

London Probation Area's Creative Re-Introduction of ETE

From Possibility...

The Criminal Justice Sector is currently subject to many major change initiatives. One of the key concepts underpinning the new Criminal Justice Act is that of reducing re-offending through an increasing focus on getting offenders into employment. Previously, the Probation Service had a role in developing offenders' basic skills through training focused on literacy and numeracy. The new Act places an increased emphasis on the Probation Service improving the employability of offenders rather than merely supervising or punishing them.

The new Criminal Justice Act allows Courts to sentence offenders to an Education Training & Employment (ETE) Specified Activity. This ETE order is used in addition to Unpaid Work or supervision orders and compels offenders to attend a set number of days training or tutoring. The Activity order splits into two elements; Skills for Life (SfL) covering basic educational needs, (English as a foreign language, literacy and numeracy, etc.), and an ETE element aiming to increase the offender's employability and access to employment (career guidance, offence disclosure, interview skills, CV writing and so on).

Previously, SfL and ETE tutoring were offered to offenders as an optional extra to their Community Punishment (now called Unpaid Work) (UW) or Supervision Orders in order to improve their basic skills. Attendance at the training was voluntary and not enforceable - offenders would suffer no punishment should they choose not to attend. Under the new legislation, an ETE order is 'enforceable'. This means that the Service must ensure that appointments are clearly recorded and attendance or non-attendance clearly documented, as evidence of non-attendance may be required for use in Court at Breach proceedings.

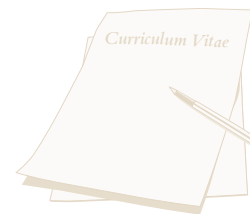
London Probation Area is unique not only in its size, accounting for approximately one quarter of the Probation Service for England & Wales, but in its complexity and diversity. London Probation Area is an Employment Pathfinder area (piloting different methods of increasing offenders' employability) and was faced with implementing Education Training and Employment as a Specified Activity from April 2005 onwards.

Ad Esse were invited to assist with the introduction of new operational guidelines. We ensured that the guidelines were built around workable process maps and resource utilisations and helped with the planning and implementation of the change plan. The aim was to reduce the workload on new Unpaid Work supervisors to a minimum and ensure that the difference between voluntary and Specified Activity training was clear to all, ensuring that enforceable orders were not missed.

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The issues facing London Probation Area were:

- An activity that had been voluntary had now become enforceable for some, but not all, offenders.
- Not all offenders were currently being offered Skills for Life (SfL) training due to lack of availability of tutors for assessment sessions, but we had to ensure that all those with a Specified Activity were assessed.
- Each Unpaid Work office currently had a different process due to resource, space and training provider issues.
- The provision of ETE training had been scaled down in London to allow specific targets for SfL training to be met and would now have to be scaled up again to meet the demands of the new Act.
- Contracts for SfL and ETE training were up for renewal (though this was used as the opportunity to introduce the new processes as part of the contract negotiations).
- A changed role for Unpaid Work staff who would become the Offender Manager when a Specified Activity Requirement was attached to Unpaid Work.
- It was unclear exactly how many offenders would receive ETE orders and how many days these would be for.
- Many UW Offender Managers were relatively new in post and could have a case load of up to 150 offenders at any one time.



OUR APPROACH

DIAGNOSTIC AND MAPPING

The first step in the project was to understand fully the existing processes and how these might have to alter given the strictures of the new Act. This was done by running a workshop with representatives of the eight LPA Unpaid Work offices where we mapped the current process and identified the variations between offices. The participants then explored how things would have to change given the introduction of the new Act. We developed some outline processes and identified the resource and role changes necessary to implement them.

Representatives from existing providers of SfL and ETE were then asked to look at the outline LPA processes to identify how their own methods might have to change. Providers were also asked to identify potential problems and issues that might occur with the introduction, or running, of the new processes.

A number of existing Offender Managers from a selection of probation offices were similarly invited to critique the outline process from their perspective. The outline process was then developed further, particularly capturing differences between UW offices that would have to continue into the future.

RESOURCE MODELLING

Given that the role of UW Offender Managers was new and that resources were scarce, and that an expected 6,500 Specified Activity orders were predicted per year, Ad Esse worked with the LPA ETE project manager to develop a resource model of the new process. The aim of this modelling was to look at the balance of likely ETE demand and tutor provision across the whole of London.

Details were fed in regarding number of orders likely to be made, likely duration, and approximate values for numbers of offenders completing orders. This provided the number of SfL and ETE sessions required for the year. We then looked at the amount of ETE provision budgeted for and made approximations of the number of tutor/offender sessions that would be available across London in the same year.

| Estimated annual ETE orders | % of 10 day orders | % of 30 day orders | % of 60 day orders | % offenders expected to compete ETE order | Total ETE sessions required |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| 6500 | 45 | 35 | 20 | 45% | 58,500 |
| 6500 | 20 | 35 | 45 | 45% | 85,500 |
| 6500 | 45 | 45 | 10 | 45% | 52,000 |
| 4500 | 45 | 35 | 20 | 45% | 40,500 |
| 4500 | 20 | 35 | 45 | 45% | 59,200 |
| 4500 | 45 | 45 | 10 | 45% | 36,000 |

