 5 days of the order being made and to start working off their CS hours within 10.*
- KPI 3: Target:** *Breach action to be taken on or before a third unacceptable failure in 90% of cases.*
- KPI 7: Target:** *Annual unit costs of CS order and of combination order to be lower than £1,570 and £2,920 respectively.*

- 4.3 The following 4 KPIs for CS order work were set for 2000/2001:

- KPI 1: Target:** *As for 1999/2000.*
- KPI 2: Target:** *90% of those on CS having arrangements to start working off their CS hours within 10 days of the order being made.*
- KPI 3: Target:** *Breach action to be taken on or before a second unacceptable failure in 90% of cases.*
- KPI 7: Target:** *Annual unit costs of CS order and of combination order to be below £1,600 and £2,020 respectively.*

- 4.4 For 2001/2002 the following SDAs and SPMs were established:

- Target** *Breach action to be taken in 90% of cases on or before a second unacceptable failure.*
- Target** *To lower the actual reconviction rates for all types of order and achieve rates lower than predicted.*
- Measure** *Compliance with the requirements of national standards on making arrangements for contact throughout the order.*
- Measure** *Proportions of orders where average weekly hours worked at least 5 hours.*
- Measure** *Differences between proportions of offenders in employment, education or training and settled accommodation at start and finish of order.*
- Measure** *Unit costs of CS and combination orders.*

For 2003/2004 targets have been set for completion of CS accredited programmes (subject to satisfactory schemes being accredited).

Community service orders

- 4.5 Table 31 shows the number of CS order commencements over the last 3 years, performance against the KPIs (based on information provided by areas to the Home Office), and reconviction data.

TABLE 31:
CS ORDER COMMENCEMENTS, COST, RATES FOR COMPLETION WITHOUT EARLY TERMINATION FOR BREACH OR FURTHER OFFENCE (KPI2 1997/1998), PROPORTION OF CASES WHERE FIRST WORK SESSION TOOK PLACE WITHIN THE NATIONAL STANDARD LIMITS (KPI2, 1998/1999), PROPORTION OF RELEVANT CASES WHERE BREACH ACTION WAS TAKEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH NATIONAL STANDARDS REQUIREMENTS (KPI3, 1998/1999), AND RECONVICTION RATES (KPI1)

	BERK-SHIRE	HAMP-SHIRE	KENT	OXES & BUCKS	SURREY	EAST SUSSEX	WEST SUSSEX	ENGLAND & WALES
COMMENCEMENTS:								
- 1996	558	1,510	1,432	948	579	615	457	46,501
- 1997	535	1,668	1,500	931	652	679	466	47,870
- 1998	626	1,727	1,580	1,036	626	676	446	49,470
- 1999	693	2,004	1,471	950	676	674	458	50,417
MOST RECENT COST/ORDER ⁽¹⁾	2,265	1,460	1,785	1,990	2,275	1,785	1,735	1,725
COMPLETION RATES WITHOUT EARLY TERMINATION FOR BREACH OR FURTHER OFFENCE, 1997	84%	76%	82%	83%	85%	79%	83%	78%
PROPORTION OF CASES WHERE FIRST WORK SESSION TOOK PLACE WITHIN 10 WORKING DAYS:								
- 1998/1999 (JULY-DECEMBER)	70%	N/A	85%	46%	80%	60%	N/A	71%
- 1999/2000	N/A	N/A	84%	48%	72%	60%	72%	69%
PROPORTION OF RELEVANT CASES WHERE BREACH ACTION WAS TAKEN ON OR BEFORE A THIRD UNACCEPTABLE FAILURE:								
- 1998/1999 (JULY-DECEMBER)	100% (36 of 36)	N/A	83% (24 of 29)	68% (64 of 94)	N/A	97% (30 of 31)	N/A	73%
- 1999/2000	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
2-YEAR RECONVICTION RATE: ACTUAL MINUS PREDICTED RATE [*** INDICATES OUTSIDE PREDICTED RANGE.] ⁽²⁾	-5%	+0%	+0%	-3%	-3%	-2%	-1%	-2%

(1) Annual unit cost figures for 1999/2000, based on alternative methodology described in paragraph 1.11.
 (2) Data based on commencements in first quarter of 1997.
 (3) Provisional.
 ** Breakdown of results not readily available for CS orders separately.

Commentary

- CS commencements had risen most strongly in Hampshire between 1996 and 1999.
- The average annual cost of each CS order varied between £1,460 in Hampshire and £2,275 in Surrey, with all areas except for Hampshire being above the national average.
- For the 5 areas where information was available for 1999/2000, the proportion where the first work session took place within 10 days of the order being made ranged from a low 48% in OBPS to a much better 84% in Kent, with figures broadly similar to the inspection findings.

- ▶ The proportion of relevant cases where appropriate breach action was taken in 1998/1999 ranged from 100% in Berkshire to 68% in OBPS. However, this data did not accord well with that from the inspection, which showed enforcement to be better in Hampshire and very poor in Surrey (29%) and Kent (37%). Figures concerning compliance with the national standard, made more rigorous in April 2000, need to be set against the inspection findings reported more fully in the second half of this chapter.
- ▶ Reconviction rates for all areas in the region were within the predicted range indicating that areas were having insufficient impact on reoffending, subject to the precautions that are required in relation to this variable.

Minority ethnic composition of community service commences

- 46 The following table shows the minority ethnic composition of CS commences, along with the percentage in minority ethnic groups in the general population aged 16-44 in the 1991 Census.

TABLE 32: PERCENTAGE MINORITY ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF CS ORDER COMMENCEMENTS, 12 MONTHS ENDING 31 MARCH 1999					
	HAMPSHIRE	KENT	SURREY	SUSSEX	THAMES
- BLACK	2.2	1.1	3.3	1.7	5.1
- SOUTH ASIAN *	0.2	0.6	1.0	0.6	6.7
- OTHER MINORITY ETHNIC GROUPS	0.7	0.6	1.7	1.6	1.9
TOTAL MINORITY ETHNIC GROUPS	3.1	2.3	6.0	4.3	13.7
PERCENTAGE IN MINORITY ETHNIC GROUPS AGED 18 TO 54 IN THE LABOUR FORCE SURVEY 1996-1998.	2	2	4	3	6

* Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi.

Commentary

- ▶ The proportion of offenders from minority ethnic groups being placed on CS orders was higher than their proportion in the local population in all the areas, and especially so in Thames Valley. However, this data needs to be treated with some caution because census data was old and percentages applied to small numbers can be misleading.

Compliance with national standards

- 47 A sample of approximately 60 CS case files (over 80 in the amalgamating services), including the CS element of some combination orders, was examined in each area with the aid of a reading team drawn from each area. Table 33 highlights the level of compliance with key aspects of national standards.

TABLE 33:
CS ORDERS - COMPLIANCE WITH NATIONAL STANDARDS

STANDARD	HAMPSHIRE	KENT	SURREY	SUSSEX	THAMES	AVERAGE FROM FIRST 6 PIP REGIONAL INSPECTIONS	PERFORMANCE RANGE IN FIRST 6 PIP REGIONS
NUMBER OF CASES OF WHICH	64	60	62	87	86	N/A	N/A
- MINORITY ETHNIC	0	2	3	3	16	*	*
- FEMALE	9	8	7	15	7	*	*
WRITTEN ASSESSMENT PREPARED	95%	80%	84%	100%	92%	*	*
PROPORTION OF ASSESSMENTS FULLY MEETING THE NATIONAL STANDARD ON CONTENT	0%	27%	2%	5%	4%	*	*
APPOINTMENT FOR ASSESSMENT ARRANGED TO TAKE PLACE WITHIN 5 WORKING DAYS OF ORDER	84%	85%	92%	92%	91%	*	*
APPOINTMENT FOR ASSESSMENT TOOK PLACE WITHIN 5 WORKING DAYS OF ORDER	67%	80%	77%	82%	79%	78%	51-100%
FIRST WORK SESSION ARRANGED TO TAKE PLACE IN 10 WORKING DAYS	69%	80%	81%	79%	59%	74%	31-95%
FIRST WORK SESSION TOOK PLACE IN 10 WORKING DAYS	47%	65%	77%	64%	43%	60%	24-86%
OFFENDER OFFERED MINIMUM OF 5 HOURS WORK PER WEEK	44%	47%	61%	79%	67%		
WORK RATE MINIMUM OF 5 HOURS A WEEK	36%	46%	63%	59%	52%	45%	16-77%
WHERE APPARENT FAILURES, ACTION ALWAYS TAKEN WITHIN 2 DAYS TO OBTAIN EXPLANATION	33%	57%	74%	70%	45%	62%	27-85%
OFFENDER'S EXPLANATION (OR LACK) ALWAYS RECORDED	59%	54%	73%	71%	48%	50%	0-100%
PO'S VIEW OF ACCEPTABLE/ UNACCEPTABLE FAILURES ALWAYS CLEARLY RECORDED	65%	50%	76%	66%	49%	60%	16-98%
APPROPRIATE WARNING GIVEN ON FIRST UNACCEPTABLE FAILURE (WHERE NOT BREACHED)							
BREACH ACTION CLEARLY TAKEN AS A RESULT OF, OR BEFORE, SECOND UNACCEPTABLE FAILURE	28 of 39 (72%)	10 of 27 (37%)	6 of 21 (29%)	22 of 32 (69%)	28 of 45 (62%)	47%	5-80%
MANAGER'S AUTHORISATION NOT TO BREACH ON SECOND FAILURE RECORDED	0 of 11 (0%)	1 of 17 (6%)	1 of 14 (7%)	3 of 10 (30%)	3 of 20 (15%)	9%	0-50%

* Information not available on same basis.

Commentary

- ▶ CS assessments, although generally available (less so in Kent) were unacceptably poor in each of the areas (although a little better in Kent). Sussex staff were able to complete their assessments within 5 days in 82% of cases, compared to a lower 67% in Hampshire. All areas needed to improve the arrangements for the first work session to take place within 10 days of the order being made, this being especially low in Thames Valley at 59%.
- ▶ Surrey got offenders to start work within 10 days as expected in 77% of cases, not a good result but the best in the region. Performance was much poorer in Hampshire and Thames Valley.
- ▶ Work rates by offenders were best in Surrey, especially when compared to Hampshire.

- » Breach action was better in Hampshire and Sussex and very poor in Surrey, although in Surrey staff were prompter in following up failed appointments. However, there was scope for all areas to improve considerably their enforcement action and the associated processes (e.g. speed to ascertain the reason for the failure to attend). There was little evidence that managers were authorising staff not to take breach action when required, although this was a little better in Sussex.
- » Over the 5 areas as a whole when assessing the number of offenders where there were failures to attend, better rates of compliance were achieved in Surrey. As was the case for probation orders, staff generally needed to achieve better offender compliance.

Views of beneficiaries

- 4.8 There was a survey of CS beneficiaries in each area, the findings of which are shown in table 34.

TABLE 34: BENEFICIARIES' SATISFACTION WITH CS AND VIEWS AS TO WHETHER CS PLACEMENT WAS DEMANDING ON THE OFFENDER					
	HAMPSHIRE	KENT	SURREY	SUSSEX	THAMES
NUMBER OF RESPONSES	135	75	70	41	187
PROPORTION SATISFIED WITH:					
- QUALITY OF FINISHED WORK	96%	97%	96%	95%	96%
- WAY AREA SUPERVISED WORK	94%	93%	93%	95%	95%
- BEHAVIOUR OF OFFENDERS	94%	92%	97%	90%	93%
NUMBER OF RESPONSES	134	75	70	40	186
PROPORTION CONSIDERING THAT PLACEMENT WAS:					
- DEFINITELY DEMANDING	55%	56%	57%	32%	62%
- PROBABLY DEMANDING	36%	37%	34%	48%	28%
- NOT REALLY DEMANDING	6%	5%	7%	18%	9%
- NOT AT ALL DEMANDING	3%	1%	1%	2%	1%

Commentary

- » It was good that beneficiaries were so pleased with the quality of the finished work of CS in each of the areas and that generally they considered the work to be demanding, although less so in Sussex.

Combination orders

- 4.9 Table 35 shows the number of combination order commencements between 1996 and 1999, the unit cost data, and completion rates without early termination for breach or a further offence, together with reconviction rates.

TABLE 35:
COMBINATION ORDER COMMENCEMENTS, UNIT COSTS, COMPLETION RATES WITHOUT EARLY TERMINATION FOR BREACH OR FURTHER OFFENCE, AND RECONVICTION RATES

YEAR	BERK-SHIRE	HAMP-SHIRE	KENT	OXF & BUCKS	SURREY	EAST SUSSEX	WEST SUSSEX
COMMENCEMENTS:							
- 1996	273	440	564	407	233	113	139
- 1997	330	479	594	449	233	123	167
- 1998	309	513	619	461	266	169	151
- 1999	309	528	580	387	258	165	170
MOST RECENT COST/ORDER ⁽¹⁾	3,705	2,390	2,920	3,260	3,725	2,925	2,845
COMPLETION RATES WITHOUT EARLY TERMINATION FOR BREACH OR FURTHER OFFENCE, 1997	81%	83%	75%	78%	79%	77%	70%
2-YEAR RECONVICTION RATES: ACTUAL MINUS PREDICTED RATE	-2%	-4%	-1%	-6%	+0%	+3%	-4%
(* INDICATES OUTSIDE PREDICTED RANGE) ⁽²⁾							

(1) Annual unit cost figures for 1999/2000, based on alternative methodology described in paragraph 1.11.

(2) Data based on commencements in first quarter of 1997.

Commentary

- ▶ The number of combination order commencements had generally risen over 1996 to 1999 as a whole (except OBPS), most noticeably in East Sussex.
- ▶ Completion was generally high.
- ▶ Reconviction rates were within the predicted range, indicating that areas were not having sufficient impact on reoffending, subject to the precautions in relation to this variable. However, the samples upon which this analysis was based were especially small in relation to combination orders.

Minority ethnic composition of combination order commencements

4.10 The following table shows the minority ethnic composition of combination order commencements, along with the percentage in minority ethnic groups in the general population aged 16-44 in the 1991 Census.

TABLE 36:
PERCENTAGE MINORITY ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF COMBINATION ORDER COMMENCEMENTS, 12 MONTHS ENDING 31 MARCH 1998

	HAMPSHIRE	KENT	SURREY	SUSSEX	THAMES
PERCENTAGE OF COMMENCEMENTS IN EACH MAIN MINORITY ETHNIC GROUP:					
- BLACK	2.1	1.2	2.5	0.4	3.4
- SOUTH ASIAN *	0.0	0.8	0.5	0.0	3.8
- OTHER MINORITY ETHNIC GROUPS	0.9	0.3	0.5	0.7	2.0
TOTAL MINORITY ETHNIC GROUPS	3.0	2.3	3.5	1.1	9.2
PERCENTAGE IN MINORITY ETHNIC GROUPS AGED 18 TO 54 IN THE LABOUR FORCE SURVEY 1996-1998.	2	2	4	3	6

* Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi.

Commentary

- ▶ The proportion of offenders from minority ethnic groups being placed on combination orders was higher than their proportion in the local population in Hampshire, Kent (marginal) and Thames Valley. However, this data needs to be treated with some caution because census data was old and percentages applied to small numbers can be misleading.

Compliance with national standards: Combination orders: Integration of probation and community service elements

- 4.11 A sample of combination order case files was examined in each area. Table 37 highlights the results and shows the level of compliance with the elements of national standards for combination orders relating to the integration of the 2 elements.

TABLE 37 COMBINATION ORDERS - COMPLIANCE WITH NATIONAL STANDARDS							
	HAMPSHIRE	KENT	SURREY	SUSSEX	THAMES	AVERAGE FROM FIRST 6 PIP REGIONAL INSPECTIONS	PERFORMANCE RANGE IN FIRST 6 PIP REGIONS
NUMBER OF CASES OF WHICH	22	24	29	35	46	N/A	N/A
- MINORITY ETHNIC	0	0	0	2	6	*	*
- FEMALE	1	2	5	6	2	*	*
REQUIRED NUMBER OF PROBATION AND CS APPOINTMENTS ARRANGED IN FIRST 12 WEEKS	12 of 22 (55%)	16 of 24 (67%)	19 of 29 (66%)	21 of 35 (60%)	20 of 44 (45%)	*	*
SUPERVISION PLAN "DEFINITELY" ADDRESSES ORDER AS A WHOLE	5 of 22 (23%)	6 of 24 (25%)	6 of 29 (21%)	12 of 35 (34%)	6 of 46 (13%)	30%	13-58%
SUPERVISION PLAN REVIEWS ALWAYS REFER TO PROGRESS ON BOTH PARTS OF THE ORDER	11 of 20 (55%)	7 of 11 (64%)	13 of 21 (62%)	15 of 24 (62%)	8 of 33 (24%)	42%	11-80%
JOINT MANAGEMENT OF 2 ELEMENTS SATISFACTORY OR BETTER	15 of 22 (68%)	11 of 24 (46%)	11 of 29 (39%)	22 of 35 (63%)	29 of 46 (63%)	48%	21-81%

Note: These results come from "pooling" the results for combination orders in both the probation and CS file readings.
* Information not available on same basis.

Commentary

- ▶ All areas needed to improve the arrangement for the required number of contacts for both elements of these orders.
- ▶ Supervision plans at best addressed both elements of the order in 34% of cases (Sussex). This was a very poor finding, and dealt with in only 13% of plans in Thames Valley. Supervision plans reviewed progress on both elements of the order more frequently, to over 60% of cases in 3 areas, but in only 24% of cases in Thames Valley.
- ▶ All areas had scope to improve the joint management of these orders, based both on the plans and contact records.

