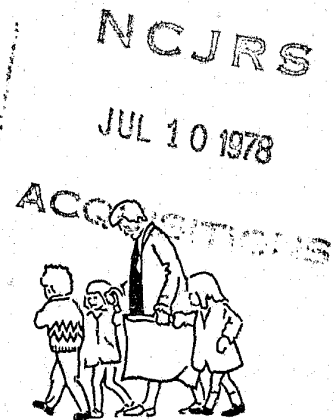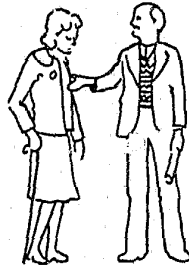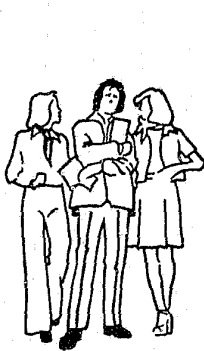INNER LONDON PROBATION AND AFTER CARE SERVICE

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

A
WORKING PARTY
REPORT

NOV 1976

THE INNER LONDON PROBATION & AFTER-CARE SERVICE

WORKING PARTY ON COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

INTRODUCTION.

The working party was set up by the Chief Probation Officer in the Autumn of 1974. It came from a general feeling that the Service needed some guidelines in what was for us a relatively uncharted area. Officers needed some boundaries within which to develop work with the community and help in deciding what was appropriate to undertake in this field.

Our given task was therefore to find out which community work concepts were valid for the Service and which aspects of our work could legitimately and properly be extended in community work terms.

The working party was made up of representatives from each region, each with a deputy, with power to co-opt. This formula, whilst giving breadth to the working party combined to militate against efficiency from inconsistent attendance and partly accounts for the length of time in producing this report.

The following members served on the working party for all or part of the time:-

D. Armstrong	W. Henderson
J. Barker	B. Howard
M.J. Barry	J. McCarthy
B. Crofton	P. McMahon
G. Dougherty	D. Powell
G. Evans	E. Pritchard
C. Fergusson	R. Ward
R.E. Gray	J. Wilson
D. Hancock	

In preparing the report the drafting of chapters was undertaken by individual members of the working party and variations in style will be apparent. Nevertheless the report has been discussed at every stage and represents the views of the working party. It is appropriate to recognise the particular contribution, both in writing Chapter 1 and in general of Grant Evans. His enthusiasm and specialised knowledge were most valuable and we were sorry to lose him when he moved in August 1975 to South Humberside. Another who contributed a great deal before leaving the Service was Doreen Armstrong. Her secondment to study community work for a year at the National Institute in 1973 made her an expert resource. Finally our thanks to Ed Pritchard who left the Service recently for a post with the CCETSW. His particular contribution was in the initial drafting of the final two chapters. The task of collating, editing and producing the final draft was undertaken by Joan McCarthy.

R.E. GRAY

Chairman   November 1976.

PART I

Chapter 1

The Service in the Community

> "Casework's failure to make much impact on
> problems of environmental stress is a matter
> for professional concern and suggests that
> social work research needs to examine ways
> in which the practitioner can work to
> greater effect."

> (Social Work in the Environment
> H.O.R.U. Report No. 21, 1974)

The case for a closer look at the relationship of the Service with
the community is in many ways the same as the case for bringing
probation practice more closely in line with the thinking that goes
on in the calmer water of teaching and research. A gap has been
allowed to develop between our practice - so easily fossilised by
reference back to statute - and our thinking which has been very
fluid during the last century or so. From our commitment to the
'one to one' relationship comes the risk that our relationship
with the community will suffer: the risk that strong under-
currents from the 'psychiatric deluge' of the thirties will
continue in the seventies to nullify our thinking about the
sociological aspects of delinquency so carefully appraised in
our diagnostic work and so bewilderingly absent in our 'treatment
plans'.

