

## **APPENDIX 4**

### **UNPAID WORK – THE MAYOR’S PROJECT**

#### **Background**

For the first time ever, the National probation Service would like to invite Mayors in selected boroughs to support an Unpaid Work Project or scheme.

#### **Benefits for local authority and mayor**

- Local people may get the opportunity, through the mayor’s office, to have some say in the choice of project.
- The project will gain publicity through the year for the mayor and the local authority.
- The project will raise awareness of how communities can benefit from Unpaid Work.
- The project may encourage other community groups to nominate projects which they would like their local probation area to tackle through Unpaid Work.

#### **Benefits for Probation**

- It will be a good platform from which to sell the many benefits of Unpaid Work including the link to the local job market.
- Local media should give it good coverage as they do most things on the mayor’s diary and Council communications units may also contribute, sharing in media releases and publicising the project in their own publications.
- The project will generate visibility for Unpaid Work and also engage local communities.
- It will strengthen existing links between probation and the local council.
- It will be popular with Ministers because it meets the needs of the Community and Business Alliances and is a visible example of justice in the community. Because it is happening across the country, and for the first time, it may generate national coverage.



## **COMMUNITY PAYBACK/UNPAID WORK**

Offenders perform 6.5 million hours of Unpaid Work a year in England and Wales. In cash terms this represents over £30 million worth of labour AND is a valuable resource to local communities.

Unpaid Work is a sentence available to courts. It is a requirement of a community order, which can be imposed on its own, or in conjunction with other requirements, such as supervision by a probation officer or a requirement to attend a specialist offending behaviour programme (please see 12 Requirements Leaflet)

The National Probation Service promotes Unpaid Work as Community Payback to emphasise the fact that offenders are making amends to the community for their crimes (please see Community Payback leaflet).

### **How long does an Unpaid Work sentence last?**

The sentence is set by the court at anything between 40 and 300 hours depending on the seriousness of the crime and the offender's record.

Generally offenders work at least six hours a day. The work takes place on weekdays and at weekends and in some cases during the evening.

### **What type of work do offenders do?**

There is a wide variety of different projects over the country. Some projects are relatively short – graffiti removal or the clearance of rubbish and improvement of public areas. Others are much more extensive projects, such as large scale redecoration projects in public buildings, schools or premises belonging to community or charitable groups and churches. The Probation Service is also keen to promote projects which have a community safety or crime prevention focus.

### **How do you select projects?**

Probation areas work with a wide range of partners including community groups, charities, local authorities, schools, churches, mosques and Crime and Disorder Reduction Panels, who suggest projects which would be suitable.

More importantly, any member of the public can suggest a project. They can contact their local Probation Service directly or through their community representatives. This is something we very much encourage.

### **Will every suggestion be taken up?**

In most cases, yes. However, projects need to fulfil the following broad criteria.

- The work would not normally be done by people in paid employment.

- Outdoor projects must be on land in public ownership, or to which the public have regular access.
- Projects must satisfy a risk assessment, including health and safety requirements.
- Projects should not require specialist or heavy equipment.
- There must be an identifiable beneficiary such as the local community or a charitable organisation.

**What type of offenders work in the community?**

In general Unpaid Work is given to low and medium risk offenders. It is not a suitable sentence for high risk offenders. Typical crimes are motoring offences, public order offences, theft and other dishonesty.

**How do people know offenders are safe to work in their community?**

The National Probation Service takes community safety very seriously. All offenders are carefully assessed before they are allocated to work projects to ensure the safety of the public. Groups of offenders are also supervised by trained probation staff.

**Will the public know that people working in their area are offenders?**

Unpaid Work has been a sentence of the courts, under various names, for over 30 years. In the past the public have not usually been aware of the work done by offenders in the community. The Probation Service is now keen to promote awareness of Unpaid Work, under the Community Payback logo. This is intended to increase public awareness of the ways in which offenders repay their debt to society.

**How can people find out more about Unpaid Work?**

By contacting their local probation area. Most areas have a website and local probation headquarters are in the Phone Book. ([www.durhamprobation.gov.uk](http://www.durhamprobation.gov.uk))