FINDINGS FOR THAMES VALLEY

Home Office targets

- 4.12 Tables 31 and 35 show data on performance in relation to the main KPIs for CS and combination orders as specified in the Home Office Plans for the Probation Service 1998/1999 and 1999/2000. In 1999/2000 the services' performance against the Home Office KPIs for CS and combination orders were as follows:
- KPI 2: information from the area showed that the first work session was taking place within the 10 days required by the national standard in 78% of cases in BPS and 48% in OBPS cases. The file reading completed for this inspection showed for the combined Thames Valley that 43% of cases commenced work in 10 days, however there was a discrepancy between the 2 services as OBPS only achieved 29% and BPS 56%. Overall Thames Valley performance against this national standard was low within the region
 - KPI 3: information from the area showed that in BPS 91% of relevant cases had been breached on or before a third unacceptable failure and 88% in OBPS, compared to the Home Office target of 90%. Table 33 shows that in the sample of case files examined during the inspection 62% were breached on or before a third unacceptable failure across Thames Valley, a result which was well below the Home Office target
 - KPI 7: the unit costs for this period in OBPS were £1,990 for a CS order and £3,260 for a combination order, whilst in BPS the unit cost of a CS order was £2,265 and for a combination order £3,705 compared with Home Office targets of £1,570 and £2,920 for CS and combination orders respectively.
- 4.13 The 2-year reconviction rate (KPI 1) for CS and combination orders was within the predicted range for orders made in the first quarter of 1997, and hence neither service met the target to reduce offending. However, this data is based on a small sample of offenders who were followed up.

Local targets and monitoring arrangements

- 4.14 In 1999/2000 the annual performance plans included a number of targets in addition to the KPIs that were relevant to the supervision of CS and combination orders, shown below with results where available.

OBPS	Results	BPS	Results
Risk assessment in 100% of cases	89% adults 96% under 24	National standards compliance: 80% maintain frequency of contact in first 3 months	59%
100% monitoring by race and gender	High returns	At least 50% of terminated orders will have achieved an employability outcome	51%
		At least 75% of cases will terminate because of satisfactory completion or good progress	83%
		The annual cost of a CS order will not exceed £850	£940

4.15 Targets for 2000/2001 included:

OBPS	Results	BPS	Results
National standards compliance Increase % of first contacts in 5 days (taken from PO target)	37% April-June to 61% July-Sept	National standards compliance 90% will achieve first contact 80% will maintain frequency of contact during first 3 months 90% will be breached when required	86% 59% took place 82%
85% enforcement of probation and combination orders	78%-88%		
95% of cases with an assessment of risk and dangerousness before a work session is arranged	N/A	At least 50% of terminated orders will have achieved an employability outcome	69%
75% screening of offender commencements for basic skills	Achieved	At least 75% of cases will terminate because of satisfactory completion or for good progress	89%
40 CS tasks completed following involvement with community safety partnerships	Achieved	The annual cost of a CS order will not exceed £1,570	N/A

- 4.16 In OBPS and BPS team planning was undertaken in CS and staff were aware of the main focus of these plans and the priorities. Clear CS plans were available which set out the outputs and outcomes required, the tasks to be undertaken to achieve them, by whom they were to be completed and the target dates. Changes in personnel, whilst creating lack of continuity, had been seen by both services as a positive way of bringing new energy and focus to the work.
- 4.17 A quarterly progress report to the OBPS previous committee in October 2000 covered the period July to September. It documented the activity that had taken place in relation to the target areas, which had been allocated to members of the strategic management team. However, there was little mention of CS in the report and it did not include statistical information. The service had decided not to include this because the previous committee had received information in routine performance reports. As a result the previous committee could not easily judge the impact of the management action outlined on CS. Separate statistical monitoring of national standards was also reported to the previous committee on a quarterly basis, which showed a pattern of performance in CS which was fairly static and left room for improvement. A problem with the quarterly monitoring of CS was that the returns were on terminated cases only and consequently the information was very old by the time it reached the previous committee. Also, it tended to be discounted by staff who thought the position was continuously improving without having contemporary data against which to test their beliefs.
- 4.18 Monthly monitoring provided regular feedback to CS staff in BPS covering a range of issues which included commencement in national standards, timescale, throughput, average group occupancy and the percentage of offenders achieving improved chances of gaining employment.
- 4.19 Across Thames Valley the monitoring of breach action was hampered by the lack of an IT based monitoring system reflecting problems with national rather than local IT development. In OBPS, in order to cope with the absence of an adequate IT solution, a manual system had been established involving a quarterly review of cases where there had been a second unacceptable absence. The ACO would identify relevant cases and discuss them with the senior CS officer. Assuming that an IT solution is not available to the new area, there will need to be consistent manual monitoring arrangements.

Compliance with the national standard

4.20 Table 33 shows Thames Valley performance in relation to a number of key aspects of the national standard as revealed by a sample of cases examined during the inspection. The figures related to the commencement of work and appropriate breach action have already been mentioned in the first section of this chapter on Home Office targets. Other findings showed that:

- there was an assessment prepared in 92% of cases, which was recorded in 5 working days in 79% of cases, but only 4% of the assessments fully met the content requirements of the national standard. This was unsatisfactory, although it was also a common finding in the region
- the first work session was arranged to take place in 10 working days in 59% of cases. This was the lowest figure in the region and it was also considerably beneath the average from the first 6 regional inspections. Where there was delay the area felt it was related to waiting for a proper risk assessment to be completed
- 67% of cases were offered a minimum of 5 hours work per week and 52% of all terminated cases were achieving a work rate of 5 hours per week or more. These figures were about average for the region but left room for improvement
- in only 45% of cases was non-compliance always followed up within 2 working days and the offender's explanation (or lack of one) for non-compliance always recorded in only 48% of cases
- the supervisor clearly recorded whether or not an explanation was acceptable in only 49% of cases
- 72% of relevant cases had received an appropriate warning as required by the national standard after a first or second unacceptable failure to comply. This was one of the area's better results by comparison with the other areas in the region.

4.21 Enforcement practice fell far short of the national standard. There were 45 cases which were in breach of their orders out of a sample of 86, which demonstrated a problem with compliance with orders, one that was evenly shared by both the services. Of the 45 cases, 28 had been breached and 19 had been breached within 10 working days of the failure as required by the national standard. In only 3 of the other cases had the line manager's approval not to breach been recorded. CS staff were sure enforcement practice was now better than these figures suggested, but they did not have up-to-date figures to demonstrate improvement. They had not been aware there was a problem with compliance.

4.22 Table 37 gives further information from the file reading on the integration of the 2 parts of combination orders. This showed that:

- in only 45% of cases were the required number of probation and CS appointments arranged in the first 12 weeks
- only 13% of supervision plans definitely addressed the order as a whole
- only 24% of supervision plan reviews addressed progress on both parts of the order
- in 63% of cases (29 of 46) the joint management of the order was satisfactory or better.

- 4.23 However, these results indicated that a number of aspects of the management of combination orders were less than satisfactory. The Q&E inspection of OBPS in 1998 identified this issue and recommended that action should be taken to improve liaison between supervisors to ensure all combination orders were enforced according to national standards. This recommendation had not been implemented by the time of the Q&E follow-up but the service had set up a pilot project to improve the joint management of combination orders. It was based on a shared induction by POs and CS officers but there was some doubt from CS officers as to the preparedness of POs to breach. The pilot should be closely monitored, especially in relation to breach, and on the basis of the results recommendations for practice across Thames Valley should be implemented to ensure that the supervision of combination orders meets national standards.

Organisation and nature of the work

- 4.24 The structure of the management of the CS operation was similar across Thames Valley in that one ACO in BPS and a director in OBPS managed a total of 3 SPOs who were responsible for deputy or senior CS officers who covered geographical patches. The workloads appeared to be about the same, albeit that OBPS had some part-time staff in post. Line management of CS officers was undertaken by either the deputies or senior CS officers, although there was some confusion concerning SPO and senior CS officer roles in OBPS. CS officers in turn managed sessional supervisors in each service. There was a structure for management and staff meetings and an expectation of supervision and appraisal of all staff across Thames Valley, despite the lack of a service policy in OBPS. BPS lacked a system for the supervision and appraisal of sessional supervisors, an issue that required urgent attention. In OBPS although there was an expectation that supervision and appraisal would take place there was evidence during the inspection that this did not always happen.
- 4.25 OBPS had undertaken a complete and comprehensive review of CS and the previous committee had adopted a new strategy in 1998 that was reviewed in 2000. The main features of the OBPS scheme were as follows:
- the underlying principles of the strategy were restorative justice and public protection
 - the quality and appropriateness of placements had been improved by a more systematic approach and a proportion contributed to the improvement of community safety
 - all CS offenders were screened for basic literacy
 - an emphasis on individual placements and the expansion of these to an average of 60% of the scheme also enabled the CS staff to place offenders on more suitable projects and to utilise their individual skills. One additional benefit of the move to increased use of individual placements was a saving of resources which had been used to develop employment related opportunities
 - a Pathfinder scheme was in place to enhance the development opportunities for offenders and they were referred to ETE and housing specialists
 - a post of health and safety officer had resulted in the availability of a high level of expertise available to CS staff, advice on assessments for placements and spot checks ensuring safety on projects. The arrangements regarding limiting group size may need to be reviewed

- there were some difficulties in recruiting supervisors due to the employment profile of the area
- there had been a focus on the application of What Works principles within CS and a discussion paper had been commissioned and delivered
- there was evidence of a commitment to good practice from CS staff.

4.26 The BPS scheme was characterised by the following:

- the majority of offenders attended group placements, the intended group size was up to 8 and approximately 25% were placed on individual placements
- there had been a turnover in staff which appeared to have recently stabilised, several CS officers were new to the work but seemed enthusiastic and there was evident commitment from the more established staff
- a monthly monitoring system gave CS staff good information on a number of variables but not enforcement
- risk assessment would be undertaken after the start of the placement if pre-convictions arrived late, not an acceptable health and safety practice. It did however appear to help meet the standard on the timeliness of the first work session
- use of the CHASE team, to refer offenders for accommodation, substance abuse and employment advice, was an excellent resource, as was the Breakthrough project for basic skills screening
- an up-to-date handbook covering most aspects of CS work, the systems and the regulations which should be met was available
- the Reading workshop, which renovated outdoor and indoor furniture for a number of community facilities and groups, was run to a high standard and offered a group of up to 12 offenders work each day and on 2 evenings per week
- a proportion of placements contributed to the improvement of community safety
- a paper on What Works in CS from a strategic perspective covered all the basic ground and staff had previously received training in pro-social modelling, although this needed to be revisited due to the turnover of staff.

4.27 The Thames Valley Area local implementation plan identified a series of actions to assist in the amalgamation of CS. The key features of the schemes, as set out above, highlighted some differences but many areas of similarity. However, little progress had been made with the amalgamation of CS, clearly due to a decision not to prioritise it as an area of work. For example, staffing issues were not identified under the section of the plan relating to employee terms and conditions which was an omission as this matter could not be dealt with in isolation by CS staff. In this connection there were issues to be resolved which related to the different focus in the 2 services on group vis-à-vis individual placements and the associated concentration of BPS group placements at weekends, which was not present in OBPS. This had led to the employment of more weekend supervisors in BPS and less reliance on weekend staff in OBPS. These factors resulted in different contracts and conditions of service for staff. It was also evident that there were still difficulties in recruitment of sessional supervisors due to the high level of employment in the area. The decision not to proceed with the

harmonisation of CS at an early stage was made because of the concern that the scale of the change needed would take a disproportionate amount of senior management time.

- 4.28 OBPS had managed to negotiate an Open Network College arrangement to provide opportunities for offenders to acquire basic qualifications whilst on CS and had set up the arrangement for staff to be trained as assessors in order to pilot this initiative. Whilst the basic skills assessment was available to all Thames Valley, the new OCN project would be piloted in OBPS before being rolled out to BPS. OBPS had created these opportunities by releasing resources as a result of the extension of individual placements.
- 4.29 Overall, amalgamation had not yet begun to impact on CS, which had left the staff frustrated and with a sense that CS was unimportant. In OBPS there remained differences between the previous Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire services leading to a lack of consistency, coupled with the additional differences between OBPS and BPS. A strategy to take CS forward in the amalgamation was urgently required to ensure operational consistency and performance improvement.

Quality of work

- 4.30 The inspection included visits to 5 group and 13 individual CS work placements across the whole of the county by an inspector and 3 lay inspectors. The worksites visited included a conference centre, schools, a church hall, charity shops, forest conservation, a probation workshop and the Red Cross. The visits took place at the weekend as well as during the week. Individual placements were agency supervised, while the group placements were supervised by the probation service. Apparently, due to the difficulties of predicting in advance when offenders would be working on individual placements, only 3 of the offenders were seen of the 11 that were planned to be observed in OBPS on these placements, which limited the observation of this type of work. However, it was possible to meet the direct beneficiaries on all the individual placements visited.
- 4.31 A total of 32 offenders were interviewed on group placements. The main points that emerged were:
- there was a range of innovative and stimulating projects. Contributions to the community were genuinely appreciated and should be promoted
 - lay inspectors were favourably impressed with the standards of work achieved on various placements. The level of supervision was very high, with supervisors taking a close personal interest in the offenders. There were examples where the offender gained employment out of the placement and this would have been improved by a more systematic approach to improving work skills
 - in OBPS supervisors were less satisfied with group placements than they had been previously as they tended to have more high-risk offenders which required tougher management, leaving less time for getting to know the offenders
 - whilst most placements offered work that was physically, emotionally and intellectually taxing, a few placements were not deemed to be so. This was so in some of the individual charity shops where the work was generally light

- individual placements offered the greatest opportunity for offenders to engage with the beneficiaries of their work and to appreciate the relevance of their contribution
 - a visit to a mosque showed the positive benefits to the minority ethnic community CS could make and the contribution of the community to CS
 - offenders were justifiably proud of the quality of the outdoor furniture and wooden toys made for a variety of public and charitable organisations
 - offenders were generally positive about the work they were doing and were clear about the consequences on failing to attend.
- 4.32 Supervisors commented that the practice of standing down offenders or putting too many offenders with one supervisor on one group caused difficulties for supervisors in managing the scheme. Training and supervision of supervisors was inadequate and was particularly poor with reference to dealing with race and minority ethnic issues. Supervisors did not think they had the skills to manage racist incidents or to appreciate the issues for minority ethnic offenders.

Beneficiary satisfaction

- 4.33 As part of the inspection a postal questionnaire was sent to all current CS beneficiaries. A large number responded (187), producing the results shown in table 34. These indicated high levels of satisfaction with:
- the quality of finished work (96%)
 - the way offenders were supervised by the service (95%)
 - the behaviour of offenders (93%).
- 4.34 Beneficiaries were also asked to state their views on whether they considered the work required of offenders to be demanding, in the sense of it being physically, emotionally or intellectually taxing as required by the national standard. 90% of those who responded took the view that it was either "definitely demanding" or "probably demanding", but 10% thought it was "not really demanding" or "not demanding at all".
- 4.35 A number of the beneficiaries made additional positive comments about the service they had received which included:
- "I have nothing but praise for the CS organisation I know it works very well."
 - "We find CS an invaluable addition to our staff levels. We can always do with more."
 - "I myself have been very satisfied with offenders under my supervision ... also it has been a bonus getting the work done, especially within our Sheltered Housing Scheme."
 - "Everyone has always politely and cheerfully carried out their jobs; and have been a pleasure to have in my home."
 - "I feel that all involved have done a brilliant job. The supervisors have a good manner with the workers. We have had no problems at all. Thanks to all involved."

- "The centre is home to 23 profoundly disabled clients. The work carried out by probation offenders has been greatly appreciated. Many of the offenders have returned and continue supporting our clients long after they have served their hours."

Summary and recommendations

4.36 The CS scheme had a number of positive features including:

- team planning was undertaken and staff were aware of the main focus of these plans and the priorities
- inspectors were favourably impressed with the standards of work achieved on various placements and the level of supervision was very high with supervisors taking a close personal interest in the offenders
- a new post of health and safety officer had ensured thorough and consistent attention to these issues in OBPS. This officer will be covering all of Thames Valley in future
- a high level of commitment to improving standards and outcomes for offenders
- a monthly monitoring system in BPS did provide CS staff with a wide range of information albeit not on enforcement
- an up-to-date handbook covering most aspects of CS work was available in BPS
- individual placements offered the greatest opportunity for offenders to engage with the beneficiaries of their work and to appreciate the relevance of their contribution
- a visit to a mosque in OBPS showed the positive benefits CS could make to the minority ethnic community
- OBPS had set targets for community safety projects and focused on the restorative and reparative aspects of CS
- the CS workshop Reading, which renovated outdoor and indoor furniture for a number of community facilities and groups, was run to a high standard
- a scheme was being rolled out across Thames Valley on employment and training during the course of CS orders which would improve offender employment outcomes at the end of orders
- there was a high level of beneficiary satisfaction.

4.37 Weaknesses included:

- there were no monitoring arrangements which informed staff about CS performance on breach within national standards requirements in a timely, regular and accurate manner
- poor performance in relation to key aspects of the national standard, including enforcement. Local monitoring showed a better level of performance
- national standards results on combination orders were poor

- training for sessional supervisors on anti-discriminatory practice had been cancelled or had not occurred and there was a lack of awareness of the issues among this group
- delays in receipt of pre-convictions and paperwork were a problem across Thames Valley and were related to slow commencement of orders
- the inspection did not demonstrate that CS was offering the possibility of developing work skills on the projects in the way it should have been
- offenders who had been stood down were resentful at the loss of "hours" and potential earnings. They felt it was demotivating
- the practice of standing down offenders or putting too many offenders with one supervisor on one group was unacceptable
- supervision and appraisal of supervisors needed improving and was particularly poor with reference to dealing with race and minority ethnic issues.

4.38 Issues that needed attention to enhance the success of amalgamation were:

- overall, amalgamation had not yet begun to impact on CS which was a matter that left many CS staff frustrated and with a sense that CS was unimportant
- policy and practice guidance for the scheme as a whole that addressed the shortcomings identified in this report
- a consistent approach to target setting, monitoring and reporting as part of an overall strategy for CS in Thames Valley.