Theoretical Aspects

The statutory framework of the Service developed significantly
with the legislation of the years 1925, 1926 and 1948 and
represents a major period of growth interrupted by the war from
1939 to 1945. The impetus given by the demands of war-time
to research into human behaviour under stress meant that in the
re-adjustment years from 1945 onwards, new knowledge and insights
were available which inevitably focussed on change in the
individual rather than in society. The theoretical framework of
the new teaching in social work was highly influenced by psycho-
analytic concepts with the contribution of the Freudian school
making a deep impression on social work theory, fitting in as it
did with individual-orientated casework and providing a socially
acceptable theory of delinquency, with its focus on individual
pathology. It may even be that the growth of the Service had
a lot to do with the relief that society felt in these highly
credible explanations. While psycho-analytically based theory
may have provided the cornerstone around which the social work
of the Service developed, changes in emphasis since then have
changed the nature of the rest of the structure. Three major
trends may be identified in recent advisory reports:-

1.   A shift in thinking towards considering the
individual in relation to his family and the
prevailing social network.

2.   Fuller recognition of environmental factors in
social disfunction.

3.   The re-structuring of the personal social services
with a view to promoting welfare, preventing breakdown
and mobilising the resources of individuals and
communities to identify and solve problems.

The importance of these changes cannot be over-stated. Since the
Service has tended to remain largely a specialist 'one to one'
casework agency embodying the theoretical implications involved
in that specialisation, the demand for a more widely-based
agency that has a capability in the field of social breakdown
as well as individual breakdown clearly threatens the status
quo. As the basic assumptions of social work are radically
questioned and revised, so the foundations of the Service are
shaken. If we are to survive in the increasingly competitive
race for resources, we need to have a highly credible, lucid,
theoretical framework that takes into account this shift in
focus and can be responsive to change.

Social work students are now being asked to learn not only
from the conflicting behavioural and analytical schools of
psychology, but from the competing disciplines of sociology,
criminology and social administration. The theoretical
framework is thus providing a wider understanding of human
behaviour without substantially altering the casework tools
of the trade. The new probation officer may think more widely
than his predecessor did thirty years ago, but he is still
practising basically the same techniques. He has a glimpse
(perhaps more) of group work and community work but he then
finds himself having to do fundamentally the same job.

To get at the heart of the matter, we have to look at the
basic problem of diagnosis. The Morison Report followed
Streatfield in stating that a social enquiry should provide
an analysis of:-

> "essential details of the offender's
> home surroundings and family background;
> his attitude to the family and their
> response to him; his school and work
> record, and spare-time activities; his
> attitude to employment; his attitude to
> his present offence; his attitude and
> response to previous forms of treatment;
> ... detailed histories ... an assessment
> of personality and character."

In short, a complete assessment of the individual and his
social situation.

This was in no way a new idea. The importance of the social
environment has been clearly seen and expounded upon by many
mainstream social work writers:-

> "The mind of man .... can be described as
> the sum of his social relationships"

(Richmond, 1917)

> "Having now securely incorporated into the
> theory and practice of social casework the
> basic tenets of dynamic psychology, we might
> usefully rediscover the social environment
> in which our clients move .... as a dynamic
> process interacting with inner personal forces."

(Goldberg 1961)

> "Central to casework is the notion of the
> person-in-his-situation"

(Hollis 1964)

> "It is only when it becomes clear how distorted
> a view is sometimes obtained of an individual
> seen only in isolation and treated thus that
> the complimentary significance of all the
> areas of the life of the person concerned in
> family, school work, leisure becomes plain"

(Monger 1964)

These basic texts are all concerned with social casework and all
make statements about the importance of understanding the
relationship between the individual and his social environment.

Thus a strong theoretical case encompassing recent changes in
thinking as well as the more basic foundations of case work
altogether emphasises the fact that relationships between client
and community are a vital area of concern in which the Probation
Service ought to be involved

Statutory Aspects

      (a) Duties. The relevance of the social environment
to casework is lost if there is no practical basis for working
within this total context. Here we find that the whole emphasis
of the agency is directed at servicing the individual; social
workers become so involved in the problems of their clients'
daily crises, and in particular their court appearances, that
they can rarely make more than a piecemeal attempt to seriously
consider dealing with aspects of the social environment. This
pressure is a reflection of the general direction of policy;
it is borne out by a host of rules and statutory duties with
which we have to comply. And even now we may be urged to get
back to 'bread-and-butter casework' before we have seriously
got away from it. At the same time, uncertainties about a
client's self-determination, authority and directiveness within
the social work relationship have led to the view that any
initiative in respect of his wider affairs should be left to the
client himself to pursue after undergoing the strengthening
process of casework.

