

Probation Board Action Plan in respect of Pre-Sentence Report Inspection - 8 September 2011

Recommendation	Accepted	PBNI Response and Action
The Probation Board should restate the Core Standards objective as delivering the Pre-Sentence Report to the court on time. (A target of 95% to 100% should be set)	Yes	<u>PBNI Action:</u> To report PSR delivery timeliness against target of 95-100% from April 2011.
The Probation Board should increase the usage of Specific Sentence Reports (or other suitable reports). A target of 35% per annum should be set.	Partially Accepted	<p>Ultimately, the judiciary have discretion with regard to the reports supplied for each case. In order to engage with the judiciary on this issue, and also to have a suitable lead in time (to enable PBNI establish suitable structures, systems and staffing), an interim target will be set for the current business year.</p> <p>For 2011-2012, PBNI will seek to provide 15% of reports to courts in a shortened format. In year 2, 2012-2013, the target will be 35% of reports provided to courts will be in a shortened format.</p> <p><u>PBNI's actions</u> against this recommendation are</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To agree a framework with the judiciary to increase the use of shortened reports by September 2011. 2. To meet local sentencers to discuss the provision of shortened reports from October 2011.
The Probation Board should usefully discuss with third party service providers how best to deliver relevant data from Pre-Sentence Reports.	Yes	<u>PBNI Action:</u> To have in place agreed mechanisms for the sharing of relevant data from PSRs with third party service providers by December 2011.
The Probation Board should survey other users of Pre-Sentence Reports in conjunction with the Sentencer survey.	Partially Accepted	The Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2008 sets out the purpose of a Pre-Sentence Report ("pre-sentence report" means a report in writing which— (a) with a view to assisting the court in determining the most suitable method of dealing with an offender).

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		<p>Schedule 1 of the 2009 Parole Commissioners (NI) Rules also refer to Pre-Sentence Reports.</p> <p><u>PBNI Action:</u> Recognising the other decision makers to reference PSRs are Parole Commissioners, when next conducting a Sentencer Survey, PBNI will include Parole Commissioners.</p>
<p>The Probation Board need to identify the specific reasons for poor uptake of Specific Sentence Reports and if necessary, develop reports that meet the requirements of Sentencers but are less resource intensive.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p><u>PBNI Action:</u> To identify and document reasons for poor uptake of SSRs by December 2011 and take appropriate action in response. (Actions listed under Recommendation 2 are also relevant).</p>
<p>The threshold for <i>standard</i> and <i>emergency</i> recalls should be clearly demarcated.</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>While PBNI accept that a clear understanding in respect of standard and emergency recall thresholds is required, this recommendation is not directly relevant to the provision of Pre-Sentence Reports.</p> <p>PBNI will seek to agree with Parole Commissioners and Offender Recall Unit the thresholds for standard and emergency recalls by October 2011.</p> <p>Practice in relation to this work may be more appropriately reviewed in the forthcoming inspection of life prisoners.</p>
<p>Area Managers should have remote access to the Probation Board IT systems for out-of-hours working.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>To complete a pilot of remote secure access to PBNI IT systems by March 2012.</p>

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<p>The Probation Board should gather information on the outcomes of cases where Pre-Sentence Reports are provided to identify possible indicators of a correlation between the sentences and the options outlined in the report.</p>	<p>Partially Accepted</p>	<p>The purpose of a PSR is set out in the 1996 and 2008 Criminal Justice (NI) Orders ('...to assist the court in determining the most suitable method of dealing with an offender').</p> <p>Therefore, the quality of PSRs is best judged in relation to the quality of the risk assessment carried out, rather than the sentence imposed (this is the responsibility of the judge).</p> <p>PBNI accept such information may be useful to review, and will conduct an exercise to ascertain the correlation between the sentences and options outlined in PSRs, and decide whether there are any implications for PBNI practice.</p>