4.39 It is therefore recommended that:

- ① *The Probation Board should ensure that the national standard for the supervision of offenders on community punishment is met, paying particular attention to*
 - (a) *the content of offender assessment;*
 - (b) *the time taken to start offenders into work;*
 - (c) *the average hours of work offered;*
 - (d) *compliance with work instructions and the enforcement of orders following non-compliance.*
- ② *The Probation Board should ensure that the management of community punishment and rehabilitation orders meets national standards, particularly in respect of enforcement.*
- ③ *The Probation Board should set targets for the proportion of community punishment hours worked on projects that promote community safety.*
- ④ *The Probation Board should ensure that objectives and targets in the annual plan fully reflect work done with those on community punishment. This should be supported by the inclusion in performance reports to the Board of progress against performance measures relating to this area of work.*

5. THE SUPERVISION OF OFFENDERS RELEASED FROM CUSTODY

5.1 This chapter examines the supervision of offenders released from custody.

Key performance indicators and national targets

5.2 The following KPIs were set for 1999/2000:

KPI 2:	Target	<i>90% of those released on licence should be seen within one working day of release.</i>
KPI 3a	Target	<i>Breach action to be taken on or before a third unacceptable failure in 90% of cases.</i>
KPI 3b	Target	<i>Breach action to be taken in 95% of ACR cases, following notification from the Parole Unit that an offender has been charged with an offence allegedly committed whilst subject to HDC and that recall action cannot be taken by the Parole Unit itself (excluding cases where there is no practical way for the case to be heard before expiry of the licence).</i>
KPI 7:	Target	<i>Annual cost per ACR licence to be lower than £1,935.</i>

5.3 The following KPIs were set for 2000/2001:

KPI 2:	Target	<i>90% of those released on licence should have arrangements to be seen within one working day of release.</i>
KPI 3a	Target	<i>As for KPI 3(a) 1999/2000.</i>
KPI 3b	Target	<i>As KPI 3(b) 1999/2000.</i>
KPI 7:	Target	<i>Annual cost per ACR licence to be lower than £2,010.</i>

5.4 For 2001/2002 the following SDAs and SPMs were established:

Target	<i>Breach action to be taken in 90% of cases on or before a third unacceptable failure.</i>
Target	<i>(For offenders sentenced to 4 years or more for serious sexual or violent offences): within 8 weeks of sentence victims offered contact, in 85% of cases.</i>
Measure	<i>Compliance with the requirements of national standards on:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>making arrangements for contact throughout the order</i> • <i>timeliness of supervision plans and reviews</i> • <i>timeliness of plans to manage risks posed by offenders assessed as high risk of harm.</i>
Measure	<i>Comparisons of proportions of offenders in employment, education or training and settled accommodation when custody started, on release and at finish of licence.</i>
Measure	<i>Unit cost of ACR and life licence.</i>

For 2002/2003 targets have been set for completion of accredited programmes and of basic skills awards.

Post-release licences

- 5.5 Table 38 shows the number of licence commencements by year and performance on KPIs, based on information provided by areas to the Home Office.

TABLE 38:
LICENCE COMMENCEMENTS, COSTS, RATES OF COMPLETION WITHOUT EARLY TERMINATION FOR BREACH/RECALL OR FURTHER OFFENCE (KPI3, 1997/1998), PROPORTION OF CASES WHERE FIRST CONTACT WITH OFFENDER WAS WITHIN THE NATIONAL STANDARD TIME LIMITS (KPI2, 1998/1999), PROPORTION OF RELEVANT CASES WHERE BREACH/RECALL ACTION WAS TAKEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH NATIONAL STANDARDS REQUIREMENTS (KPI3, 1998/1999)

	BERK-SHIRE	HAMP-SHIRE	KENT	OXES & BUCKS	SURREY	EAST SUSSEX	WEST SUSSEX	ENGLAND & WALES
COMMENCEMENTS:								
1996	299	836	863	543	282	510	335	39,650
1997	321	931	987	614	325	477	361	41,751
1998	298	937	1,180	587	358	512	349	44,207
1999	408	1,172	1,027	654	391	495	377	45,329
MOST RECENT COST/LICENCE ⁽¹⁾	2,740	1,760	2,160	2,410	2,750	2,160	2,100	2,090
COMPLETION RATES 1997	92%	98%	97%	98%	97%	93%	95%	96%
CASES WHERE FIRST CONTACT WITH OFFENDER WAS WITHIN ONE WORKING DAY OF RELEASE:								
- 1998/1999 (JULY-DECEMBER)	93%	N/A	94%	89%	76%	71%	N/A	85%
- 1999/2000	N/A	N/A	97%	89%	92%	89%	95%	87%
RELEVANT CASES IN WHICH BREACH/RECALL ACTION WAS TAKEN ON OR BEFORE A THIRD UNACCEPTABLE FAILURE:								
- 1998/1999 (JULY-DECEMBER)	50% (3 of 6)	N/A	71% (5 of 7)	89% (7 of 8)	No relevant cases	33% (1 of 3)	N/A	48%
- 1999/2000	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**

(1) Annual unit cost figures for 1999/2000, based on alternative methodology described in paragraph 1.11.
(P) Provisional.
** Breakdown of results not readily available for licences separately.

Commentary

- ▶▶ Except for East Sussex, the volume of work had risen in all areas between 1996 and 1999.
- ▶▶ The unit costs for post-release licence supervision were the lowest in Hampshire and above the national average for all the other areas.
- ▶▶ On available information, in 1999/2000 all the areas achieved the target of at least 90% of offenders being seen within one day of release (including OBPS and East Sussex at 89%). The inspection findings broadly supported this, but also showed that in Hampshire first contact occurred on the first day in only 75% of cases.
- ▶▶ In 1998/1999, in relation to taking appropriate breach action, performance was better in OBPS and poorest in East Sussex, although for the latter the sample of just 3 cases was very small. The inspection findings showed that enforcement generally was inadequate; better in Hampshire and poorer in Sussex. Again, figures concerning compliance with the national standard need to be set against the inspection findings reported more fully in the second half of this chapter.

Compliance with national standards

- 5.6 A sample of at least 60 throughcare case files was examined in each area (more in the amalgamating areas) with the aid of readers drawn from the area. Table 39 shows the work undertaken with and on behalf of prisoners prior to release.

TABLE 39: RESETTLEMENT CASES - QUALITY OF PRE-RELEASE WORK							
	HAMPSHIRE	KENT	SURREY	SUSSEX	THAMES	AVERAGE FROM FIRST 6 PIP REGIONAL INSPECTIONS	PERFORMANCE RANGE IN FIRST 6 PIP REGIONS
DEGREE OF CONTACT WHICH THE SUPERVISING OFFICER HAD WITH THE PRISONER:							
- APPEARED "CLEARLY" TO BE ADEQUATE GIVEN THE NEEDS AND CIRCUMSTANCES	45%	67%	30%	27%	48%	55%	33-71%
- APPEARED "MAINLY" TO BE ADEQUATE BUT COULD HAVE BEEN BETTER	22%	25%	28%	42%	20%	25%	14-44%
QUALITY OF CONTACT WHICH THE SUPERVISING OFFICER HAD WITH THE PRISONER:							
- APPEARED "CLEARLY" TO BE ADEQUATE GIVEN THE NEEDS AND CIRCUMSTANCES	42%	67%	27%	32%	44%	51%	29-68%
- APPEARED "MAINLY" TO BE ADEQUATE BUT COULD HAVE BEEN BETTER	23%	25%	30%	35%	26%	25%	15-46%

Commentary

- » Levels of contact with offenders before release were better in Kent, a county with many prisons and where the quality of contact was also better.
- 5.7 Tables 40-43 identify the level of compliance post-release with national standards in the cases examined, including the quality of supervision.

**TABLE 40:
POST-RELEASE LICENCES – COMPLIANCE WITH NATIONAL STANDARDS – CONTACT**

	HAMPSHIRE	KENT	SURREY	SUSSEX	THAMES	AVERAGE FROM FIRST 6 PIP REGIONAL INSPECTIONS	PERFORMANCE RANGE IN FIRST 6 PIP REGIONS
NUMBER OF CASES OF WHICH	61	61	61	82	84	N/A	N/A
- MINORITY ETHNIC	1	0	1	0	13	*	*
- FEMALE	4	7	2	3	3	*	*
FIRST APPOINTMENT ARRANGED TO TAKE PLACE WITHIN ONE DAY	97%	90%	95%	98%	93%	*	*
SEEN WITHIN ONE WORKING DAY OF RELEASE	75%	92%	88%	90%	88%	88%	73-97%
HOME VISIT ARRANGED TO TAKE PLACE WITHIN 10 WORKING DAYS OF RELEASE	46%	87%	51%	54%	49%	*	*
HOME VISIT TOOK PLACE WITHIN 10 WORKING DAYS OF RELEASE	43%	77%	49%	53%	46%	*	*
WEEKLY MEETINGS ARRANGED FOR FIRST 4 WEEKS	82%	90%	93%	89%	84%	84%	68-97%
AT LEAST 5 CONTACTS TOOK PLACE IN FIRST 4 WEEKS	62%	77%	73%	65%	67%	*	*
PORTNIGHTLY CONTACT ARRANGED FOR SECOND AND THIRD MONTHS	85%	86%	87%	84%	77%	75%	58-93%
PORTNIGHTLY MEETINGS TOOK PLACE FOR SECOND AND THIRD MONTHS	72%	79%	74%	71%	69%	52%	25-81%
LICENCE CONDITION(S) ALL IMPLEMENTED PROMPTLY (TO DATE)	3 of 13 (23%)	20 of 26 (77%)	9 of 19 (47%)	10 of 26 (38%)	13 of 31 (42%)	*	*

* Information not available on same basis.

**TABLE 41:
POST-RELEASE LICENCES – COMPLIANCE WITH NATIONAL STANDARDS – ENFORCEMENT**

	HAMPSHIRE	KENT	SURREY	SUSSEX	THAMES	AVERAGE FROM FIRST 6 PIP REGIONAL INSPECTIONS	PERFORMANCE RANGE IN FIRST 6 PIP REGIONS
ACTION ALWAYS TAKEN WITHIN 2 DAYS TO OBTAIN EXPLANATION FOR FAILURES TO ATTEND	59%	54%	69%	63%	62%	58%	30-80%
OFFENDER'S EXPLANATION (OR LACK) ALWAYS CLEARLY RECORDED	60%	61%	88%	73%	63%	53%	31-83%
PO'S VIEW OF ACCEPTABLE/ UNACCEPTABLE FAILURES ALWAYS CLEARLY RECORDED	58%	66%	67%	51%	55%	47%	12-80%
APPROPRIATE WARNING GIVEN ON FIRST OR SECOND UNACCEPTABLE FAILURE (WHERE NOT BREACHED/ RECALLED)	8 of 26 (31%)	17 of 28 (61%)	11 of 29 (38%)	19 of 42 (45%)	14 of 36 (39%)	*	*
BREACH/RECALL ACTION CLEARLY TAKEN AS A RESULT OF, OR BEFORE, THIRD UNACCEPTABLE FAILURE	9 of 13 (69%)	6 of 12 (50%)	6 of 12 (50%)	8 of 14 (57%)	6 of 10 (60%)	32%	0-64%
MANAGER'S AUTHORISATION NOT TO BREACH ON THIRD FAILURE RECORDED	1 of 5 (20%)	2 of 8 (25%)	1 of 6 (17%)	2 of 6 (33%)	2 of 5 (40%)	18%	0-83%
WHERE RISK OF HARM RAISED, HOME OFFICE PAROLE UNIT INFORMED IMMEDIATELY	4 of 6 (67%)	0 of 3 (3%)	3 of 8 (38%)	1 of 3 (33%)	0 of 3 (0%)	*	*

* Information not available on same basis.

Commentary

- » It was good to see that so many offenders had arrangements to be seen within one day of release, but in Hampshire there was a high attrition rate.
- » Levels of home visiting, as required, varied between 46% in Hampshire to 87% in Kent, a good performance.
- » Levels of contact during the first 3 months of supervision varied.
- » In Kent there was better attention to ensure that licence conditions were fully implemented, but generally improvements were required especially in Hampshire.
- » Prompt action to follow-up failures to attend was more evident in Surrey and less so in Kent, but in both areas there was better attention to recording officers' views about the acceptability of the absences.
- » Breach action was taken appropriately in 69% of cases in Hampshire. Managers too rarely authorised decisions not to breach, in common with findings in relation to other orders.
- » Overall, all areas needed to improve their enforcement action.
- » Over the 5 areas as a whole, in most cases there were less than 3 unacceptable failures, a better finding than with probation and CS orders.

**TABLE 42:
POST-RELEASE LICENCES - COMPLIANCE WITH NATIONAL STANDARDS - ASSESSMENT AND SUPERVISION
PLANNING**

	HAMPSHIRE	KENT	SURREY	SUSSEX	THAMES	AVERAGE FROM FIRST 6 PIP REGIONAL INSPECTIONS	PERFORMANCE RANGE IN FIRST 6 PIP REGIONS
SUPERVISION PLAN PREPARED	92%	97%	92%	95%	93%	79%	21-100%
PROPORTION OF ASSESSMENTS AND PLANS WHICH MET ALL REQUIREMENTS OF THE NATIONAL STANDARD ON CONTENT	4%	13%	20%	30%	15%	*	*
PROPORTION OF PLANS WITH CLEAR TARGETS FOR PROGRESS	39%	31%	36%	46%	42%	*	*
RISK ASSESSMENT OF HARM TO VICTIM OR PUBLIC	20%	54%	44%	59%	68%	*	*
4-MONTHLY REVIEW OF SUPERVISION PLAN	76%	84%	66%	83%	80%	49%	17-82%

* Information not available on same basis.

**TABLE 43:
POST-RELEASE LICENCES – EFFECTIVENESS OF SUPERVISION**

	HAMPSHIRE	KENT	SURREY	SUSSEX	THAMES	AVERAGE FROM FIRST 6 PIP REGIONAL INSPECTIONS	PERFORMANCE RANGE IN FIRST 6 PIP REGIONS
EXTENT TO WHICH OFFENDING BEHAVIOUR APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN CHALLENGED: - ALL OFFENDERS "CLEARLY SUFFICIENT" "LIMITED BUT SUFFICIENT IN CIRCUMSTANCES" - MINORITY ETHNIC OFFENDERS "CLEARLY SUFFICIENT" "LIMITED BUT SUFFICIENT IN CIRCUMSTANCES"	9% 30% 1 of 1 (100%) 0 of 1 (0%)	12% 30% N/A N/A	17% 25% 0 of 2 (0%) 1 of 2 (50%)	12% 42% N/A N/A	14% 26% 2 of 13 (15%) 3 of 13 (23%)	20% 31% * *	3-52% 14-57% * *
EXTENT TO WHICH OFFENCE RELATED PROBLEMS APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN ADDRESSED: - ALL OFFENDERS "CLEARLY SUFFICIENT" "LIMITED BUT SUFFICIENT IN CIRCUMSTANCES" - MINORITY ETHNIC OFFENDERS "CLEARLY SUFFICIENT" "LIMITED BUT SUFFICIENT IN CIRCUMSTANCES"	34% 34% 1 of 1 (100%) 0 of 1 (0%)	27% 55% N/A N/A	36% 38% 0 of 2 (0%) 1 of 2 (50%)	25% 53% N/A N/A	34% 35% 6 of 13 (46%) 4 of 13 (31%)	31% 38% * *	8-57% 25-57% * *
EXTENT TO WHICH THE OFFENDER MADE AWARE OF EFFECT ON VICTIMS AND OTHERS: - ALL OFFENDERS "CLEARLY SUFFICIENT" "LIMITED BUT SUFFICIENT IN CIRCUMSTANCES" - MINORITY ETHNIC OFFENDERS "CLEARLY SUFFICIENT" "LIMITED BUT SUFFICIENT IN CIRCUMSTANCES"	6% 18% 0 of 1 (0%) 0 of 1 (0%)	8% 22% N/A N/A	11% 15% 0 of 2 (0%) 1 of 2 (50%)	4% 31% N/A N/A	19% 17% 3 of 7 (43%) 0 of 7 (0%)	15% 26% * *	2-40% 11-57% * *

* Information not available on same basis.

Commentary

- Although in all areas there was generally a supervision plan, too few plans met the requirements in relation to content and all the areas needed to show significant improvement in relation to this. Target setting also needed improvement.

- ▶ The assessment of risk of harm to the public was better in Thames Valley, especially when compared with Hampshire where this was sufficient in only 20% of cases.
- ▶ Plans were reviewed in 84% of cases in Kent compared with 66% in Surrey.
- ▶ From the records, the degree to which offending behaviour was challenged was generally not sufficiently evident. In Thames Valley, where records on 13 minority ethnic offenders were examined, this was unsatisfactory in 8. Offence related problems were addressed more frequently in all the areas. None of the areas can be proud of the evidence of offenders being made aware of the impact of their offending on others. Again in Thames Valley this was not satisfactory in relation to 4 of the 7 minority ethnic offenders for whom this was relevant. All areas needed to improve the content of supervision. It is recognised that this can be difficult with offenders on very short licences but the variations in performance showed what could be achieved, especially when compared to some of the results achieved by areas in other regions.

Observation of practice

- 5.8 A number of interviews with offenders on licence were observed in order to assess further the effectiveness of supervision. Results are shown in tables 44-47. Percentages are also shown for ease of reference but they are based on small numbers.

