



## Bedfordshire Probation Area

### From Possibility...

The Criminal Justice Act 2003 made radical changes to the structure of prison and community sentences which affect the work of the Prison and Probation Services at all levels. With a series of implementation stages running from April 2004 through to 2006/07, this represents a major change programme for the Prison and Probation Service.

The single generic Community Sentence will have a significant impact on the structures and processes currently used and "Custody Minus" is likely to increase the number of medium and high risk offenders supervised by the Probation Service.

The generic community sentence will replace all current adult community orders to allow the courts greater flexibility to tailor the sentence to the individual offender. Courts will have the option of ordering reviews for requirements of less than 12 months and must do so for those over 12 months.

Bedfordshire Probation Area (BPA) have been using the EFQM Excellence Model for several years to help guide their continuous improvement journey and, in particular, have seen the benefits of adopting a process perspective for performance improvement. It was therefore a natural decision for Chief Officer John Scott and ACO Andrew Powell to embed process thinking into their CJA03 Implementation Plan.

The challenge was to design the key customer-facing processes that would enable staff to implement the requirements of the Act. Ad Esse were asked to provide that support, ready to implement the new processes in April 2005.

### Our Approach

The key elements of our support were to:

- Develop a high-level process model that identified the main customer-facing processes
- Facilitate 4 process design teams to develop the lower-level detail of how each of the key processes would work
- Build a caseload volume and staffing spreadsheet model to evaluate the options for deploying staff
- Produce a set of process maps, with links to supporting documentation, to be made available across the BPA intranet

BPA were also keen to ensure that any outputs from their work could be shared more widely and agreed to work closely with one of the other East of England Areas on the process design work.

Andrew Powell (ACO) was overall Project Manager for the CJA03 Implementation Project and chaired the multi-disciplinary Reference Group that co-ordinated the various streams of activity. In addition to the process design work-stream, the scope of work included:

- HR, including staff training
- Communications (internally and externally)
- IT
- Finance and Risk Management
- Integration with National Probation Directorate milestones

## To Actuality...

### Process Design

Each of the process design teams had facilitation support from Ad Esse over a two month period. The boundaries of the processes were clearly defined by the Reference Group before the teams started and they had a range of source material and guidance on the CJ Act provided by the National Probation

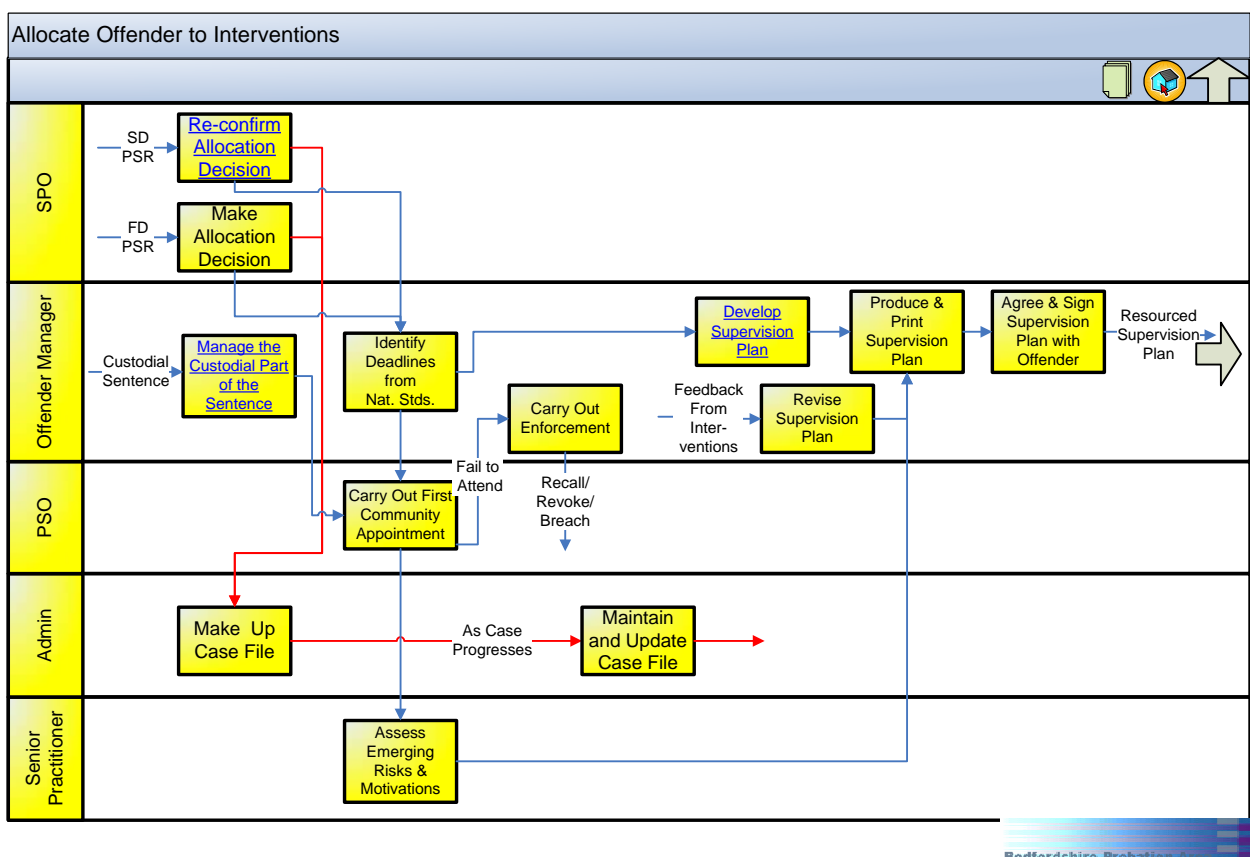
Directorate. The design task was therefore to identify the key process steps and their flows and linkages. (Example map below).

