

From Possibility...

The National Probation Service has several customer groups, including Sentencers within Magistrate and Crown Courts. Prior to sentencing an offender, the Courts will generally request a report, and this is a key process of the National Probation Service.

The Service traditionally provided the Courts with a full Pre-Sentence Reports (PSR) with a small proportion of Specific Sentence Reports (SSR) which were quicker to produce but could only be completed in certain cases.

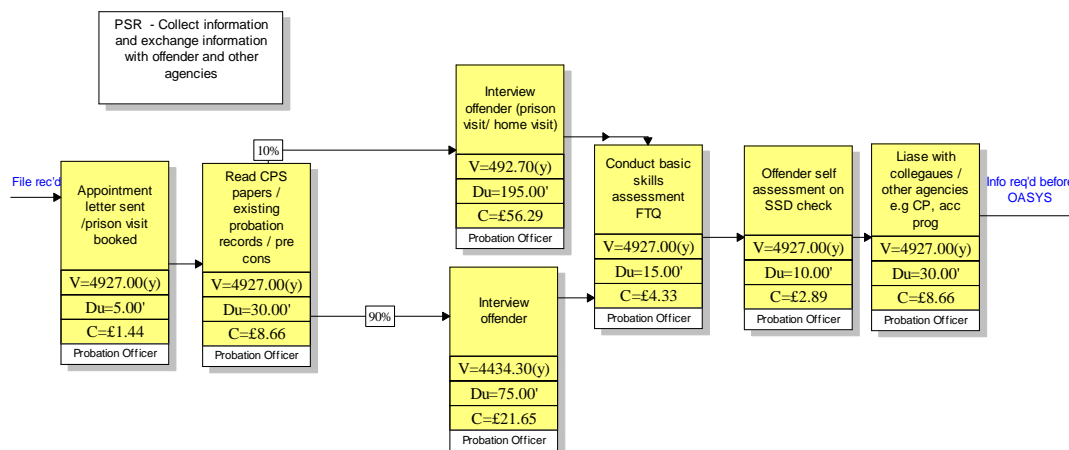
In 2003 the Service found itself under extreme workload pressures and decided to examine this key process to see if it could be improved and streamlined in any way. Lorraine Mackin, our CJS Director tells us how she supported the project.

Our Approach

Working in one Probation Area a cross-grade team from all parts of the process was established. This included court staff, administrative staff, probation officers, trade union representatives as well as critical support staff such as information services.

The team's task was to map, analyse and redesign the process to ensure the time it took to produce a report was reduced, but the overall high quality of reports and sentencer satisfaction was maintained.

Costing and Analysing the Process

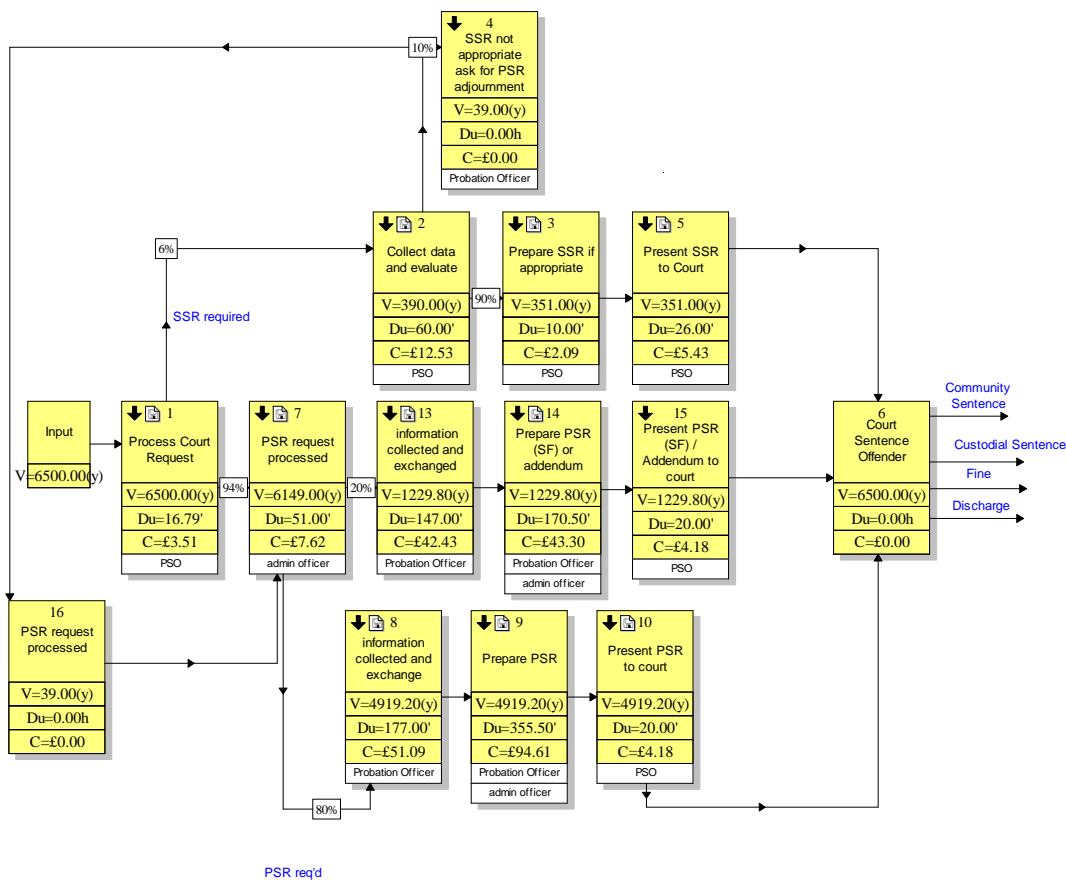


The team mapped the process in a workshop to understand the overall flow. It was critical to physically walk the process through to test this flow out in the real world. Conducting a process walkthrough enabled us to find out how long the process took, who performed certain tasks and where problems were occurring.

To Actuality...

The team implemented several improvements to streamline the overall process. The major improvement was the development of an alternative (and shorter) version of a Pre-Sentence Report, a PSR (SF), for certain offenders. The team used Control process software to “model” different process scenarios. Creating scenarios helped the team to decide realistic volumes to establish for the “mix” of reports which needed to be processed through the three process streams.

Fully costed and re-designed process model



The Benefits

The new type of PSR (SF) saved around 3 hours and 55 minutes for each report produced, when compared to the full Pre Sentence Report. Whilst not every report could be produced as a PSR (SF), in a large-volume process the time and cost savings were significant. It also provided an overall picture of the process, roles and costs of the process for the very first time, which provided a critical tool for communicating and implementing change.

a posse ad esse – from possibility to actuality