TABLE 44:
OBSERVATION OF PRACTICE: LICENCES: ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING

	HAMPSHIRE	KENT	SURREY	SUSSEX	THAMES
NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS WHICH TOOK PLACE, OF WHICH:	17	30	9	19	18
- SUPERVISOR WAS PSO	5 of 17	12 of 30	3 of 9	0 of 19	3 of 18
- MINORITY ETHNIC OFFENDER	1 of 15	0 of 27	2 of 8	1 of 19	1 of 16
- FEMALE OFFENDER	0 of 17	2 of 29	0 of 9	1 of 19	2 of 18
SUPERVISION PLAN THAT ADDRESSED ADEQUATELY THE RISK FACTORS AND OFFENDERS' CRIMINOGENIC NEEDS	8 of 15 (53%)	24 of 25 (96%)	3 of 8 (38%)	10 of 16 (62%)	13 of 18 (72%)
SUPERVISION PLAN SET SMART OBJECTIVES	1 of 14 (7%)	9 of 25 (36%)	0 of 8 (0%)	8 of 15 (53%)	2 of 17 (12%)
SUPERVISOR DEFINITELY CLEAR ABOUT WHAT SHE/HIS WANTED TO GET OUT OF THE SESSION	15 of 17 (88%)	26 of 26 (100%)	5 of 9 (56%)	17 of 18 (94%)	13 of 16 (81%)

**TABLE 45:
OBSERVATION OF PRACTICE: LICENCES: CONTENT OF INTERVIEW**

	HAMPSHIRE	KENT	SURREY	SUSSEX	THAMES
NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS WHICH TOOK PLACE	17	30	9	19	18
WHERE ENFORCEMENT ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED ON DAY OF INTERVIEW,* HANDLED WELL	1 of 4 (25%)	10 of 10 (100%)	2 of 2 (100%)	1 of 2 (50%)	3 of 3 (100%)
WHERE CURRENT PUBLIC PROTECTION ISSUES INVOLVED, INTERVIEW LIKELY TO CONTRIBUTE TO REDUCTION IN RISK:					
- VERY WELL	1 of 6 (17%)	4 of 10 (40%)	2 of 6 (33%)	1 of 8 (12%)	5 of 9 (56%)
- WELL ENOUGH	3 of 6 (50%)	6 of 10 (60%)	4 of 6 (67%)	7 of 8 (88%)	3 of 9 (33%)
OFFENDING RELATED FACTORS DEALT WITH IN WAY THAT WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO REDUCTION IN REOFFENDING: ^a					
- ALL OFFENDERS					
VERY WELL	4 of 16 (25%)	13 of 28 (46%)	0 of 7 (0%)	2 of 18 (11%)	4 of 17 (24%)
WELL ENOUGH	9 of 16 (56%)	14 of 28 (50%)	7 of 7 (100%)	14 of 18 (78%)	9 of 17 (53%)
- MINORITY ETHNIC OFFENDERS					
VERY WELL	0 of 1 (0%)	N/A	0 of 1 (0%)	0 of 1 (0%)	1 of 1 (100%)
WELL ENOUGH	1 of 1 (100%)	N/A	1 of 1 (100%)	1 of 1 (100%)	0 of 1 (0%)
OFFENDERS' SOCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES DEALT WITH: ^a					
- VERY WELL	3 of 16 (19%)	10 of 28 (36%)	0 of 7 (0%)	4 of 18 (22%)	5 of 17 (29%)
- WELL ENOUGH	12 of 16 (75%)	18 of 28 (64%)	7 of 7 (100%)	14 of 18 (78%)	12 of 17 (71%)
VICTIM ISSUES DEALT WITH IN WAY THAT WOULD INCREASE OFFENDERS' AWARENESS OF IMPACT OF OFFENDING ON OTHERS: ^a					
- VERY WELL	1 of 9 (11%)	3 of 13 (23%)	1 of 6 (17%)	0 of 10 (0%)	1 of 8 (12%)
- WELL ENOUGH	2 of 9 (22%)	9 of 13 (69%)	4 of 6 (67%)	9 of 10 (90%)	3 of 8 (38%)
INTERVIEW SATISFACTORILY CONSISTENT WITH SUPERVISION PLAN	11 of 12 (92%)	23 of 24 (96%)	8 of 8 (100%)	11 of 12 (92%)	16 of 17 (94%)
INTERVIEW CONSISTENT WITH SUPERVISORS' ADVANCED PLANNING	15 of 16 (94%)	30 of 30 (100%)	9 of 9 (100%)	17 of 17 (100%)	16 of 16 (100%)
OVERALL QUALITY OF INTERVIEW:					
- ALL OFFENDERS					
VERY GOOD	5 of 17 (29%)	15 of 29 (52%)	1 of 10 (10%)	2 of 19 (10%)	6 of 18 (33%)
SATISFACTORY	9 of 17 (53%)	13 of 29 (45%)	8 of 10 (80%)	16 of 19 (84%)	9 of 18 (50%)
NOT SATISFACTORY	2 of 17 (12%)	1 of 29 (3%)	1 of 10 (10%)	1 of 19 (5%)	3 of 18 (17%)
VERY POOR	1 of 17 (6%)	0 of 29 (0%)	0 of 10 (0%)	0 of 19 (0%)	0 of 18 (0%)
- MINORITY ETHNIC OFFENDERS					
VERY GOOD	0 of 1 (0%)	N/A	0 of 2 (0%)	0 of 1 (0%)	1 of 1 (100%)
SATISFACTORY	1 of 1 (100%)	N/A	2 of 2 (100%)	1 of 1 (100%)	0 of 1 (0%)
NOT SATISFACTORY	0 of 1 (0%)	N/A	0 of 2 (0%)	0 of 1 (0%)	0 of 1 (0%)
VERY POOR	0 of 1 (0%)	N/A	0 of 2 (0%)	0 of 1 (0%)	0 of 1 (0%)

^a This proportion is of cases where this issue was relevant/current on the day of the interview (as assessed by the inspector). These and the other proportions in the tables exclude cases where not relevant/current.

**TABLE 46:
OBSERVATION OF PRACTICE: LICENCES: CONDUCT OF INTERVIEW**

	HAMPSHIRE	KENT	SURREY	SUSSEX	THAMES
NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS WHICH TOOK PLACE	17	30	9	19	18
SUPERVISOR ABLE TO REINFORCE WORK BEING DONE BY OTHERS INVOLVED IN DELIVERING SUPERVISION PLAN OBJECTIVES (WHERE RELEVANT):					
- VERY WELL	2 of 8 (25%)	6 of 16 (38%)	N/A	3 of 13 (23%)	4 of 10 (40%)
- WELL ENOUGH	6 of 8 (75%)	10 of 16 (62%)	N/A	9 of 13 (69%)	3 of 10 (30%)
SUPERVISOR ACTIVELY INVOLVED OFFENDER IN DISCUSSION:					
- VERY WELL	7 of 17 (41%)	13 of 29 (45%)	4 of 9 (44%)	6 of 18 (33%)	6 of 18 (33%)
- WELL ENOUGH	9 of 17 (53%)	15 of 29 (52%)	3 of 9 (33%)	12 of 18 (67%)	11 of 18 (61%)
METHODS USED BY SUPERVISORS GENERALLY APPROPRIATE TO WHAT THEY WERE TRYING TO ACHIEVE:					
- VERY WELL	5 of 17 (29%)	11 of 27 (41%)	1 of 9 (11%)	2 of 18 (11%)	7 of 18 (39%)
- WELL ENOUGH	9 of 17 (53%)	12 of 27 (44%)	8 of 9 (89%)	14 of 18 (78%)	6 of 18 (33%)
INTERVIEWER SENSITIVE TO OFFENDERS' RACE, GENDER OR OTHER POTENTIALLY DISCRIMINATORY FACTOR (WHERE RELEVANT):					
- VERY WELL	1 of 10 (10%)	3 of 9 (33%)	0 of 3 (0%)	1 of 10 (10%)	3 of 7 (43%)
- WELL ENOUGH	8 of 10 (80%)	5 of 9 (56%)	2 of 3 (67%)	9 of 10 (90%)	4 of 7 (57%)

**TABLE 47:
OBSERVATION OF PRACTICE: LICENCES: OFFENDER VIEWS**

	HAMPSHIRE	KENT	SURREY	SUSSEX	THAMES
NUMBER OF OFFENDERS INTERVIEWED BY INSPECTOR/LOCAL ASSESSOR	17	30	9	18	18
OFFENDER UNDERSTOOD WHAT WAS TRYING TO BE ACHIEVED DURING THE INTERVIEW THAT DAY:					
- CLEARLY	12 of 17 (71%)	23 of 30 (77%)	4 of 9 (44%)	12 of 18 (67%)	13 of 18 (72%)
- TO SOME EXTENT	4 of 17 (24%)	6 of 30 (20%)	5 of 9 (56%)	6 of 18 (33%)	5 of 18 (28%)
WHERE PUBLIC PROTECTION ISSUES INVOLVED, OFFENDER CONSIDERED THAT WORK THAT DAY WOULD HELP REDUCE RISKS PRESENTED:					
- CLEARLY	4 of 4 (100%)	5 of 11 (45%)	0 of 7 (0%)	7 of 10 (70%)	6 of 12 (50%)
- TO SOME EXTENT	0 of 4 (0%)	6 of 11 (55%)	5 of 7 (71%)	2 of 10 (20%)	4 of 12 (33%)
OFFENDERS CONSIDERED THAT WORK THAT DAY WOULD HELP THEM STOP REOFFENDING:					
- ALL OFFENDERS					
CLEARLY	10 of 17 (59%)	12 of 30 (40%)	0 of 9 (0%)	9 of 17 (53%)	11 of 17 (65%)
TO SOME EXTENT	5 of 17 (29%)	15 of 30 (50%)	7 of 9 (78%)	5 of 17 (29%)	4 of 17 (24%)
- MINORITY ETHNIC OFFENDERS					
CLEARLY	0 of 1 (0%)	N/A	0 of 2 (0%)	0 of 1 (0%)	1 of 1 (100%)
TO SOME EXTENT	0 of 1 (0%)	N/A	2 of 2 (100%)	1 of 1 (100%)	0 of 1 (0%)
OFFENDERS CONSIDERED THAT WORK THAT DAY WOULD HELP WITH THEIR SPECIFIC NEEDS AND CIRCUMSTANCES:					
- CLEARLY	10 of 16 (63%)	16 of 30 (53%)	0 of 9 (0%)	8 of 18 (44%)	12 of 17 (71%)
- TO SOME EXTENT	2 of 16 (13%)	13 of 30 (43%)	5 of 9 (56%)	7 of 18 (39%)	5 of 17 (29%)
OFFENDERS CONSIDERED THAT THEY HAD BEEN TREATED FAIRLY DURING ORDER IN GENERAL:					
- ALL OFFENDERS	16 of 17 (94%)	27 of 28 (96%)	6 of 9 (67%)	15 of 18 (83%)	16 of 18 (89%)
- MINORITY ETHNIC OFFENDERS	1 of 1 (100%)	N/A	2 of 2 (100%)	1 of 1 (100%)	1 of 1 (100%)

Commentary

- » As with probation supervision, these tables show a range of practice issues, but comments need to be seen in the context of a single observation within a longer period of supervision. Inspectors will increasingly seek to find evidence of practice grounded in the principles of What Works in the supervision of offenders. Key points to note are:
- there were 5 observations of practice with minority ethnic offenders and 5 with female offenders
 - supervision plans were generally better than those seen during the file reading particularly in Kent. SMART objectives were included more often in Sussex and Kent than in the other 3 areas (0% in Surrey)
 - interviews were generally planned – less well in Surrey
 - where there were public protection issues to address, this was generally well done though less well in Hampshire
 - offending behaviour was generally tackled well though more so in Kent and Surrey than in Hampshire and Thames Valley. It was always tackled well for minority ethnic offenders (though numbers were small)
 - interviews were generally well aligned with the supervision plan in all areas and consistent with the supervisor's advance planning
 - although the offender's social circumstances were generally well addressed, there was substantial scope in Hampshire and Thames Valley to improve the degree to which offenders were made aware of their offending on others
 - where issues of enforcement were relevant, these were generally handled well except in Hampshire
 - offenders were generally actively involved in their interviews, and the methods used by supervisors were usually appropriate to what they were seeking to achieve though less so in Thames Valley
 - where relevant, supervisors were nearly always sensitive to the offender's race or gender
 - offenders nearly all understood what the supervisor was trying to achieve and thought supervision would make a difference to the risks they presented. Most thought that the work undertaken that day would help them. All but 10 offenders considered that they had been treated fairly, and all minority ethnic offenders thought this.
- » The overall quality of the observed sessions with offenders indicated that better work was being undertaken by staff than that which they recorded, especially so in Hampshire and Thames Valley. The overall quality of the observed work was particularly high in Kent, Surrey and Sussex.

5.10

5.11

FINDINGS FOR THAMES VALLEY

Home Office targets

- 5.9 Table 38 shows data on the services' performance in relation to the main KPIs for pre and post-release work specified in the Home Office Plans for the Probation Service 1998/1999 and 1999/2000. The following results, shown by local monitoring, were achieved for KPIs in 1999/2000:

- **KPI 2:** The services' own monitoring for 1999/2000 showed that in OBPS 89% of offenders were seen within one day of release, which nearly met the KPI target of 90%. In BPS the resettlement cases were combined with community orders and a joint figure of 85% achieved. This inspection showed that 88% of cases were seen within one day of release
 - **KPI 3a:** Local data showed that in OBPS 66% of relevant cases breach action was taken in line with the national standard. In BPS, again the data was a combination of community orders and licences the figure was 91% as measured in the January 2000 ACOP audit. This inspection showed 60% of relevant cases were breached as required against the 90% Home Office target. There was considerable variation between services, with BPS achieving 100% and OBPS only 20%
 - **KPI 3b:** no information was available from the Home Office on the target that breach action should be taken following alleged further offending whilst subject to HDC in 95% of relevant ACR cases
 - **KPI 7:** the most recent unit costs for licences were £2,740 and £2,410 for BPS and OBPS respectively, both above the Home Office target.
- 5.10 Overall, there were considerable performance variations between services over time periods and, according to local monitoring, between teams. It will be critical for the area to monitor performance in detail so that pockets of poor performance can be addressed and good practice built upon.

Local targets and monitoring arrangements

- 5.11 The annual performance plans for the 2 services for 1999/2000 included a number of targets relevant to the supervision of licences. These were:

OBPS	Results	BPS	Results
90% breached in line with national standards	66%	National standards compliance: 85% will achieve first contact 80% maintain frequency of contact in first 3 months 85% breached as required	83% 59% 91%
100% of supervision plans should include specific programme proposals	N/A	At least 80% of offenders found supervision "helpful" in dealing with their offending behaviour	92%
		At least 85% of terminated orders will have achieved at least 3 positive outcomes during supervision	55%
		At least 75% of cases will terminate because of satisfactory completion or good progress	83%
		The annual cost of an ACR licence will not exceed £1,935	£2,200

5.12 Targets for 2000/2001 included:

OBPS	Results	BPS	Results
National standards compliance 70% of first contacts arranged as required 85% enforcement of probation and combination orders	94%-96% 33%-60%	National standards compliance 90% will achieve first contact 80% will maintain frequency of contact during first 3 months 90% will be breached when required	86% 59% took place 82%
90% victim contact for those newly sentenced to 4 years+	20%	At least 85% of terminated orders will have achieved at least 3 positive outcomes during supervision	65%
		At least 75% of cases will terminate because of satisfactory completion or for good progress	89%
		The annual cost of an ACR licence will not exceed £2,010	N/A

5.13 In common with other aspects of work, BPS targets and results were based on all types of supervision rather than licences alone. It would have been more helpful to be able to differentiate between different types of supervision as resettlement national standards compliance is often different to that for community orders. The results shown above were based on local monitoring reports. OBPS reported on some resettlement performance measures in their quarterly performance report covering July to September 2000 and showed the first 2 quarters of 2000/2001. Victim inquiry monitoring was reported in an internal inspection report dated July 2000. The BPS data was shown in the April-June 2000 report on county performance objectives, although most of their indicators did not differentiate resettlement cases. Neither service had sufficient strategic focus on the supervision of resettlement cases. It would have been useful to have a range of objectives and indicators for resettlement work that could track performance and highlight areas for improvement.

5.14 In addition to routine monitoring OBPS also carried out a number of internal inspections and quality audits relevant to resettlement work. Audit reports were published in March 1999, February and July 2000. They reported a gradual improvement in resettlement practice as a whole. It was therefore disappointing that the findings in this inspection showed many areas of practice with need for improvement. This was consistent with PSR performance where local monitoring had shown performance to be better than that evidenced by the inspection. The service had continued to use an inspection tool that did not reflect national standards and so did not get an accurate picture of performance.

Compliance with national standards

5.15 Table 39 shows the results of the examination of resettlement case files in relation to work done with offenders before release. In 74% of cases the degree of contact supervising officers had with offenders pre-release was assessed as adequate, given the needs and circumstances of the offender. The quality of contact was assessed as adequate in 70% of cases. Both were a little below the average from the first 6 regional inspections.

5.16 Tables 40 to 42 show the principal findings of this inspection on compliance with national standards. In relation to levels of contact, it was notable that:

- compliance with the national standard for prompt first contact on release was excellent, with 95% arranged to take place within one day and 88% actually being seen in that timescale
- home visits with the time limit only took place in 46% of cases. In OBPS 60% of home visits took place within the time limit, compared with 33% in BPS
- contact arranged in the first 4 weeks met the standard in 84% of cases but only took place in 67% of cases
- a disappointing 42% of licence conditions were implemented promptly (13 out of 31 cases).

5.17 Table 41 contains information on enforcement. The table shows that:

- in 62% of cases non-compliance was followed up within 2 days
- the offender's explanation was clearly recorded in 62% of cases and the officer's view of acceptability in 55% of cases
- in only 39% of cases was an appropriate warning given as a result of an unacceptable absence
- in 6 out of 10 cases breach action was taken in line with national standards. BPS achieved 100% as against 20% for OBPS although, in a further 40% of their cases, manager's authorisation not to breach was sought
- in none of the cases, where risk of harm was raised, was the Parole Unit notified.

5.18 Table 42 provides information on supervision planning. The table shows:

- supervision plans were prepared in 93% of cases and nearly 90% were prepared within the national standard time limit for which the service should be commended
- however, only 15% of plans complied with the standard on content although only 42% of plans had clear targets for progress
- an analysis was done of the components of the supervision plans. The area performed better on dealing with offending related needs and circumstances, use of partnerships and motivating the offender but less well on assessing how further offending would be reduced and use of programmes. This is comparable with the commentary on table 43 below
- it was also apparent from the analysis of the supervision plan content, and then what happened during supervision, that some plans were not followed through, e.g. of the 53 cases where the plan did cover how the likelihood of further offending was to be reduced, in only 35 of these was this addressed sufficiently during supervision
- very few cases dealt well either with the offender's experience of racism and/or other forms of discrimination or with racially motivated offending or racist attitudes. Often the record failed to make it clear whether there were issues and, if so, how these were being addressed
- although at 68% it was the best in the region the area's performance on risk assessment of harm to the victim or the public was disappointing. There were 21 cases in the sample of 84 which had an inadequate assessment
- reviews were completed in 80% of cases, a good performance but with some room for improvement

- performance in the 2 services was broadly comparable, except that in BPS plans were reviewed more frequently as required by the national standard.