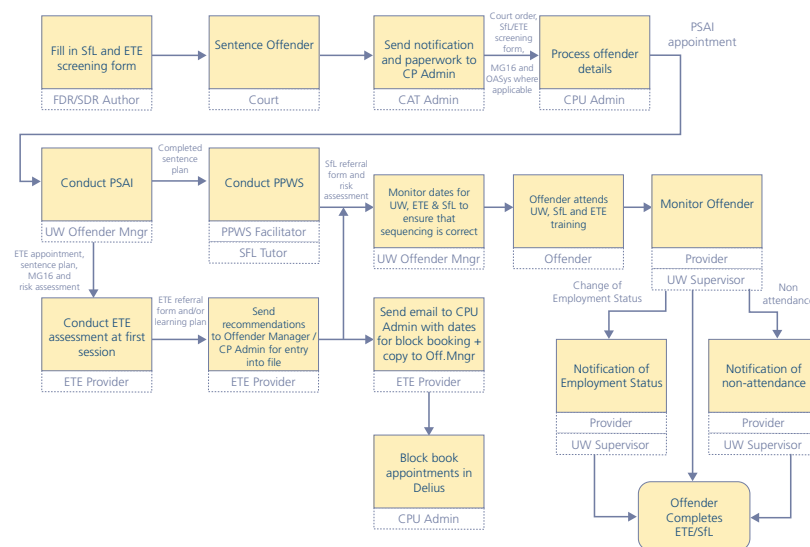
The supply side of the ETE sessions available was developed using a model of the number of providers and tutors and the number of sessions per day they could run.

This modelling immediately highlighted a likely resource gap; demand for ETE tutoring was likely to be much higher than supply. One outcome of this was to develop guidelines for Pre-Sentence Report (PSR) authors and sentencers ensuring that the number of Specified Activities was well below the initial estimates produced by the LPA. Another outcome was the need to monitor each week the number and length of orders and compare these to the existing resource model.

New process maps were finally developed taking into account office variations across London. Each office was visited to test the new process with users and modifications made. The final version of the maps act as the skeleton for guidelines to be written by the Assistant Chief Officer. Ad Esse also worked with the project manager to assist with the implementation plan, including strategic decisions to be made to make the new ways of working effective. Implications of the key strategic decisions facing the Area were identified to give the Area a firm grip on performance.

The final version of one of the newly designed process maps is illustrated below. Other maps have been produced for Unpaid Work offices with combined Pre-Session Appraisal Interview (PSAI) and PPWS and for probation offices entry routes for offenders.

ETE as a Specified Activity for offices with separate PSAI and PPWS sessions:

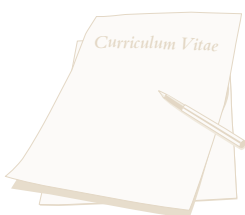


To Actuality...

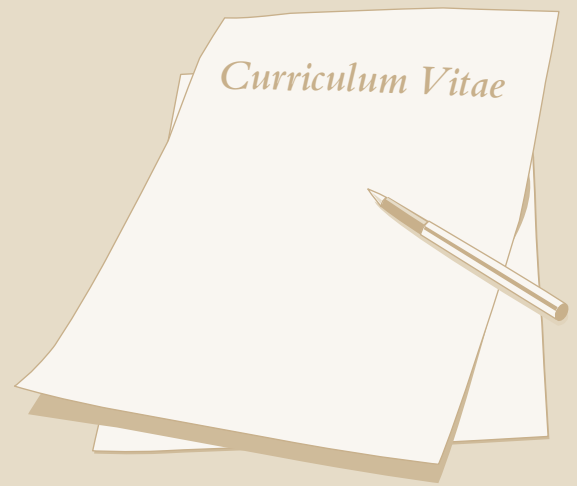
Implementing the processes defined has required some policy decisions to be made regarding the role of Offender Managers and providers, priorities within the system and how to ensure that the new processes are understandable and easily implemented by all those across the service. Mapping the processes has identified a number of recommendations, specifically with a view to ensuring that all offenders with a Specified Activity were properly tracked through the system and reducing the workload of the Unpaid Work Offender Managers.

The main recommendations and actions were as follows:

- Incorporating ETE screening questions in the Skills for Life screening form used pre-sentence by the Pre-Sentence Report author.
- Determining a set split of days between Skills for Life and ETE based on availability of training resource to reduce the sentence planning element of the Offender Manager's workload.
- Moving some of the administrative burden for attendance recording and employment status recording from the Unpaid Work staff to ETE and Skills for Life tutors.
- Ensuring the minimum number of Specified Activities so that maximum use could be made of the provision to enable offenders to volunteer to spend up to 20% of their Unpaid Work sentence on ETE or SfL training.
- Careful monitoring of actual sentencing patterns and feeding these into the supply/demand model to predict any capacity issues before they become too difficult to manage.



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THE BENEFITS

With this proactive approach to the implementation of change, London Probation Area has a clear, tested process to act as the backbone for guidelines to be issued to staff. The benefit for London is the confidence that the process is practical and takes into account local resource variations, meaning that staff will be able to use the guidelines and process maps from day 1.

The ETE team has a clear implementation and communication plan and also has a resource model that can be used to manage and monitor the process across London. All the roles and documents to be used are clear and the likelihood of success of the project is greatly increased.

Jill Shaw, ACO Unpaid Work for Offenders (North & East), Education, Training and Employment for Offenders, London Probation, said:-

"Using Ad Esse helped us to streamline referral routes to employment advice for offenders with operational staff and clarify the focus and role of the new Activity Requirement. The process highlighted potential obstacles in terms of data collection and resources which we have been able to address strategically within London Probation."

"The work we did was extremely useful to me in focussing on the processes with staff and providers, which we have continued to build on. We have increased our provision in the new contracts and have put in a bid for a further increase next year. We have also placed additional admin staff into all the pilot locations to help track employment outcomes, and increased the size of the ETE team to include 2 Coordinators and an Employer Facing Manager on Secondment from Job Centre Plus. As a consequence we now have better monitoring arrangements which are beginning to impact on performance results."

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