We are left with the question of how far this individual emphasis is intended to preclude a two-way contact with the community and whether our hesitation to be involved in local affairs which may shape the clients' social environment is wholly justified. There are some indications that it is not.

The Streatfield Report has already been mentioned as focussing in the Social Enquiry Report a good measure of attention on the social environment. Among the twenty-nine mandatory duties of the probation officer the preparation of reports is the first listed in Jarvis' Probation Officer's Manual, and the significance of social factors in throwing light on the defendant's behaviour is well accepted. Other mandatory duties imply direct commitment to community involvement. One is the development of voluntary community effort in helping discharged prisoners; and others are embodied in the 1973 C.J. Act, where provision is made for -

> "the establishment and administration of Probation Hostels and Houses, Day Training Centres, Bail Hostels and other establishments for the rehabilitation of offenders"

and

> "making arrangements for offenders to perform work under Community Service Orders."

Both these involve the Service in a new investment in community-based programmes with a new need to explore the relationship with the community.

Turning to the non-mandatory functions, the first of these is "work with pre-delinquents". While this work is strangely unacknowledged on the officer's caseload, it could clearly be his most important function if he were able to invest more resources in it; and since few other agencies have the capacity for such investment, we seem to accept a reluctant responsibility. Jarvis' text on the objectives of probation includes the following widely accepted definition of aims and method:-

> "The technique of intensive casework counselling and recourse to general community resources are exploited to their fullest extent in an endeavour to develop within the Probationer those qualities of character and personality which will tend to the permanent assumption of a stable and responsible manner of living."

(b) Aspirations.

> "A community-based service with opportunities for involvement in local community projects" -

this is the kind of thing frequently appearing in advertisements for probation officers. With our accepted responsibility for the treatment of delinquents in the community, how realistic is our base in the community? Within the new areas of responsibility of the 1973 C.J.A. there is an overwhelming case for a realistic 'reciprocal relationship' with the community if these schemes are to work. The Service has to offer something to the community if

it is to benefit. The enthusiastic response from voluntary agencies to the introduction of the Community Service Scheme with its offer of manpower is a good example of this reciprocal relationship. On the question of residential provision, the Inner London Working Party said:

> "The hostel should be a focal point for contact with groups and individuals in the community, and we believe it should be where possible a local resource."

The development of these schemes is a dual process; that is:

> "the matching of our resources to the joint tasks of enabling clients to work and live with the community or group within it, and enabling the community or group to work or live with the clients within it."

Inevitably this involves us in two-way support using our own resources along with those of the client and the community to achieve an objective which is in no way different from that stated by Jarvis.

SUMMARY

We are left with an overwhelming indication of the need to examine our working relationship with the community. Our starting point is one of accepting the importance of this relationship but asking in what ways the Service can develop it, and what contribution the development can make to the primary task of the Service.

Note I

The Departmental Committee on the Conditions of Service of Probation Officers reported in 1922 and the C.J. Act in 1925 as amended by the C.J. (Amendment) Act 1926, put into force the main recommendation. The C.J. Act 1948, now incorporated in the P.C.C.A. 1973, provides the legal framework for release on probation.

Chapter 2

Working Definitions

In the first chapter, the justification for examining the Service's
relationship with the community has been set out, but what is meant
by 'community'? The Working Party spent much time discussing the
definition of this word. This chapter attempts to explain what
is meant in this report when words such as 'community', 'community
work' and 'community involvement' are used.

As a working definition, the Working Party has used the word
'community' to mean a group who have at least some sharing of
identity, values and interests. The Working Party accepts what
is said by the Seebohm Report about communities. This report
recognised that the term 'community' is usually understood to
cover both the physical location and common identity of a group
of people. It points out that the definition of a community is
increasingly difficult as society becomes more mobile and people
belong to 'communities' of common interest influenced by their
work, education or social activities, as well as where they live.
The report goes on to say:-

> "Thus although traditionally the idea of a community
> has rested upon geographical locality, and this
> remains an important aspect of many communities,
> today different members of a family may belong
> to different communities of interest as well as
> the same local neighbourhood. The notion of a
> community implies the existence of a network of
> reciprocal social relationships which among other
> things ensure mutual aid and give those who experience
> it a sense of well-being."