Quality of work

- 5.19 The effectiveness of post-release supervision, as recorded in table 43, showed that: 5.22
- generally, offending related problems were better dealt with than the offending behaviour itself, with 69% assessed as sufficient, given the needs and circumstances of the offender, compared to 40%
 - performance across the region was disappointing on the extent to which offenders were made aware of the impact of their offending on victims and others
 - the Thames Valley sample contained a relatively high number of minority ethnic cases. The effectiveness of supervision, as evidenced by the records, was disappointing for this group but broadly comparable to the total sample. 5.23
- 5.20 Members of the file reading team drawn from the area commented that:
- some of the handwritten contact logs were difficult to follow and entries did not do justice to the work being done
 - welfare-oriented work was done well, at the expense of a focus on offending behaviour
 - there was some confusion about the priority given to resettlement work particularly when the offender was still in prison
 - it was helpful that both BPS and OBPS were beginning to use the same policy guidelines
 - the assessment was often better than the plan of action
 - the system (BPS) did not allow for recording the impact of the work being done
 - motivating offenders was an issue – offender denial was being accepted too easily by officers
 - there was a low level of group work being done, even where this was mentioned in the plan
 - sex offenders who were on the Thames Valley Programme were well supervised.
- 5.21 The second method used to assess the quality of work was the direct observation of practice and tables 44 to 47 record the results. In all cases, the assessor was able to view the case file and accordingly was able to make links between sentence and supervision planning documentation and the conduct of the interview. Eighteen post-release supervision sessions were observed and the key findings were: 5.24
- 72% of plans adequately addressed the risk factors and offenders' criminogenic needs but only 12% had SMART objectives
 - in 13 out of 16 cases the supervising officer was clear about what they wanted to get out of the interview 5.25
 - in all 3 cases where enforcement was an issue this was dealt with well

- the findings on work to challenge offending behaviour and that on offending related problems reflected the file reading findings, with the former being done less well
 - the interview with the one minority ethnic offender was very good
 - victim issues were dealt with very well or well enough in only 50% of cases.
- 5.22 The practice assessors also interviewed the offenders who had been observed and a summary of their views is shown in table 47. Key findings were:
- all offenders understood what was trying to be achieved in the interview
 - 83% of offenders considered that the work done would help to reduce the risk they represented to the public
 - 89% of offenders considered that the work would help them to stop reoffending and all of them thought that the work would help with their specific needs and circumstances
 - overall, offenders were very positive about the work of the service.
- 5.23 The practice assessors made the following comments about specific interviews:
- "Very difficult dangerous offender Skilled work."
 - "No link made between current employment and triggers to offence."
 - "Well applied structured session as part of preparation for programme attendance."
 - "Enforcement issues were dealt with very well."
 - "There was an absence of victim issues."
 - "PO picking up work well that should have been done earlier in the case - it was not allocated until just prior to release."
 - "The interview was excellent, planned, focused, goal-oriented."
 - "The information given to the offender was confusing."
 - "The offender appeared to have been using drugs ... it was a key factor in his previous offending and should have been pursued further."

Policy and working arrangements

- 5.24 Both services had adopted common guidance for staff on resettlement cases early on in the planning for amalgamation. There was ongoing work to produce guidance on work with life-sentence cases and victims, although both services had existing policies on the latter. The implementation plan showed a target date for the end of March 2002 to harmonise methods of service delivery. The plan also reported that some partial commonality of service delivery had already been achieved.
- 5.25 One ACO held functional responsibility for resettlement in each service. These senior managers liaised closely over amalgamation plans. OBPS convened a forum for resettlement managers across the county which included managers seconded to prison establishments and which the BPS SPO also attended.

- 5.26 At the time of the inspection there was a mixture of approaches to the supervision of resettlement cases. Most cases in BPS were held as part of a generic caseload although, in some teams, there was a semi-specialist resettlement role. In OBPS resettlement was mainly delivered by specialist staff but with some flexibility in some localities based on the specific profile of the service. In OBPS there were SPOs with responsibility for resettlement teams based in localities, whereas in BPS one SPO held a county-wide functional brief. One issue that arose in OBPS concerned the delayed allocation of cases in the Oxford City team, a matter that was raised with senior managers. The team had been operating for a period with only a third of normal staffing.
- 5.27 Decisions concerning the model of case management will have an impact on the future arrangements for the supervision of resettlement cases. At the time of the inspection the expectation was that some flexibility would be built into the model so that different localities could deliver supervision in different configurations to meet the needs of the locality. Although this seemed to be a sensible approach the area needed to ensure that the evolution of different approaches does not lead to inequalities in service delivery. Senior managers will need to monitor progress closely and ensure that developments fit with the overarching principles of the case management model and key performance measures.
- 5.28 Victim inquiry work was covered by the same comprehensive policy statements and guidelines in both services, originally developed in 1996/1997, although was tailored to meet current practices. Work with victims was done within the overall context of a restorative justice model as set out in a joint statement of principles. In OBPS victim inquiries were undertaken by POs not involved in the supervision of the offender, whereas in BPS a victim contact unit had been set up. The 2 services had also developed a helpful *Framework for Cooperation between BPS, OBPS and Victim Support*. This defined roles and responsibilities and the process for contacting victims. Both services monitored victim inquiry work.
- 5.29 Monitoring of victim inquiry work covering the period July 1999 to June 2000 showed the following:

Criteria	OBPS	BPS
Number of offenders	44	27
Number of victims identified	114	31
Number of victims contacted within 2 months of sentence	20 (17.5%)	12 (39%)
Number of victims contacted beyond 2 months	82	7
Number of victims where face-to-face contact achieved	20	9
Number of victims requesting ongoing contact	50	11

From 2001/2002 there will be a national target for areas to contact 85% of identified victims within 2 months of the offender being sentence. As can be seen neither service was close to meeting this. This area of work was relatively recent and it was clear that both services were working towards meeting the target.

- 5.30 The amalgamation implementation plan signalled a review of the existing guidance in response to the HMIP Thematic Inspection on Victims and an anticipated probation circular covering new expectations on work with victims. A helpful report on the resourcing of victim contact work had

been completed recommending the setting up of a dedicated unit for Thames Valley operating from 2 locations.

- 5.31 Both services described positive relationships with local prisons. A joint declaration supporting restorative justice had been agreed by a range of criminal justice agencies across the Thames Valley and set the tone for a spirit of cooperation and common goals. Regular meetings took place locally and regionally. For OBPS the impact of seconded staff on the service was greater with 25% of PO/PSO staff located in prisons compared to Berkshire with only one prison in its area. This was compounded by the placement of more experienced staff in the prison setting leaving field teams with a significant proportion of less experienced PO/PSO staff.
- 5.32 OBPS was to be commended for taking part in the Pathfinder focusing on the resettlement of prisoners serving less than 12 months and who would not normally be under the supervision of the service. The project was being run in partnership with 2 local prisons and involved a group work programme delivered in prison which was then followed up upon release by specialist practitioners working in the community.

Summary and recommendations

- 5.33 There were some strengths in relation to the supervision of offenders after release from custody:
- joint work on policies for resettlement and victims
 - initial contact on release was prompt
 - BPS compliance with the national standard on breach action
 - supervision plans were prepared and reviewed within the national standard time limit
 - offending related problems were often dealt with well
 - sex offenders on the Thames Valley Programme were well supervised
 - offenders were positive about their experience of supervision
 - there were positive relationships with local prisons.
- 5.34 However, the following weaknesses needed to be addressed:
- most aspects of compliance with national standards but particularly enforcement and the quality of supervision plans
 - ensuring that offending behaviour is addressed during supervision, with the goal of reducing the likelihood of further offending
 - work with offenders on making them aware of the impact of their offending on victims and others
 - work with racially motivated or racist offenders
 - the profile of resettlement work within the What Works agenda and specifically the referral of licensees to suitable programmes.

5.35 Issues that needed attention to enhance the success of amalgamation were:

- consistent and specific objectives and targets within the new area strategic plan focusing on resettlement and work with victims
- regular performance monitoring reports on the progress towards achieving the objectives and targets.

5.36 It is therefore recommended that:

- ① *The Probation Board should ensure that compliance with national standards for the supervision of offenders released from custody improves, paying particular attention to:*
 - (a) *enforcement;*
 - (b) *risk assessment and review;*
 - (c) *the content of supervision plans and reviews.*
- ② *The Probation Board should ensure that resettlement work is fully integrated into the implementation of the What Works strategy paying particular attention to improving work done with licensees to address, and therefore reduce their offending behaviour.*
- ③ *The Probation Board should ensure that objectives and targets in the annual plan fully reflect work done with pre and post-release cases. This should be supported by the inclusion in performance reports to the Board of progress against performance measures relating to this area of work.*

6. THE MANAGEMENT OF HIGH-RISK CASES

- 6.1 This chapter examines the supervision of offenders identified by areas as posing a high risk of causing serious harm to others, i.e. acting violently. However, it should be noted that there is currently no standard national formula or guidance about which cases should be designated as high risk, with the result that the definitions and categorisations are known to vary between areas. In this context the delays in implementing OASys, the offender assessment system to be used by all areas for which they have been waiting since last summer, have been problematic.

Number of high-risk cases

- 6.2 Table 48 shows the number of cases registered as high risk in each area and the proportion of total caseload represented by such cases.

TABLE 48: CASES REGISTERED AS HIGH RISK AS A PROPORTION OF TOTAL CASELOAD							
AT 31 DECEMBER 1999	BERK-SHIRE	HAMP-SHIRE	KENT	OXF & BUCKS	SURREY	EAST SUSSEX	WEST SUSSEX
CASES REGISTERED	374	115	253	40	493	292	85
% TOTAL CASELOAD	16%	2.6%	5.7%	1.2%	24%	12%	4.8%

Commentary

- The proportion of cases registered locally in relation to high risk varied considerably between the areas. This at least in part reflected the differing definitions of high risk of causing serious harm between the areas. In addition in some areas, such as Surrey, offenders might be on more than one type of high-risk register, such as a dangerousness register and one for child protection. In such an event offenders could well be double counted (as was the case in Surrey).

The quality of work and compliance with relevant national standards

- 6.3 A sample of cases that were considered to present risks of causing serious harm to the public was examined in each area, some subject to supervision under the terms of a probation or combination order and some supervised on licence following release from prison. Table 39 identifies levels of compliance with national standards in the supervision of those cases. It should be noted that the small size of the sample means that the percentages should be treated with caution and only those that indicate a clear trend or a marked difference in performance are discussed in the text.

**TABLE 49:
HIGH-RISK CASES – COMPLIANCE WITH NATIONAL STANDARDS**

	HAMPSHIRE	KENT	SURREY	SUSSEX	THAMES	PERFORMANCE RANGE IN FIRST 6 PIP REGIONS	AVERAGE FROM FIRST 6 PIP REGIONAL INSPECTIONS
NUMBER OF CASES OF WHICH	14	23	16	20	34	N/A	N/A
- MINORITY ETHNIC	1	0	1	0	3	*	*
- FEMALE	0	0	1	9	0	*	*
CONTACT:							
INITIAL CONTACT ARRANGED AS REQUIREMENTS OF NATIONAL STANDARDS	14 of 14 (100%)	20 of 23 (87%)	14 of 16 (88%)	27 of 28 (96%)	33 of 34 (97%)	*	*
INITIAL CONTACT TOOK PLACE AS REQUIREMENTS OF NATIONAL STANDARDS	12 of 14 (86%)	21 of 23 (91%)	13 of 16 (81%)	24 of 27 (89%)	30 of 34 (88%)	84%	65-92%
REQUIRED NUMBER OF MEETINGS OFFERED IN FIRST 3 MONTHS	11 of 13 (85%)	17 of 23 (74%)	9 of 15 (60%)	15 of 24 (62%)	18 of 27 (67%)	68%	34-90%
REQUIRED NUMBER OF MEETINGS TOOK PLACE IN FIRST 3 MONTHS	10 of 13 (77%)	14 of 23 (61%)	6 of 14 (43%)	10 of 24 (42%)	15 of 28 (54%)	48%	22-80%
ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS OR LICENCE CONDITIONS IMPLEMENTED PROMPTLY	2 of 9 (22%)	11 of 15 (73%)	6 of 11 (55%)	9 of 14 (64%)	6 of 16 (38%)	*	*
SUPERVISION PLANNING:							
SUPERVISION PLAN PREPARED	13 of 14 (93%)	22 of 23 (96%)	15 of 16 (94%)	26 of 28 (93%)	33 of 34 (97%)	87%	62-100%
WHERE SUPERVISION PLAN PREPARED, % WHICH MET ALL REQUIREMENTS OF THE NATIONAL STANDARD ON CONTENT	2 of 14 (14%)	4 of 23 (17%)	3 of 16 (19%)	13 of 28 (46%)	7 of 34 (21%)	*	*
RISK ASSESSMENT OF HARM TO VICTIM OR PUBLIC	10 of 14 (71%)	10 of 23 (43%)	7 of 16 (44%)	21 of 28 (75%)	23 of 34 (68%)	50%	50-100%
4-MONTHLY REVIEW OF SUPERVISION PLAN	11 of 12 (92%)	16 of 18 (89%)	7 of 11 (64%)	16 of 19 (84%)	18 of 21 (86%)	53%	28%-84%
RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN AVAILABLE WITHIN 5 WORKING DAYS OF ORDER/RELEASE	7 of 14 (50%)	7 of 23 (30%)	4 of 16 (25%)	10 of 27 (37%)	11 of 34 (32%)	*	*
ENFORCEMENT:							
WHERE APPARENT FAILURES, ACTION ALWAYS TAKEN WITHIN 2 DAYS TO SEEK TO OBTAIN EXPLANATION	4 of 8 (50%)	8 of 13 (62%)	6 of 7 (86%)	9 of 15 (60%)	13 of 20 (65%)	62%	40-93%
OFFENDER'S EXPLANATION (OR LACK) ALWAYS CLEARLY RECORDED	4 of 8 (50%)	9 of 13 (69%)	4 of 7 (57%)	10 of 14 (71%)	15 of 20 (75%)	57%	29-86%
PO'S VIEW OF ACCEPTABILITY OF ABSENCES ALWAYS CLEAR	6 of 8 (75%)	11 of 13 (85%)	3 of 7 (43%)	9 of 14 (64%)	13 of 20 (65%)	51%	15-100%
BREACH ACTION CLEARLY TAKEN AS A RESULT OF, OR BEFORE, SECOND/THIRD UNACCEPTABLE FAILURE	4 of 5 (80%)	5 of 6 (83%)	3 of 4 (75%)	2 of 6 (33%)	4 of 10 (40%)	42%	0-80%
MANAGER'S AUTHORISATION NOT TO BREACH ON SECOND/THIRD FAILURE RECORDED	0 of 1 (0%)	0 of 1 (0%)	0 of 1 (0%)	2 of 4 (50%)	0 of 6 (0%)	27%	0-100%
OVERALL PERFORMANCE SCORE	65%	67%	54%	63%	61%	*	*

* Information not available on same basis.

Commentary

- ▶ First contact took place within the requirements of the national standards in 81% or more of all the cases, with Kent achieving 91%.
- ▶ Hampshire achieved better levels of contact during the first 3 months of supervision. Managers should be concerned about contact levels especially when these are areas' high-risk cases by their definitions, especially so Surrey and Sussex.

- ▶▶ Additional requirements were implemented more promptly in Kent (73%) compared with only 22% in Hampshire.
- ▶▶ Supervision plans were available in over 92% of all cases, but their quality was too often unsatisfactory in all the areas. This was a troubling finding, especially when linked with the fact that risk of harm was not adequately assessed in 100% of cases, something that all areas must achieve (better in Sussex). Supervision plan reviews were not always happening as required, especially so in Surrey.
- ▶▶ It was of concern that with this group of offenders enforcement action was not always crystal clear. All areas needed to make improvements in this aspect of their work so that sufficient accountability can be demonstrated for this potentially dangerous group of offenders. This was especially true for Sussex and Thames Valley. It was unsatisfactory that breach action was either not taken or authorised not to be taken in every one of these cases.
- ▶▶ An overall performance score, calculated as the average of a number of key aspects of supervision work with high-risk offenders, showed results for each area of only around 55-65%. While based on only a small number of cases, this finding was disappointing and indicated a need for improvement in each area in this important aspect of work.

FINDINGS FOR THAMES VALLEY

Home Office targets

- 6.4 No national KPI has been set for this aspect of work.

Local objectives and monitoring arrangements

- 6.5 OBPS and BPS had taken chosen different styles for their annual plans. In 2000/2001 OBPS had taken the Home Secretary's priority to reduce the risk of harm to the public from dangerous offenders and had developed a set of related targets and tasks. The targets included the completion of assessments and hostel occupancy. The tasks included actions on policy and practice development. BPS's corporate plan focused on 4 sets of objectives: court, supervision, family court welfare and development. Two objectives related specifically to the management of high-risk cases. These were to carry out an independent internal inspection on cases on their risk management database and the other to ensure that 85% of cases on the database were assessed as satisfactory or better in that inspection.
- 6.6 Both approaches had advantages and disadvantages. Whilst OBPS gave clear priority to public protection in its plan it did not support this with targets focusing on the quality of the assessment and management of risk of harm. BPS was a mirror image with an objective focusing on quality of risk management but no clear priority given to public protection in the plan as a whole. By taking the best of both services the amalgamated area could improve its strategic focus.
- 6.7 BPS had developed a risk management database for monitoring high-risk cases. It was a Lotus Notes database, based on a model from the Inner London Probation Service. Cases that were considered to

display any factors relating to risk of harm to others or self had to be included on the database, triggering a note to the relevant SPO and senior manager and requiring a full risk assessment. OBPS had decided to adopt the BPS database and there were plans to roll this out across the whole Thames Valley.

6.8 The database had potential but, in practice, it was proving unwieldy and difficult to keep up to date. Inspectors had a demonstration of the database and whilst it was clearly a potentially helpful tool there were a number of issues that needed to be addressed:

- it was difficult to identify a list of the current highest risk cases. Once registered cases appeared to stay on the database. It would have been helpful to be able to stratify the register
- some of the case information entered on the register was misleading or incomplete and some of the assessments poor
- training for those using the database.

6.9 In addition to routine monitoring BPS had carried out an annual independent inspection of the management of high-risk cases. A report had been presented to the previous committee and an action plan developed to address the findings of the report. It was clear that the service had followed through with the recommendations. For example, guidance to staff on their roles and responsibilities had been issued. It was also apparent from the findings of this inspection that improvements were still needed in practice.