Each team took their draft maps to colleagues for a "sanity check" as part of routine team meetings and collated the supporting paperwork, templates and checklists that would be needed to operate the process. This provided an opportunity to streamline some of the paperwork and ensure consistency between different offices.

A further key task undertaken by each team was to identify the draft National Standards for performance, as they applied to their process.

The consensus view of the teams after their second meeting was that the process wasn't actually very complicated and the main challenge would be in ensuring it was deployed effectively across the relevant staff groups.

The process maps were produced in MS Visio so that they could be made available across the BPA intranet, using a plug-in for MS Internet Explorer. Each map had hyperlinks to related processes, or to drill-downs for more detail. Document attachments were also included in the maps.

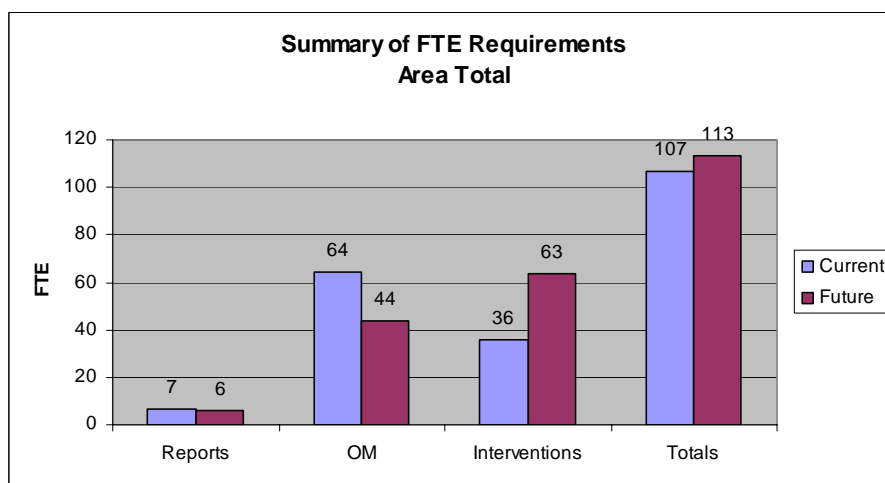


A Process Definition document was produced in MS Word for each process. This included a summary of the purpose of the process, its inputs and outputs, description of the main process steps and identification of the relevant National Standards.

## Organisational Analysis and Design

It was known from the start of the BPA Implementation Project that changes to the organisation's structure would be required to enable both the processes and the CJ Act to be implemented. BPA had discussed the concept of dividing staff into "Clusters" - teams with responsibility for end-to-end Offender Management processes.

An important piece of analysis was the development of a spreadsheet to model the pre-CJA processes and staffing levels and the same for post-CJA implementation.



The analysis showed that overall staffing levels in the current organisation were fairly close to what would be required post-CJA, but that the staff weren't allocated to the required processes, or balanced across the offices in a way that would meet the expected caseload volumes.

The model helped to identify the number of clusters required at each office and the likely mix of staff required to operate the newly designed processes.

Of course, the analysis was only part of input required for the re-focussing of the BPA organisation to meet the needs of the CJA and the new National Offender Management Service. Important considerations included the preferences of staff for the type and variety of work they would be doing, as well as existing skill levels and grades available to carry out specialist tasks.

## The Benefits

The process teams have delivered clear, new processes that describe how the requirements of the CJA will be implemented. They have supporting information for the operation of these processes and a line of sight to the required National Standards for performance. All the processes are available to BPA staff via the intranet.

The Bedfordshire Probation Area approach has been to have a widespread staff involvement throughout its CJA Implementation Project, which has helped ensure a high degree of ownership of the solutions and of the plans to make these solutions workable.

The analytical modelling of the processes, caseload volumes and staffing has given the Chief Officers Group some solid baseline data on which to make decisions about future staffing requirements and resource planning.

Andrew Powell said:

“The Introduction of the Criminal Justice Act, and the organisational changes that have accompanied it have necessitated complex changes to the way we do things in Bedfordshire. Ad Esse's consultant Ian Seath has provided us with a process model that has allowed a clarity often missing in major changes in Probation.

He has helped us define our vision, and taken us step by step through the planning and the processes. He has worked effectively with staff at all grades, and given them confidence in the Area's change control. He has reliably produced accessible maps, graphs and diagrams at short notice.

We are still anxious about the implications of this Act, but Ad Esse's help has left us feeling as much in control as possible in such an uncertain landscape.”

### More Information

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