Seebohm goes on to make the following points which are of
particular interest to the Probation Service:-

> "The feeling of identity which membership of a
> community bestows derives from the common values,
> attitudes and ways of behaving which the members
> share and which form the rules which guide social
> behaviour within it. Such rules are the basis of
> the strong social control over behaviour which is
> a characteristic of highly integrated and long
> established communities. Powerful social control
> may, of course, stifle the individual and produce
> over-conformity, but it has been suggested that
> the incidence of delinquency is likely to be
> highest either where little sense of community,
> and hence little social control, exists, or where,
> in a situation of strong social control, the
> predominant community values are in fact
> potentially criminal."

As far as 'community work' is concerned, the Working Party accepted
the traditional definition as described by Murray Ross:

> "It is a process by which a community identifies
> its needs or objectives, orders (or ranks) these
> needs or objectives, develops the confidence
> and will to work at these needs or objectives,
> finds the resources (internal and/or external)
> to deal with these needs or objectives, takes
> action in respect of them and in so doing
> extends and develops co-operative and collaborative
> attitudes and practices in the community."

Following on from this definition Batten saw the role of the community
worker as being:

> "to create sufficiently favourable conditions for
> group action in the community without infringing
> the group's autonomy, i.e. to act as a catalyst."

Community work is primarily concerned with forms of collective
action in relation to the environment. An essential element of
community work is a shift of power to the traditionally powerless
as people act to change things by their own efforts. The
Gulbenkian Foundation has done the most authoritative work in
applying these ideas to situations similar to those in Inner
London. The Gulbenkian Report defines community work as being:-

> "essentially about the inter-relation between
> people and social change; how to help people with
> the providers of services to bring about a more
> comfortable 'fit' between themselves and constant
> change; how to survive and grow as persons in
> relation to others."

The Gulbenkian work identifies three levels of community
involvement:-

> 1. Agency or inter-agency activities - community
> organisation.
>
> 2. Direct work with local people - community (field) work.
>
> 3. Analysis, forecasting and planning - community
> planning.

These three levels were all considered by the Working Party. The
way this report presents its evidence reflects this definition
for the first level corresponds with the material presented in
chapter 4 of this report, and the second level is discussed in
the evidence described in chapters 5 and 6. It is perhaps a sad
reflection that at the present the third level appears to have
minimal relevance to the Probation Service.

The Working Party was beset by problems of definition especially
in the early stages of its work. It was only after a great deal
of thought and work that we were able to make and agree upon our
own definition of community involvement within the Service. The
following definition is the one that was adopted for the purpose
of this report:-

"any project run by the Service for or with
its clients which attempts to make use of existing
community resources, helps the client to meet the
community or the community to meet the client, is
community involvement."

PART II

Chapter 3

Where Are We Now - Survey of Present Commitments

One of the first problems that emerged in our discussions was the
limited information available on the work the Inner London Service
is already engaged on in the community sphere. The first task
that the Working Party set itself therefore was to gather information
from the Regions on what projects were being run at present or were
under consideration. This part of the report deals with the
information we received in a summarised form, attempts an analysis
of the ways we are already working and gives guide-lines for
more constructive thinking about community work projects in the
future.

It should be said that the survey was by no means complete.
Regional representatives on the Working Party were asked to
gather from their Regions information about any kind of current
community involvement together with anything attempted in the
past or being considered for the future. Although we received
a good deal of information it was on the whole of a limited nature
and in most cases confined to even less than a simple description
such as 'crash-pad for homeless offenders' or 'Kingsmead Centre -
on-the-spot social work in which probation officers join',
which not only made classification difficult but told us nothing
about how or why the project was set up, for whom, with whose help
and to what purpose. One or two projects such as Haggerston were
well documented (see Appendix A) but it was impracticable to
obtain fuller information across the board as several hundred
projects in all were listed.