6.10 In May 2000 OBPS had presented an internal inspection report focusing on public protection to the previous committee. It was a comprehensive and useful document with a wide-ranging set of recommendations. Although the report drew attention to aspects of practice in need of improvement, it did not set targets and the recommendations tended to focus on management activity. It is perhaps not surprising therefore that some of the same shortcomings in practice were reflected in the files seen for this inspection. For example, 30% of cases did not demonstrate work carried out to reduce the likelihood of reoffending/harm to the public.

6.11 Although the system for identifying, assessing and managing high-risk cases needed improvement in both services and therefore in the amalgamated area, these should be addressed when OASys (the national risk/needs assessment and planning tool) is implemented. The area should therefore concentrate on ensuring that the current systems are working well rather than attempting a major redesign.

Risk management policy and inter-agency arrangements

6.12 Both services had developed a risk management policy and practice guidelines. OBPS had a comprehensive public protection policy dated 1998. The policy covered the identification and assessment of risk, roles and responsibilities and guidelines for the management of dangerous offenders. Integrated into the policy was the assumption that high-risk cases would attract more resources than lower-risk cases. Much of the policy was based on the principles established by experts in the field and had been developed in consultation with them.

- 6.13 BPS had developed a document to support the implementation of their assessment framework, last updated in 2000. This document and the framework itself integrated an assessment of risk of harm, risk of reoffending and needs, with a contact log and supervision plan. It was intended to reduce the amount of paperwork to be completed by staff whilst ensuring consistency and high standards in assessment and planning. Where a case was identified as presenting a risk of harm then there was an additional computer generated *pro forma* for full assessment, planning and review. This was supported by clear guidelines for each grade of staff setting out their roles and responsibilities.
- 6.14 The services had different approaches to the registration of high-risk cases, with OBPS registering only those considered the highest risk (1.22% of the caseload) and BPS putting anyone considered a risk onto their risk management database (16% of the caseload).
- 6.15 In addition to their internal policies the services had agreements with other local agencies about the joint management of high-risk cases. In OBPS there was a joint strategy with the Thames Valley Police introduced in April 1999. A community safety joint protocol on information exchange was being rolled out across the Thames Valley that included police, health and district councils. There was also specific guidance on housing issues and dangerous offenders and an agreement with the employment service about restricting the employment of dangerous offenders. It was clear that the service had taken a very active role in developing inter-agency arrangements.
- 6.16 In BPS there was an inter-agency strategy and protocol covering the joint management of cases considered dangerous. A separate policy existed for sex offenders registered under the Sex Offenders Act in which the police were the lead agency. This also covered OBPS. Guidelines were available on the operation of local risk management panels, including information exchange. In addition separate documents covered the Thames Valley Project and the Wallingford Sex Offender Treatment Programme.
- 6.17 The amalgamation implementation plan noted that although the current Thames Valley procedures for inter-agency work were agreed with the police, that some internal systems were not aligned. A review of risk management panels across the Thames Valley, undertaken jointly by police and probation, was scheduled to take place in December 2000.

The quality of work and compliance with national standards

- 6.18 Table 49 shows the area's performance in high-risk cases for contact, supervision plans and enforcement. Key points to note were:
- initial contact met the requirements of national standards in 97% of cases and it actually took place in 88% of cases
 - contact after the first appointment was less impressive, with only 54% of offenders being seen 12 times within the first 3 months
 - where relevant, in well under half the cases additional requirements were implemented promptly
 - although supervision plans had been prepared in nearly all cases, only 21% of them met the national standard on content

- it was disappointing that only 68% had a sufficient risk of harm assessment and only 32% of risk management plans were in place within 5 working days of release or the start of the order
- 86% plans were reviewed at the 4 month point
- only 4 out of 10 cases met the standard on breach action, although enforcement actions up to that point were better than that for the general sample of probation orders and licences.

6.19 There were differences between the services in compliance with national standards. BPS was generally better on contact levels, e.g. 100% of licensees seen within one day of release. OBPS was better on supervision planning, e.g. 42% of risk management plans available in 5 working days compared to 27% in BPS. There was mixed performance in enforcement, with OBPS more often recording the offender's explanation for failure to attend and BPS more often taking breach action (4 out of 8 cases appropriately breached compared to OBPS where appropriate breach action was not taken in either of their 2 cases).

6.20 During the file reading and fieldwork there were some issues which arose about the operation of the risk management systems and the quality of practice. They included:

- although the BPS framework had many strengths, it was not helpful in recording the evidence for judgements made about the risk represented by the offender. The OBPS assessment method allowed more scope for setting out the evidence for judgements but relied much more upon the skills and competence of the officer
- assessments were often better than the risk management plan but supervision plans and risk assessments were not always integrated
- where a specific victim was identified, and where intervention related to this, it was of a high standard
- across Thames Valley there were different definitions of what constituted serious harm
- in BPS the name of every offender for whom a PSR was requested was sent to the police domestic violence unit for screening. This provided BPS with valuable information about risk of harm that might not otherwise have been apparent
- the quality of assessments was variable. Even though the systems were robust they still needed a "thinking" practitioner to operate them well. There was evidence that where there were staffing problems the systems began to break down. For example, in OBPS there had been recruitment difficulties that were resolved by employing staff unfamiliar with the probation systems and a period of extended induction was needed to reorientate these staff
- during the file reading and the fieldwork there were a small number of cases in both services that were drawn to the attention of senior managers because inspectors felt they needed urgent attention. Although these were the exception there were some serious concerns about the quality of assessment and risk management practice. For example, one offender had moved into the area to live with his former victim and small child and a risk management panel should have been convened

- most staff in both services had a good understanding of how their respective systems worked and felt confident that risk was being well managed, particularly in the multi-agency settings.

Serious incident reports

- 6.21 There were 11 cases where an offender under the supervision of the area had been involved in a serious incident and a management review completed. A majority of these were community order cases. Three involved offences of rape, 4 involved murder or attempted murder, others involved GBH, arson, aggravated vehicle taking and a racially aggravated assault. Two were from OBPS and 9 from BPS. Key issues to emerge were:
- neither service was confident that all cases had been properly identified
 - most cases did not fully meet national standards for contact levels
 - some work needed to be done on the consistency of the management reviews. Although some reviews were very comprehensive, others were less helpful in setting out the precise details of supervision
 - neither service was routinely reporting to the previous probation committee all serious incidents and their management reviews
 - there was evidence that the findings of management reviews were addressed in both services.
- 6.22 The area should ensure that all serious incidents are identified, the Board Chair notified, management reviews consistent and that a regular report is made to the Board on the outcome of serious incidents.
- 6.23 There had been one Part 8 Review of the death of a child involving BPS. It was found that the service had made an appropriate referral to a locally established risk management panel, although there was criticism that in respect of this inter-agency panel there was not a shared understanding or commitment to the purpose of the panel. As a result a multi-agency seminar was held to clarify and agree the role of the panel.

Summary and recommendations

- 6.24 The positive aspects of the supervision of high-risk offenders were:
- inter-agency protocols on a range of issues
 - a long-standing programme for sex offenders which had been a Pathfinder and had been accredited
 - initial contact with offenders was prompt
 - work with victims in specific cases was of a high standard
 - there was a high level of commitment and understanding amongst staff.

6.25 Areas for improvement were:

- levels of contact
- prompt implementation of additional requirements/conditions
- the quality and timeliness of risk assessments and supervision and risk management plans
- enforcement practice
- the consistency of serious incident reviews.

6.26 Issues for attention to enhance successful amalgamation were:

- ensuring that strategic plans clearly stated the high priority to be attached to public protection and set out targets that demonstrated achievements
- ensuring that the database of high-risk cases when rolled out across the whole county contained accurate, timely and easily accessible records of those cases
- the alignment of a range of inter-agency protocols
- serious incidents would need to be reported regularly to the new Board.

6.27 It is therefore recommended that:

- ① *The Probation Board should ensure that compliance with national standards improves for offenders assessed to be high-risk, paying particular attention to:*
 - (a) *levels of contact;*
 - (b) *timely risk management plans of a consistent quality;*
 - (c) *supervision plans;*
 - (d) *enforcement.*
- ② *The Probation Board should receive regular reports on the outcomes of serious incident reviews and that the reviews are consistent, comprehensive and have an associated action plan where relevant.*
- ③ *The Probation Board should ensure that the database of high-risk cases is based on agreed risk definitions across Thames Valley, is accurate, timely and accessible to those who need to use it.*

7. VALUE FOR MONEY AND MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

- 7.1 This chapter examines and compares performance and unit costs of the various aspects of service delivery of the 5 areas in this region. In the area part of the chapter, the management arrangements for planning and reviewing performance and systems for accountability are examined.

Value for money

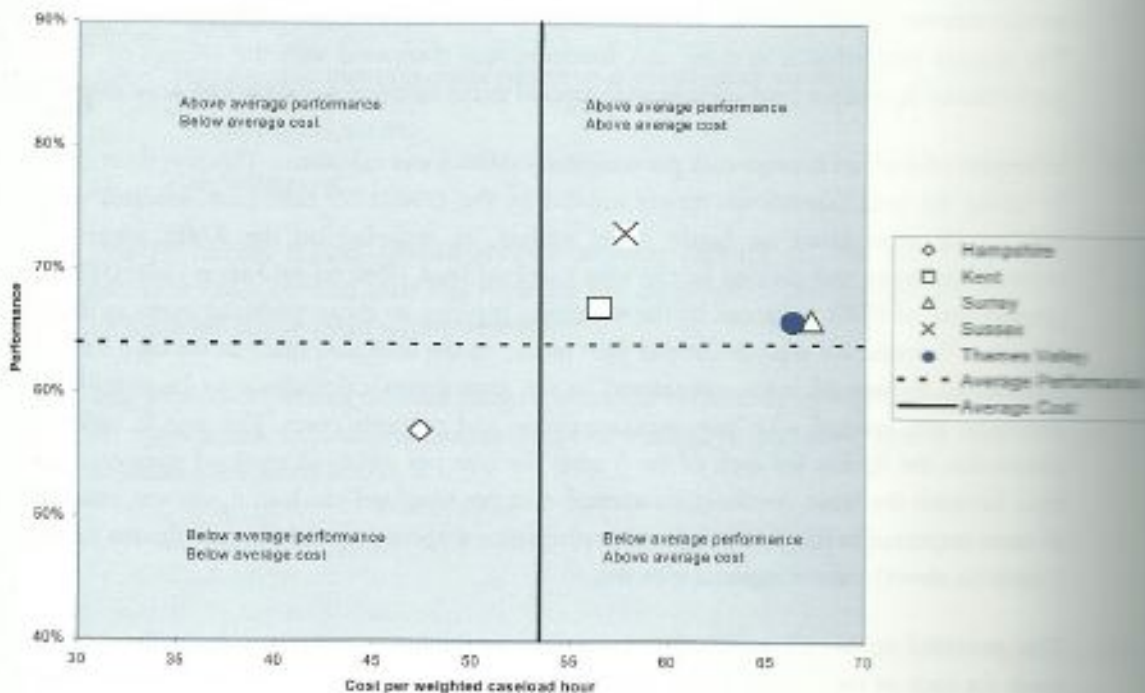
- 7.2 The inspection assessed relative vfm between areas by comparing information on area performance and information on the cost of the area. It needs to be emphasised that cost comparisons are based on the application of the cash limit formula that existed prior to April 2001, a formula that was founded on workloads. Were the new cash limit formula to be applied there would be changes to the relative vfm delivered by the areas as the new formula is based on the relative needs factors in each of the probation areas. This is coupled with a swifter resolution of reducing the relative under- and over-funding of areas (the damping factor). In this respect the more crucial variable in each of the vfm charts is the performance one.
- 7.3 In respect of performance, a list of indicators was used relating to certain key aspects of the National Standards for the Supervision of Offenders in the Community and KPIs in the 4 key functions of service delivery; namely, PSRs, the supervision of probation orders, CS orders and prison licences. The average performance in these task functions was compared with the average of corresponding performance figures for probation areas inspected in the first 6 regional performance inspections.
- 7.4 In respect of cost, an average cost per weighted caseload was calculated. This was done, for each area, by taking the total expenditure figures implied by the 1998/1999 cash limit, adjusted to exclude an estimate of expenditure on family court welfare, as recorded on the RMIS system. This total expenditure figure was divided by the total caseload (end 1998) of probation orders, CS orders and licences, and of PSRs, weighted by the weighting applying to those workload items in the cash limits allocation formula. An adjustment was then made, on the lines also made in the cash limits allocation process, in respect of items considered in the cash limits calculations to be outside short-term probation area control – i.e. pay, superannuation and property costs. This was in order to seek to ensure that the figures for each of the 5 areas for cost per weighted caseload were on a comparable basis between the areas. Similarly, an average cost per weighted caseload figure was calculated across all areas inspected in the first 6 regional performance inspections, and the cost figures for each of the 5 areas (as above) were compared with this.
- 7.5 This provided an overall assessment comparing performance and costs. A similar comparison was made for each of the 4 categories of service delivery by comparing the average performance with the unit cost figures for the relevant category of work as calculated by HMIP and described in Chapter 1. It was recognised that there were some approximations in this data, which might limit the extent of the conclusions that could be drawn from the figures. However, the information used was the best available data on unit costs of particular area activities.

7.6 The above methodology provided an approach both for the area's work overall and for the key functions, to provide an indication of relative vfm. However, the methodology, while reasonable, is not precisely accurate nor definitive. It necessarily involves some elements of approximation. The performance data, while relating to certain key aspects of national standards and KPIs, does not for example include reconviction information (in view of the issues referred to in Chapter 1), and covers only some aspects of performance in relation to management of risk of harm. The calculation of average cost per weighted caseload also involves a degree of approximation, partly because work in the 4 key functions does not account for all the work. Further, while the adjustments made seek to take account of variations in costs between areas, which are outside their short-term control, it is possible that there are other factors not fully taken into account (e.g. such as an area's funding towards crime diversion and prevention schemes, etc.). The assessments of relative vfm should therefore be seen as indicators rather than definitive statements. They should be considered alongside the other material presented in this report.

Assessment of value for money – overall

7.7 The positioning of the areas in the region in relation to the performance and cost averages enabled the assessment of relative vfm to be made. Figure 1 shows the assessment of relative vfm for each of the areas in terms of their overall performance in the 4 key functions.

Figure 1: Assessment of relative vfm - overall level



Commentary

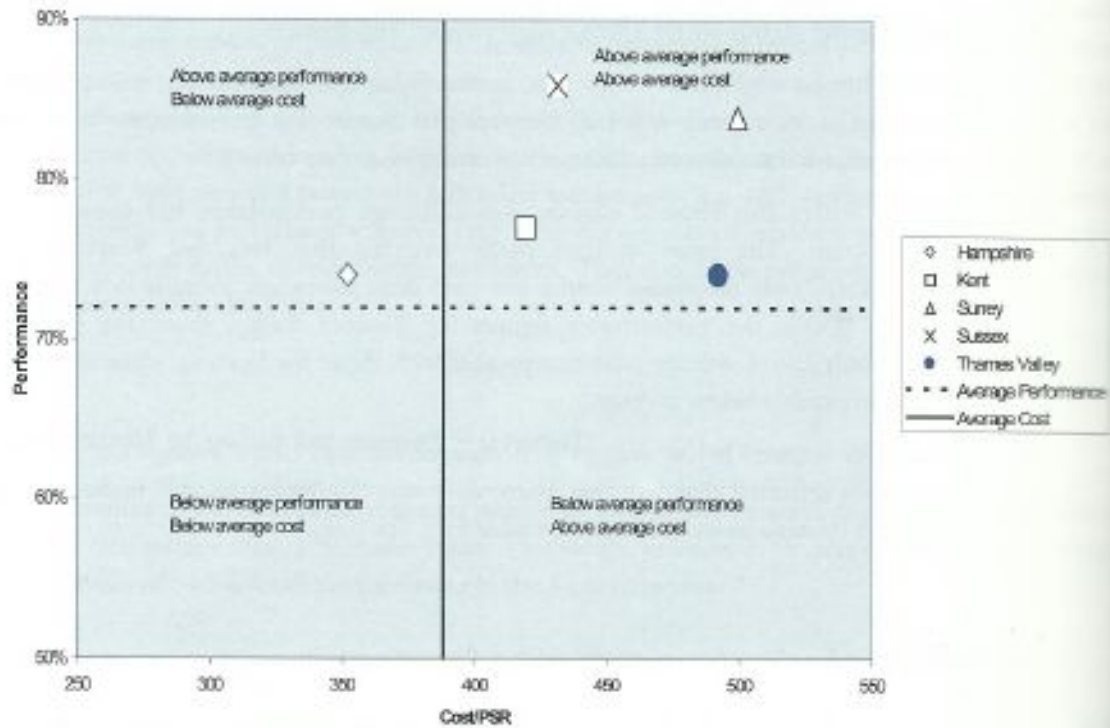
- ▶ Sussex showed performance that was above the average of the previous regions and the best of the 5 areas, at above average costs. The 2 original areas contributed in a balanced and equivalent way to the overall level of performance.
- ▶ Kent showed slightly above average performance and costs.
- ▶ Surrey showed slightly above average performance but considerably above average costs. The latter at least partly reflected the fact that Surrey was considerably "over-resourced" under the cash limit allocation formula in recent years (see table 1).
- ▶ Thames Valley also showed slightly above average performance but considerably above average costs. The latter at least partly reflected that fact that Berkshire had been considerably "over-resourced" under the cash limit allocation formula in recent years (see table 1). Within the performance figures for Thames Valley, those for Berkshire were considerably above average (and comparable with those for Sussex), while those for OBPS were considerably below average.
- ▶ Hampshire showed below average performance but also below average costs. The latter at least partly reflected that fact that Hampshire was "under-resourced" under the cash limit allocation formula in recent years (see table 1).

Assessment of value for money – key functions

- 7.8 As well as an assessment of relative vfm at an overall level, an assessment was similarly made for each of the 4 main categories of work or functions that were examined during the inspection. Average performance on the key aspects of national standards and KPIs for the respective categories was compared with the unit cost figures for the relevant category of work.