However, even limited information provided us with the following
telling points:-

> 1. A good deal of work was already being done on a
> local basis involving a considerable expenditure of
> effort on behalf of individual officers.

> 2. It was clear that most of what was being done was
> on a very local basis and dependent on individual
> initiative, with very little attempt to co-ordinate
> with and inform other interested bodies.

> 3. Individual perceptions of what did and did not
> constitute community work or community involvement
> or working with the community clearly differed to a
> great extent.

The problem of making sense of this information occupied us for
some time, and in the end it was decided to place every project
under one of three headings:-

> 1. Agency and Inter-Agency Co-operation.

> 2. Provision of Services for Special Needs.

> 3. Self-help Groups.

We arrived at these categories with a little help from community work theory, but mainly on the basis of convenience, and they are not intended as exclusive or all-inclusive categories. What emerges from a consideration of these categories and the different ways or working involved is that the justification of such different projects relies on basically similar fairly straight-forward assumptions. Part II therefore concludes with an examination of the wider issues involved and provides a set of questions which are intended as the framework for criteria in assessing the relevance of any particular form of community involvement.

Chapter 4

Agency and Inter-Agency Co-Operation

In attempting to make manageable the bulk of evidence submitted, two broad types of co-operative enterprise were isolated. The first is broadly learning and discussion orientated, and might refer to the typical social workers' luncheon group. The value of these meetings is often disputed and certainly seems to vary greatly from area to area. They tend to be limited to discussion and rarely spill over into action, and the motivation for attending varies from a wish for a social chat to showing the Probation Service flag.

As community involvement these groups have some potential as starting points for action projects, forming as they do part of the learning/knowledge base necessary to work in a local area, and giving indications of potential allies on particular issues of concern.

The second major part of the evidence fell broadly under the heading of liaison. Some of this is not only a traditional but also a statutory part of a probation officer's job. This applies especially to liaison with hostels. It has been assumed that the purpose of liaison is related to improvement of the service given to clients, but it could be an assumption that will not stand up to examination in very many cases.

Over 100 examples of this kind of liaison activity were listed. The level of involvement was difficult to assess because of the way evidence was presented to the Working Party, and because of this it is impossible to make anything but a general comment about it validity in terms of community work involvement.

Liaison with a hostel might, for example, involve an officer in contacts far wider than the residents and the staff, and include work with neighbours and associates. It could involve actively working towards getting a hostel accepted in the local community, for example in examining with the staff the feasibility of opening its facilities to other community groups at certain times, and supporting staff in this and other kinds of community involvement. The same goes for activity surrounding liaison with voluntary projects, or with neighbourhood-based groups where the aim might be to enable the group to move into the self-help category.

Within the knowledge of Working Party members it seemed unlikely that the majority of the work listed in evidence of this chapter fell appropriately within the area of community involvement of this kind. This is not to dispute its validity but to point again to the need to continually re-assess the work that we do in terms of its value to our clients. It would be the contention of some members of the Working Party that such work would have more value were it seen in the broader context described by the Gulbenkian Report with the clear aim of attempting to 'bring services (including our own) and the meeting of need in closer relation with each other.' This involves considering more closely than we do needs and resources not only in relation to our clients, but also to the communities in which they live and in which we function as part of a resource network.

Chapter 5

Provision of Services for Special Needs

The survey revealed a whole range of projects which were neither
specifically neighbourhood-based nor simply liaison. Their linking
factor was that they were all attempts to provide for the specific
or general needs of limited groups. In order to illustrate the
range, we devised the following classification:-

1. **Provision of Services for Material Needs.**

    (a) Projects initiated or being run by the Service
    itself for its own clients.

    These are nearly all accommodation projects, begun
    on the initiative of one officer or a small group
    in response to a particular local need. Voluntary
    Associates appear to be involved in a number and
    are frequently the only representatives of the
    community on such schemes.

    (b) Projects initiated or being run by other groups
    either in partnership with, or in co-operation or
    liaison with the Probation Service.

    Again these are mostly accommodation projects and
    many cater for groups which include non-clients.

2. **Provision of Services for Social Needs.**

    An all-embracing heading which we divided as follows:-

    (a) Voluntary Associate Groups.

    The relevant point here is that most regions included
    their V.A. groups as examples of community involvement.
    We felt it important to state that while recognising
    the important investment the Service has in V.A's
    we have made no attempt to look at them specifically
    in this report. We were more concerned with the use
    of volunteers generally in roles other than the
    accepted and well defined area of accredited V.A's.

    (b) Projects initiated and run by the Service alone.

    As with 1 (a), these were nearly all attempts to
    provide a resource or service for client groups,
    and included such enterprises as centres, clubs
    and groups. A few, however, aimed more widely
    and included potential as well as actual clients,
    such as a battered wives group. There seems to be
    a great deal of variation in the use made of
    resources other than Service resources.

    (c) Projects where the Service is involved as a
    partner with other local agencies in providing a
    resource for particular groups.

Such involvement normally starts at the planning
stage and is usually for 'at risk' groups, for
example, in drug projects, legal aid and literacy
schemes and a free school project.

(d) Projects which are providing a resource for
particular groups but which have been set up
independently of the Service and involve it in
only a limited way.

Several of these are on the borderline of
liaison.

The intention of the above classification is not to give rigid
definition but to illustrate the variety of projects the Service
is already involved in, and in particular to indicate the levels
of involvement which are possible.

We came to two main conclusions on the basis of the evidence.
The first was that there is clearly a lot of confusion about what
is and what is not community involvement: it is likely that
community involvement is seen by some as anything over and above
one-to-one casework. Secondly, the evidence suggests that a
great deal of work is already being done in the area of provision
of service for special needs.

It would have been useful to have had more detailed information
on all these projects instead of the very brief descriptions
received. However, certain impressions emerged. The clearest
of these is that although much is going on, it is occurring in
a haphazard and localised fashion. Many of the projects mentioned
were unknown to most of us and clearly little is done except on
a very local basis to publicise projects, seek advice from
elsewhere, or attempt to share information and experiences.

It was clear that projects tended to group themselves around
individual officers or office teams, seeming to indicate that
work in this area is at present wholly dependent on individual
initiative.

It would appear that current projects have started in one or
two ways: either one officer or a small group has 'had a go' at
dealing with an obvious need among a group of clients - and
sometimes have tried to get others interested; or an approach comes
from another agency, usually at individual level, for assistance
with a project which is seen as relevant to clients. There is
little evidence of overall planning and many of the projects
listed contain the information that they never got off the ground,
or subsequently failed.

One final and important impression is that little use seems to have
been made of community resources. Discussion seems to be mostly
at inter-agency level, and all too often community involvement
means middle-class involvement of, for example, bankers, solicitors
on management committees and of middle-class accredited V.A's. The
Working Party was not certain that V.A's should properly be included
as examples of community involvement since they can in some sense
be seen as adjunct to casework, and much of their value lies in

this area. We felt that volunteers, whether they are accredited or not, can be considered as 'community involvement' only when their significance in a particular situation rests on their being part of the community.

We felt it might be helpful in this section to look at two concepts of community involvement which could be related to the project headings of this chapter. These are:

      1.   Involvement of the community in providing the services for the special needs of our clients.

and

      2.   Getting involved as a Service and as individual officers in projects which might cater for the special needs of other groups.

1. Our clients - what are their needs and who should be meeting them?

In some cases this is clear. Needs and duties are sometimes specified in law. Some needs we are only marginally responsible for meeting, such as finance. Others such as accommodation are increasingly becoming our responsibility, because we deal with a particularly disadvantaged group. On the whole, the rules specify general duties, and the decision about which needs it is appropriate for us to meet will be influenced to some extent by the changing perspective of the Service. We are, for instance, much more aware now of the client in his social situation and his needs in relation to this. Given, however, that there is agreement at some level on the needs to be met, the question then arises, what other resources are available in the community that could more appropriately be used in meeting these needs? Perhaps the question of what is desirable is less relevant than what is possible. There are two helpful models here:

      (a) Where the Service attempts to make use of existing community resources rather than its own limited resources, or attempts to persuade the community to meet the needs of our clients. This is a matter of degree. Our clients, when at liberty, do live in the community, and some at least of their needs are met there as a matter of course. Other needs are perhaps less readily recognised by the community - or it is less willing to meet them. At one level it is a question of having the information; do officers know of the resources of their community, and do they have the links whereby they can be made available to clients? At another level what counts is education of the wider community in understanding the particular needs of offenders, and how the community can help to meet them.