7.9 Figure 2 shows the assessment of vfm for each of the areas in respect of PSRs.

Figure 2: Assessment of relative vfm - PSRs

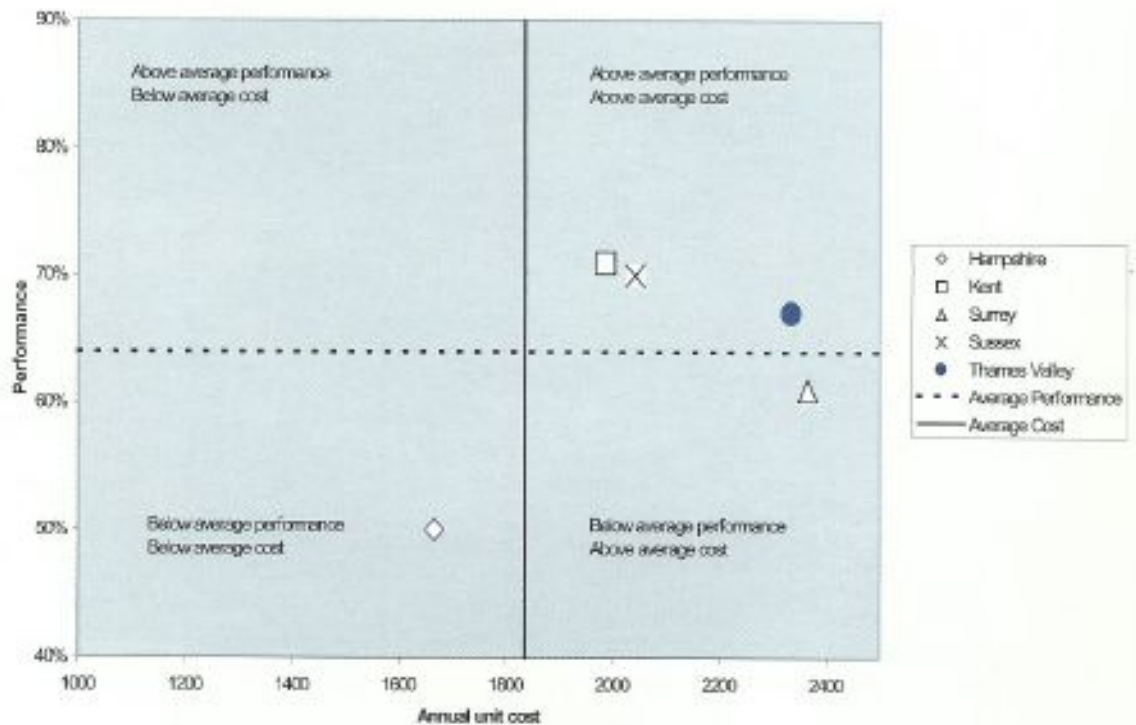


Commentary

- ▶▶ Sussex showed considerably above average performance but above average costs.
- ▶▶ Surrey also showed considerably above average performance but considerably above average costs.
- ▶▶ Kent showed above average performance but above average costs.
- ▶▶ Thames Valley showed slightly above average performance but considerably above average costs.
- ▶▶ Hampshire also showed slightly above average performance but below average costs.

7.10 Figure 3 shows the assessment of vfm for each area in respect of probation orders.

Figure 3: Assessment of relative vfm - probation orders

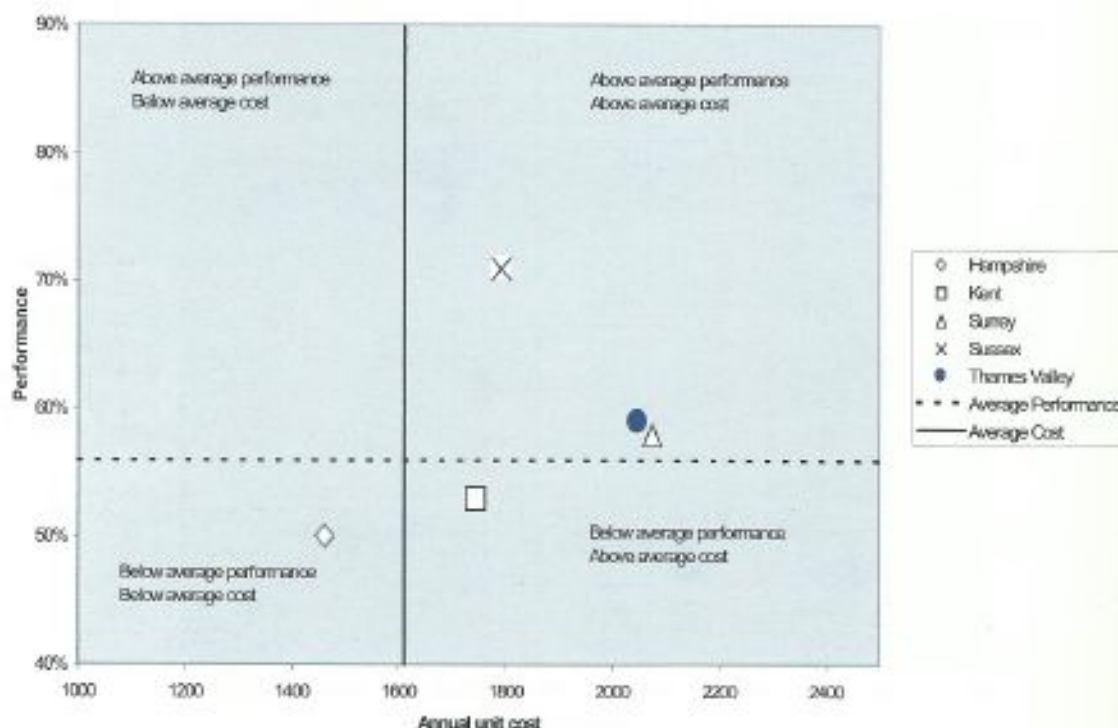


Commentary

- ▶▶ Kent showed above average performance but above average costs.
- ▶▶ Sussex showed above average performance but above average costs.
- ▶▶ Thames Valley also showed slightly above average performance but considerably above average costs.
- ▶▶ Surrey showed slightly below average performance but considerably above average costs, and so represented relatively poor vfm.
- ▶▶ Hampshire showed considerably below average performance but below average costs.

7.11 Figure 4 shows the assessment of vfm for each of the 5 areas in respect of CS orders.

Figure 4: Assessment of relative vfm - CS orders

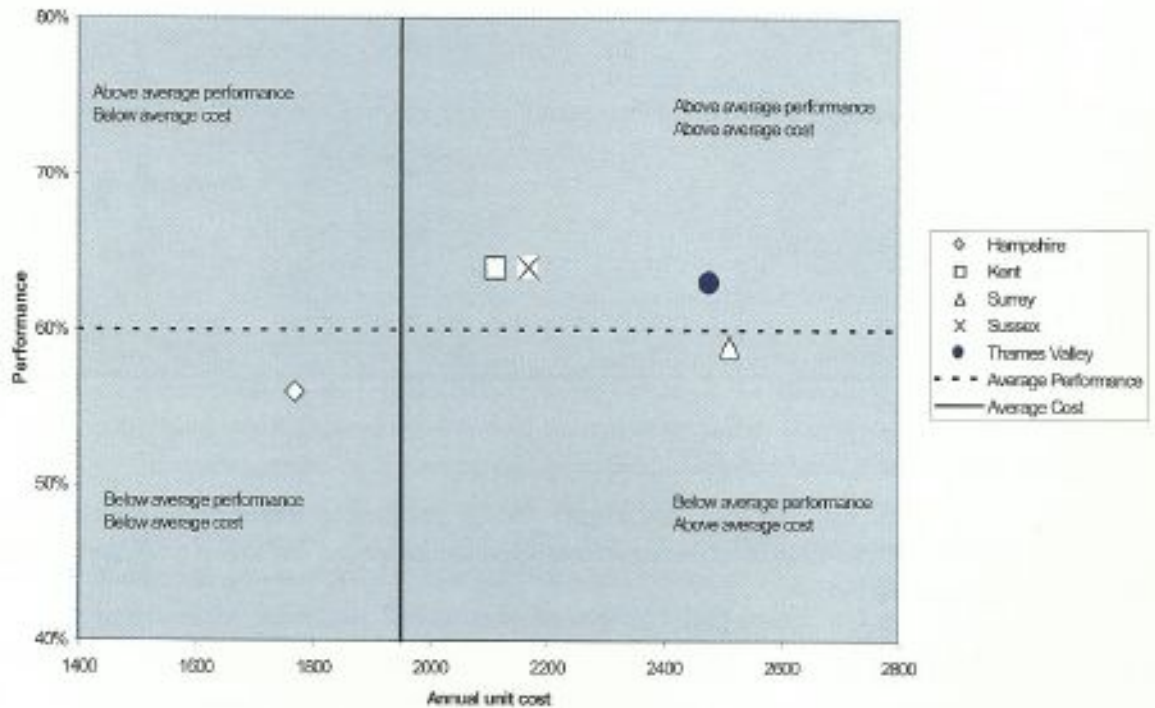


Commentary

- ▶▶ Sussex showed considerably above average performance but above average costs.
- ▶▶ Thames Valley and Surrey showed slightly above average performance but considerably above average costs.
- ▶▶ Kent showed slightly below average performance and above average costs.
- ▶▶ Hampshire showed below average performance and costs.

7.12 Figure 5 shows the assessment of vfm for the 5 areas in respect of post-release licences.

Figure 5: Assessment of relative vfm - post-release licences



Commentary

- ▶▶ Kent showed slightly above average performance and costs.
- ▶▶ Thames Valley also showed slightly above average performance but considerably above average costs.
- ▶▶ Sussex showed slightly above average performance and above average costs.
- ▶▶ Surrey showed about average performance and considerably above average costs.
- ▶▶ Hampshire showed below average performance and costs.

Partnerships

7.13 Probation Circular 9/1997 requires that areas spend a minimum 7% of budget on partnership agencies. What specific services are purchased is left to the determination of Probation Board, although Probation Circular 64/1998 subsequently required that the main provision should be the treatment and rehabilitation of drug misusers.

7.14 The following table shows the services provided by partnership arrangements across the region and the percentage of budget spent by previous committees on partnerships in the last operational year.

TABLE 50:
PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS: PROPORTION OF TOTAL BUDGET SPENT ON PARTNERSHIPS 1998/1999 AND
PROPORTIONATE SPEND OF PARTNERSHIP EXPENDITURE BY TYPE OF WORK

PARTNERSHIP PROVISION	HAMPSHIRE	KENT	SURREY	SUSSEX	THAMES VALLEY
% TOTAL BUDGET SPENT ON PARTNERSHIPS 1998/1999	6.9*	4.9	7.0	6.6	6.9
PERCENTAGE OF EXPENDITURE ON PARTNERSHIPS 1999/2000 SPENT BY TYPE OF WORK:					
- DRUG MISUSE	5.6	5.7	5.0	14.4	7.9
- OFFENDER ACCOMMODATION	48.5	51.0	56.0	39.6	47.0
- ALCOHOL ABUSE	4.6	2.5	-	8.1	4.0
- DEBT COUNSELLING AND ADVICE	1.6	17.5	-	1.5	4.0
- ETE	-	-	26.0	27.0	26.2
- FAMILY COURT/MEDIATION/ACCBSS CENTRES	1.8	5.0	-	3.0	3.4
- VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT/TRAINING/SUPPORT	-	2.2	2.5	0	2.0
- OTHER	37.8	16.2	11.25	5.0	30.0

* Data based on 1999/2000 budget.

Commentary

- Two areas had not met the Home Office partnership expenditure target of 7% in 1998/1999. In all areas offender accommodation comprised the largest single item within the partnership budget.

FINDINGS FOR THAMES VALLEY

The operation of the previous probation committee and financial management

- 7.15 At the time of the inspection services were looking to the future arrangements for Probation Boards which would take over responsibility for the local oversight of the area in April 2001 when the National Probation Service for England and Wales would come into operation. In view of the impending change, the comments on the existing arrangements in this report are brief and reflect the work of the committees.
- 7.16 The BPS probation committee was made up of 28 members, 19 of whom were sentencers, 6 local authority representatives and 2 co-optees. Two members of the committee were from minority ethnic groups. The main committee met 5 times per year and was served by subcommittees for hostels, JNC and personnel. The OBPS committee was made up of 9 members, 7 of whom were sentencers, one local authority member and one co-optee. There were no members from minority ethnic groups. The reduced committee size had been introduced as a response to legislation proposed some years ago intended to replace probation committees with smaller boards. The committee met 8 times per year and was not served by any subcommittees.
- 7.17 Since December 1999 members of both the BPS committee and the OBPS committee had attended a TMSG, which was set up to oversee the amalgamation process. With the inception of the new area a new Probation Board would take over the governance of the 2 existing services.

7.18 Key points arising from the inspection in relation to the operation of the probation committee were:

- BPS had employed an in-house treasurer for 100 hours per year, whereas OBPS had a separate contract with the chief administrative officer for the provision of treasury services. Both ACOs with responsibility for finance were working closely together on amalgamation issues and reporting as appropriate to the TMSG and their respective committees. Inspectors were impressed with their joint approach
- both services had tried in the past to link their financial decision-making with wider planning processes. They were both motivated to ensure that the amalgamation went well and were being positive, creative and constructive. They had taken a methodical approach to resource allocation and produced a provisional service delivery plan that aimed to link the budget to workload, staffing levels and performance. It set out a model for resourcing case management based on the principles of What Works. It was being discussed at the time of the inspection and so its effectiveness as a model was still to be tested
- the 1999/2000 District Audit Management Letter to the Berkshire Probation Committee concluded that it showed good overall control of spending. It described a positive approach to the management of resources and the amalgamation, sound financial systems and no issues were raised about the legality of the committee's actions. It noted that arrangements would be enhanced if an overall policy for the detection and prevention of fraud and corruption was established. This had been postponed so that a policy for the amalgamated area could be developed, facilitated by an existing OBPS policy
- the 1999/2000 Management Letter to the OBPS Probation Committee similarly concluded that it showed good overall control of spending and in addition recommended that the TMSG should develop a medium-term financial strategy for consideration by the new Board on its inception. The financial systems and arrangements for the prevention of fraud and corruption were considered adequate
- the district auditors for both services agreed to carry out a joint vfm study in 1999/2000 on the management arrangements for amalgamation. The overall conclusion was that the amalgamation was being effectively managed. There was a set of recommendations, which were presented to the TMSG in September 2000.

Organisational structure and management arrangements

7.19 The organisational structure of the area was about to undergo a radical change with the amalgamation of the 2 services. Although there had been a great deal of focused activity the area was awaiting the appointment of a new CO, Chair and Board who would have to review the plans and approve a way forward for the new area. At the time of drafting this report (February 2001) the new CO had just been appointed, Board membership had only recently been finalised and the new Board Chair was in discussion with the new CO about how she would exercise her role.

Strategic planning and performance monitoring

- 7.20 The style of the strategic plans in both services was very different. In OBPS the plans focused on the Home Secretary's priorities but within the context of the service's "ethical framework" based on the principles of restorative justice. The plans set out targets and tasks for the service and also specified the senior manager responsible and target dates. It was often difficult to make explicit links between the tasks outlined and the targets set within a specific priority area. For example, in the 2000/2001 plan OBPS Priority 2 was to increase adherence to national standards and had 7 specific sets of targets but only 3 tasks, which did not address all of the targets. Overall, in the 2000/2001 plan there were 39 sets of targets and 50 associated tasks, a challenging timetable for the service. Some of the local targets did not reflect national targets. For example, first contact for probation orders was 80% compared to the national KPI target of 90%. 7.20
- 7.21 In BPS the "corporate plan" was a succinct statement of the county objectives to be achieved in the operational period April to December. There were 4 areas covered: courts, supervision of offenders, family court welfare and development. The first 3 consisted of very specific targets and the latter more general aspirational objectives. Although the plan was to be commended for its simplicity and clarity, it would have been helpful for the objectives to be linked to the Home Secretary's priorities for the probation service nationally. 7.21
- 7.22 As with a number of other aspects of management the new Thames Valley area would benefit from combining the more visionary style of the OBPS strategic planning with the more focused and performance oriented BPS style. 7.22
- 7.23 Plans to integrate performance monitoring were well advanced. The TMSG had been forward thinking in appointing a single manager to oversee information systems development across both services. The information units were already operating as one team, although still based in 2 locations. Neither service had implemented CRAMS and the choice of a case management system was still under consideration. There was close liaison with the Home Office and it appeared that the information systems strategy was being well managed. 7.23
- 7.24 Performance monitoring varied in both counties. In OBPS senior managers had worked closely with the committee to design a quarterly performance monitoring report that met its requirements. The resulting report focused on KPIs, workload and national standards. Information was presented in area and locality formats. The performance monitoring report did not cross-refer to the strategic plan. Although the report provided the committee and senior management with useful performance information, there was little use made of it by middle managers to identify and monitor local performance. Individualised information was available but there was variable use made of it by different line managers and some confusion about its availability. 7.24
- 7.25 In BPS performance monitoring reports reflected the shape of the strategic plan focusing on KPIs, national standards and other strategic targets. The CO had chosen to limit the number of strategic targets that had also restricted the scope for performance management across the service. Individual information was available to local managers but their use of it varied. In addition to regular performance reports used by the committee and senior management, the CO sent out to every member of staff a bulletin giving the most recent service performance against a set of headline targets. 7.25

This was presented in a user-friendly format, was clearly well received and contributed to the sense of a performance culture.

- 7.26 In the strategic planning set up for the new area there needed to be clear links made between national, regional and local priorities, targets, performance measurement and reporting. Performance monitoring needed to be available in various levels of detail for a range of audiences. Board members should have reports combining information about KPIs and national standards with progress against the targets and tasks in the annual plan. Senior managers should have regular performance reports on the area as a whole but in more detail on their areas of responsibility. Middle managers should have access to performance information on their own units' performance in comparison to others, as well as information about individual members of the team. Individual members of staff should have access to regular feedback on their own performance. All of these reports should be used to identify and spread good practice and address poor performance.

Race and gender equality

- 7.27 In BPS the lead manager for equality issues was the CO. BPS had been one of a number of organisations to make a joint statement – *The Reading Declaration* – following the publication of the Macpherson Report into the death of Stephen Lawrence. The service did have an equal opportunities policy which addressed, in general terms, equality of opportunity in employment. The service did not have an equivalent policy for equality issues in service delivery. There had been a renewed focus on equality issues and the probation committee had set a specific objective in the Annual Plan 2000/2001. This addressed racially motivated offenders, fair access to service by black (including Asian and other) offenders and the achievement of recruitment and progression targets. The service had produced a comprehensive progress report covering its response to the HMIP Race Equality Thematic Report, as well as progress against its recruitment targets and annual plan objective. There had been significant progress in a number of areas. For example, race and ethnic monitoring returns had reached 99%.
- 7.28 In OBPS the lead manager for equality issues was one of the directors. Although there had been a policy statement on equality of opportunity and working with diversity approved by the probation committee in May 1999, there had been a policy gap in relation to race and equal opportunities in both employment and service delivery issues. The service had developed a Race Action Plan for 2000/2001 in response to Government priorities. This set out the issues for both employment and service delivery in relation to OBPS but also the Thames Valley area. The action plan set a range of targets for the year, which would have been enhanced by clearer supporting performance measures. The first annual progress report to the Home Secretary showed that progress had been made. For example, 9% of all staff appointments in the last 12 months had been from black minority ethnic groups and OBPS had been the only service to bid successfully for a grant under the "Connecting Communities" scheme. It had employed an Asian worker to act as a link between the service and the Asian communities with the aim of increasing recruitment of employees and CS beneficiaries from those communities. The Acting CO had relaunched a set of practice expectations on race and ethnic monitoring and also met twice with a group of minority ethnic staff.

- 7.29 During the file reading and fieldwork for the inspection there were a number of observations about equality issues which illustrated the impact of the services' policies and strategies:
- women offenders were sometimes dealt with as welfare cases rather than their offending behaviour being addressed
 - some PSRs contained stereotypical descriptions of people
 - there was a "colour-blindness" in the approach of both services
 - specific group work for women was difficult to provide because of small numbers but both services were working at finding solutions
 - local links with racial harassment forums were being developed
 - staff were very positive about the ETE service, particularly for women
 - some of the observed practice was very good on diversity issues
 - there had been a range of training opportunities in both services focusing on diversity
 - one SPO raised the issue that some buildings were difficult for both women offenders and disabled offenders e.g. small reception areas with stairs.
- 7.30 One of the first actions of the TMSG was to set up a Thames Valley Race Focus Group. The aim of this group was to inform the development of policy and recommend specific policies, procedures or practices. Both services had a clear commitment to developing race equality in the new area but needed to ensure that clear targets and performance measures were built into the planning and review of their strategies. Neither service had made extensive and consistent use of the monitoring information available to them and needed to ensure that regular monitoring information will be presented to the new Board demonstrating progress against local and national targets. The GPs had collaborated successfully to recruit minority ethnic candidates for membership of the new Board.

Staff supervision and appraisal

- 7.31 OBPS, upon the amalgamation of Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire, had decided to continue operating 2 appraisal schemes until a new one was developed. This had not been achieved by the time of the announcement of the further amalgamation with BPS. Both OBPS and BPS had now agreed to implement the BPS appraisal scheme across the Thames Valley. This scheme appeared to be well thought out and was regularly monitored to make sure appraisals were completed on all staff. There was a direct link made between the service's annual plan and individual's appraisal objectives as well as meeting occupational standards. BPS also had a useful statement of best practice for supervision in line management meetings. Supervision of staff did take place in both services but was dependent upon the individual line manager and tended to be reactive rather than proactive. Some staff stated that the main focus tended to be on the management of high-risk cases and compliance with national standards.
- 7.32 The failure in OBPS to link individual performance appraisal to the achievement of local and national performance targets had contributed to the very weak performance culture in the service, a key element of the relatively poorer performance in OBPS when compared with BPS. The appropriate

now existed for rapid progress to be made to spread a strong performance culture throughout the area.

Value for money

- 7.33 The graphs on vfm provide an indication of the relative costs combined with the performance of the area, in overall terms and for each of the 4 main categories of work. The main findings were:
- performance in relation to PSRs showed slightly above average performance but considerably above average costs
 - the supervision of probation orders showed slightly above average performance but considerably above average costs
 - the CS scheme showed slightly above average performance but considerably above average costs
 - resettlement work showed slightly above average performance but considerably above average costs.
- 7.34 The overall assessment was of slightly above average performance but considerably above average costs. The costs partly reflected the fact that Berkshire had been over-resourced under the cash limit formula in recent years and the impact of higher on-costs and overheads in an expensive region such as this. In relation to costs, the graphs would alter with the application of the new cash limit arrangements, effective from April 2001. In this context the more significant variable is the performance one.
- 7.35 When this inspection was planned it was agreed that in the final report only limited use would be made of data that compared BPS and OBPS, with the final judgement about this balance resting with HMIP. In the various chapters such differences have been highlighted just occasionally to enable the new Board and senior managers to plan for the future, recognising that where the 2 services started from is relevant. In addition, senior managers have had access to the full set of performance data generated by this inspection, including comparative data about the 2 services. It is hoped that such data will be used to inspire improvements.
- 7.36 During the fieldwork inspectors also used some of this data to draw attention to more significant differences when discussing performance in various locations. However, the performance figures set out above mask considerable differences between the 2 services, with BPS overall demonstrating considerably above average performance and OBPS considerably below average performance. Although OBPS showed a number of strengths as highlighted in this report, and useful for the amalgamation, despite the Q&E inspection performance, improvement in OBPS had not been achieved to the extent expected. The Q&E follow-up suggested that there had been some progress, but this was necessarily based on OBPS performance and quality data, which has not proved to be sufficiently robust as shown by this inspection. Whilst this commentary may generate some tensions for the new Board and CO the reality of some of the differences between the 2 services have to be recognised and worked with.

Partnership policy

- 7.37 OBPS had a robust policy and procedures for the identification and establishment of partnerships. The director and SPO with responsibility for services development had oversight and were supported by a partnership commissioning group which set priorities for the allocation of partnership money. It also held a brief to review the partnerships. Local SPOs had a brief to liaise with partner agencies. The probation committee approved the budget and received reports on partnerships, although these were subsumed in a relevant service delivery report. Although there were many positive aspects to the policy and practice, the service needed to develop more outcome-focused objectives and monitoring that reflected these. In 1999/2000 the service spent 5.2% of their revenue budget on partnerships.
- 7.38 BPS did not have a specific partnership strategy and did not report on partnership performance to the committee. The CO argued that the service determined for every area of expenditure the most cost-effective way of delivering and supporting services. There was a document setting out the selection procedure, standard agreements, monitoring and payment arrangements. This was a clear and helpful document. The service spent 4.5% of the revenue budget on partnerships in 1999/2000. Contracts were overseen by one of the ACOs and operational managers had responsibility for identifying services to be provided by partners. The standard contract format made clear reference to performance indicators for each contract.
- 7.39 The amalgamation implementation plan showed that the 2 services were working to harmonise their policy and procedures. Table 50 shows that they had similar profiles of expenditure. The stated intention was to bring all current contracts to a common end date in March 2002, allowing sufficient time to align procedures and to develop a new strategy. The new arrangements needed to ensure that the cost-effectiveness of partnership contracts was monitored and reported regularly to the Board. This would require the setting of measurable, outcome-focused targets and standardised reports. The approach would fit with the Better Quality Services approach that the area was adopting.

Collaborative arrangements

- 7.40 There had been a tradition of collaboration between the 3 counties making up Thames Valley. The COs met to discuss issues of joint interest despite being in 2 different regional groupings. Joint work had included The Thames Valley Project providing group work programmes for sex offenders. The 3 services had also been involved in joint bidding initiatives for forklift truck driving training for offenders, an early basic skills initiative, an ESF basic skills project which later became a Basic Skills Pathfinder. This tradition of working together had been helpful in establishing a workable plan for amalgamation.
- 7.41 More locally based examples of multi-agency collaboration included:
- in the Banbury area agencies had been working together to establish a range of services for drug users. OBPS had contributed a relatively small amount of DTTO money and participated in the development process. The service was also an active member of other drugs related working groups across the 2 counties
 - OBPS had put in a successful bid for "Connecting Communities" under the heading of *Towards More Representative Services* – the only service in the country to do this

- OBPS had also contributed to a range of housing related initiatives, e.g. the Winterwatch project in Aylesbury, a short-term emergency accommodation project for single, homeless young people
 - BPS had taken a lead in bidding for ESF funding for a basic skills project which was shared with OBPS and drew in £185,000 of European funding.
- 7.42 The process of preparing for amalgamation had been the most important collaboration for both services. Although the inspection did not assess the quality of the implementation plan, it was an important part of the context for the inspection, not least because it was a massive undertaking for the 2 services and was therefore inevitably going to have an impact on performance. The TMSG had chosen not to appoint a transition manager but to task senior managers to develop implementation plans for their areas of responsibility. This appeared to be working well, although there was still a lot to be achieved particularly in the harmonisation of service delivery. There had been learning from the amalgamation of Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire and managers were able to apply this to the new amalgamation planning. It was apparent during the inspection that there were some aspects of OBPS service culture that were still changing after the first amalgamation. The new senior management team and Board for the Thames Valley area will need to ensure that the process of integration was achieved expeditiously.

Summary and recommendations

- 7.43 In relation to vfm and management arrangements, the area's strengths were:
- an effective TMSG and advanced planning for most aspects of amalgamation
 - sound financial systems, planning and administration
 - a strong sense of vision in OBPS and the clear focus on achieving targets in BPS
 - race equality was clearly a priority for the new area.
- 7.44 The areas for improvement were:
- performance monitoring
 - race and gender equality issues, particularly the quality of work with offenders.
- 7.45 Issues to be addressed to enhance the success of amalgamation were:
- harmonising the strategic planning styles of 2 services.
- 7.46 It is therefore recommended that:
- ① *The Probation Board should require the CO to design a suite of performance monitoring reports reflecting recent national guidance on monitoring and clearly linked to the improvement of performance at individual, team and area levels.*
 - ② *The Probation Board should require the CO to review the quality of practice with minority ethnic and women offenders and set targets for improving performance.*

8. THE NEXT STEPS

- 8.1 This report has been submitted to the Secretary of State, the Probation Board, and the CO. Copies have been made available to the press and are on the web site of HMIP at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmiprob/hmiprob.htm>.
- 8.2 The report makes a number of recommendations which are designed to encourage the area in its work, to take further some of its own good practice and to promote improvements in quality and effectiveness in the future. Recommendations are made to the Board in recognition of the fact that the CO is also a member of the Board. It is then a matter for the Board to determine how to delegate the implementation of the recommendations and to ensure that it receives progress reports.
- 8.3 The Inspectorate will meet the Board to discuss the findings and recommendations. The Board will be asked to send a response to the recommendations, together with an action plan, within 3 months of the publication of the report. It is anticipated that the recommendations will normally be implemented within 12 months of the publication of the report, which should allow sufficient time for integration with existing developments.
- 8.4 A programme of follow-up inspections will be conducted about 12 months after publication of the report to ensure that progress is made in implementing the recommendations. The Chief Inspector of Probation has decided that the resources of HMIP in its follow-up programme should be focused on those areas whose performance was least satisfactory in the Performance Inspection Programme. The content and length of any follow-up programme will depend on the issues that require examination. All follow-up reports will be published. Decisions about the level of follow-up will be based on the following criteria:
- performance against the Home Office KPIs and the area's own targets
 - performance against national standards
 - performance in relation to observed practice, to include issues such as public protection and the impact of supervision on offender behaviour
 - achievement of vfm, including the use of partnerships
 - achievement of equitable service delivery
 - leadership and management arrangements to plan and review performance to achieve improvements
 - any other factors which may have contributed to a particularly good or poor performance.
- 8.5 It has been decided that there will be 3 categories of follow-up inspection:
1. **A paper-based follow-up inspection** for areas which were generally performing satisfactorily, and where strengths clearly outweighed weaknesses, or where there was evidence that weaknesses were being well addressed: the area will be required to submit a written report identifying the progress made on the recommendations in the Performance Inspection

Programme report supported by management information. HMIP will only visit the area if the material raises issues of concern.

2. **A standard follow-up inspection** for areas where weaknesses were fairly equally balanced with strengths: the area will be required to submit a written report identifying the progress made on the recommendations in the Performance Inspection Programme report supported by management information. HMIP will visit the area to inspect the progress made on the recommendations. The visit will include a meeting with members of the Probation Board and will include some auditing of local results.
 3. **A full follow-up inspection** for areas where weaknesses clearly outweighed strengths: the area will be required to submit a written report identifying the progress made on the recommendations in the Performance Inspection Programme report supported by management information. HMIP will visit the area and conduct additional work, which is likely to include a further examination of records, to audit local results, and attention to other key weaknesses identified. The visit will include a meeting with the Probation Board. All follow-up reports in this category will be presented to the Board by the assistant chief inspector and lead inspector who will, on occasion, be joined by the Chief Inspector of Probation.
- 8.6 Whatever the level of follow-up, the recommendations in the report will always require areas to provide further performance data, either from routine monitoring or from inspection and sampling exercises. Areas will reduce the demands made on them by the follow-up inspection if local planning is undertaken early to ensure that relevant performance information will be available to enable inspectors to assess progress. This approach will support that of the European Excellence Model, a tool probation areas will be using as part of their self assessment and to demonstrate Better Quality Services. Ideally, performance information required by HMIP will be available from systems already integrated into the area's planning and review arrangements. Follow-up work will be undertaken, where possible, by the lead inspector and an inspector who was not involved in the original inspection. The basic principle underlying follow-up inspections will be that of auditing area performance information. If this is not available, and without it it is not possible to determine if performance has improved as required, the area will be judged as not having implemented the recommendations. Requests for advance information will be made in good time.
- 8.7 In recognition of the timing of the inspection, for these amalgamating areas the Chief Inspector of Probation has determined that they will receive a **specially tailored follow-up inspection**, to be agreed with the new Board, 3 months before the follow-up inspections are due to take place.
- 8.8 The following were the main strengths:
- a positive and collaborative approach to amalgamation
 - good liaison with sentencers and high levels of sentencer satisfaction
 - the quality of PSRs in BPS
 - ETE and basic skills provision
 - the quality of work done by offenders on CS orders and high levels of beneficiary satisfaction
 - good provision for work with sex offenders

- good communication and protocols between agencies involved in managing high risk of harm cases
- priority was given to race equality
- sound financial administration.

8.9 The areas for improvement included:

- the quality of performance monitoring reports
- most aspects of compliance with national standards
- PSR timeliness and their quality in OBPS
- the timeliness and quality of supervision plans
- the management of combination orders
- the integration of resettlement cases into the What Works strategy
- the coverage of CS and resettlement in the annual plan
- the reporting of serious incidents
- the consistency of risk definitions
- the accuracy, timeliness and accessibility of the high risk of harm database
- the quality of practice with minority ethnic and women offenders.

The role of the Inspectorate and the aims of the Performance Inspection Programme

The Inspectorate is part of the Home Office, reporting independently to the Secretary of State and contributes to the achievement of Home Office **Aim 4:**

effective execution of the sentences of the courts so as to reduce reoffending and protect the public

and specifically to the Criminal Policy Group's objective:

to ensure effective independent scrutiny of prisons and probation areas.

By fulfilling its inspection programme aims and objectives, the Inspectorate aims to:

- assure the Secretary of State and through him, Parliament and the public that local probation areas are carrying out their task properly and efficiently having due regard for economy in the use of public funds
- encourage individual probation areas to adopt the best standards of management and probation practice and deliver services of the highest quality to courts and the public.

Inspectorate programmes are designed specifically to fulfil this challenging remit. They do so through the regular inspection and open publication of reports on individual probation areas and specific issues of concern. Consequently, the Inspectorate:

- inspects the outputs and performance of the probation area and allied organisations, assessing quality and vfm
- checks that the services received by the courts, offenders and the public are delivered in the most effective way possible and meet the needs of those whom they serve
- promotes the highest standards of management and practice
- advises the Home Office on probation and allied matters.

The Inspectorate is committed to the Home Office policy of equality of opportunity for all, regardless of ethnic origin, religious belief, gender, sexual orientation, marital status or disability. An equal opportunity dimension informs all the work of the Inspectorate.

The overall aim of the Performance Inspection Programme is to:

- assure the Secretary of State that each probation area is providing high quality, effective services and vfm.

The specific objectives of the Performance Inspection Programme are to:

- (a) ensure that the quality of service received by users in each probation area is improving in accordance with declared standards;
- (b) ensure that each probation area is able to become more effective in carrying out its duties;

- (c) ensure that each probation area is able to improve its efficiency and vfm in the use of resources;
- (d) publish timely reports which promote these objectives.

The Inspectorate believes that comparative information about areas within a region should be available and published as a prelude to improving performance and effectiveness and as a vehicle for spreading good practice.

Standards for achieving quality and effectiveness of service delivery nationally are contained in the Home Office 3 Year Plan for the Probation Service and the National Standards for the Supervision of Offenders in the Community. National standards are designed to improve accountability, consistency, good practice and area effectiveness. National standards do not of themselves guarantee a quality service delivery, but they are based on best practice, should be striven for and compliance should be monitored.

In addition to performance data, unit cost information for a variety of activities enables commentary about vfm.

The Inspectorate also undertakes other tasks including:

- policy advice: providing high quality advice from a professional perspective to Ministers, the Home Office and others. All inspectors have responsibility for providing advice on one or more specific subjects under the overall coordination of the chief inspector
- carrying out short-term enquiries into high profile issues affecting either the national probation service or local probation areas.

At the completion of each inspection a report is published, copies of which are available (price £10 including postage) from:

*HM Inspectorate of Probation
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Tel: 0207 273 3819

The Inspectorate is a public body. It is open to members of the public to raise with it matters which fall within its remit. Anyone who wishes to comment on an inspection, a report or any other matter affecting the Inspectorate should write to:

*HM Chief Inspector of Probation
50 Queen Anne's Gate
London SW1H 9AT*

Performance Inspection

ISBN 1 84082 652 5

Crown Copyright Price £10.00

Printed by Pindar plc