      (b) Where the Service makes use of its own resources of time, money, facilities, buildings, etc. to provide a service which enables the client to get closer to the community, and its resources, or the community to get closer to the client. This is bridge building, implicit in the idea of a halfway house where the client's

special needs are met in a way which enables him to
come closer to the community, and where the community
can get closer to the client and see him more as an
individual. This notion seems to be implicit in such
new developments as Sherborne House, Community Service
Orders and Bulldog Manpower Services Limited.

2. Other Groups.

Service involvement in meeting the needs of other groups who are
not defined simply by their client status leads directly on to the
issues raised in chapter 6. It involves consideration again of the
task of the Service and how we decide what are the appropriate
needs to be met.

Some of our clients are part of larger special need groups such
as drug addicts, the homeless, the chronic unemployed. In these
cases one might apply the same criteria as for the first
category, and seek the co-operation of other interested bodies.
On the whole, the criterion seems to be that if the people we
are proposing to make provision for are not actual clients, they
may at least be realistically defined as 'at risk' and our
involvement seen as preventive in terms of the primary task.

Requirements and Pay-Offs.

To involve and be more involved in a community at the level of
reaching special needs does have its price. It is not normally
something that is simply added to the day's work. It requires
that we know something about the resources that the community
has to offer in our own area and a willingness to go out and
explore them. It also calls for a willingness to look for other
needs when we are already having difficulty in coping with the
obvious ones and it does require resources in order to build
bridges between clients and the community. At the same time
there are pay-offs. Not only is some of our work transferred
to the community, but also a wider range of help can be given to
the client in ways which are often more acceptable to him.

Chapter 6

Self-Help Groups.

Working with self-help groups brings us into the area of
'neighbourhood community work' involving direct work with local
people of which the Gulbenkian Report Community Work and Social
Change says:

> "a worker will normally make himself known in
> a small neighbourhood for the purpose of helping
> local groups to define and achieve some goals they
> want. He may work for or on behalf of groups
> with particular needs."

Self-help is a concept easily understood if not practised by
probation officers in casework terms, but it seems less easily
transferred into the broader setting of neighbourhood or special
interest/problem based groups. Throughout the evidence gained
from ILPAS officers uncertainty is apparent about what is self-
help, the worker's role, the level of proper involvement and
how far groups are client-orientated. Confusion seems to be
partly in the area of what role a professional social worker
can have vis-a-vis a group whose aim is to achieve something by
group members for group members. Using the latter as a
definition of a self-help group, a number of groups referred
to in the evidence do not fall into this category, but are
rather probation officer-led groups based on a therapeutic model.

It may be useful to look at:

Possible Worker Roles based on an assumption that the worker
could be a probation officer.

> 1. Initiator.
>
> 2. Supporter.
>
> 3. Servicer.

These roles can be identified as follows:-

> 1. Where the worker sees symptoms of need (e.g.
> poor housing conditions, lack of play space, a
> dangerous road, a high delinquency rate), and goes
> about testing out acceptance of need among local
> people and helping them to get together to look at
> ways of tackling it.
>
> 2. Where the worker comes across an existing group
> which is having difficulties and offers support,
> advice, ideas towards helping the group achieve its
> aims more effectively.
>
> 3. Where a group has got through the stages outlined
> above and needs practical help e.g., somewhere to
> meet, duplicating facilities.

These three roles can also be seen as part of a continuum with 2 and
3 being fairly fluid. A follow-up to 3 could be complete withdrawal
if a group becomes fully self-supporting or itself wishes to fold up.

The differentiation made between neighbourhood and special interest based groups in the evidence is not a clear one. It seems to depend on the way in which the term neighbourhood is interpreted, and most commonly this means a housing estate. It seems likely that special interest groups are also locally based, but in a bigger area, e.g. the patch covered by a probation office. Groups such as Prisoners' Wives Union, PROP, Mental Patients' Union, were referred to by officers where these organisations either have their headquarters in the patch or are especially active. Local groups may be set up, e.g. on the A.A. pattern, and probation officers have been active in helping to initiate and support these.

To justify the Service's involvement in such groups they should be seen to be in some sense 'client-orientated'. The criteria used might be that there is a relatively high percentage of clients living in an area which has a high delinquency rate, e.g. the Haggerston and Nile Estates in Hackney; or where the aim is to help with particular problems related to delinquency, for instance, those of the prisoner's wife and family. This approach appears reasonable both from a probation and a community work point of view, recognising as it does that the needs of a Probation Service client may be shared by others. In the case of the prisoner's wife, the difficulties she is trying to cope with may not be so very different from those of her divorced, deserted or widowed neighbours. At Haggerston, the Play Group, Summer Project, Tenants' Movement and Youth Club involved people according to their social needs and not their social categories.

Probation officers are likely to become concerned about certain social issues through their relationships with clients. The community work perspective provides the broad context in which these issues may be seen and raises the question, can this client's needs best be met by casework intervention or by a community-based approach? The validity of this question and the possibility of an answer depends on knowledge of what is going on in an area, the attitudes of officers themselves, the views of the hierarchy and the availability of necessary resources.

Knowledge of an area and its problems and characteristics becomes part of any probation officer's working equipment in time, but often it is not organised in such a way that it can be shared or drawn upon in everyday work. The simple exercise of 'mapping' clients may raise questions about an area and its problems, e.g. the Haggerston experience. Estate or block identity, isolation from public transport, types of industry, shopping facilities, etc. are all realities in the lives of our clients, and likely to have an impact on life-style and satisfactions in a subtle and often unrecognised way.

Having said that, the question arises how can we tune into this knowledge base. The community work approach suggests ways of finding out what are the needs of an area and how they are perceived by people living within it. The obvious source of information open to us is of course the client and his family. To this can be added simple observation of, for example, housing density, basic amenities, meeting places, and linking such observation with questions about what these factors mean in human terms to the local inhabitants. Written material like census figures, local newspapers, local authority publications

and pictorial representations such as maps of clients' homes, youth clubs, shopping areas, can also be used as ways of putting together a view of an area. Once this has been achieved it is possible to begin asking questions about meanings.

These can then be examined through contacts with local social agency personnel and with local people and groups. Clearly this kind of exercise takes time, and although short cuts are possible, by, for example, focussing on one particular issue, the worker, if he is to be useful as a facilitator, needs to have some general knowledge of where this issue might come in the priority rating among local people. In areas where a community work agency or worker is established, much of this information will be available, and probation officers may be able to use it providing that they are seen as potential allies with the interests of the local community at heart. If this is not the case perhaps it is an indictment of the Service and something which requires consideration and remedy.

Having looked briefly at a possible knowledge base from which community work method could be practiced, it may be worth considering some of its practice implications and possible advantages for the Service. Practice implications are difficult to isolate because of the lack of experience in the Service of any consistent use of the community work method. A lack of formality, less emphasis on confidentiality, a willingness to work on issues not directly linked to agency task, appear to characterise work done by 'pure' community workers. Each of these clearly has implications for the Probation Service which can only really be tested in practice. It may be too that the 'pure' community work model will be found to be inappropriate to the Service and that some alternative model will emerge again from practical experience.

Possible advantages for the Service would seem to be more easily defined. In the first place a case could be put forward for greater job satisfaction for individual probation officers. The theory and practice of community work has become accepted teaching on qualifying courses, and in-service training courses have also raised interest in this area of work. Among the more experienced officers who have acquired some knowledge of the method, frustration has been expressed in the feed-back on courses about the difficulties of working this way in a busy office situation. Official approval of the use of community work methods where appropriate would release for positive use a good deal of interest and commitment.

On a broader level and well within the stated policy and task of the Service are the possibilities of extending more localised projects for offenders subject to Community Service Orders, recruitment of locally based voluntary associates and obtaining increased information about formal and informal local resources.

Allied to all these is the prospect of a greater credibility for the Service as a concerned and interested body in local terms. One could anticipate also increasingly useful co-ordination with other service agencies and a widening of perspective to enable probation officers to see their clients as part of a whole rather than as isolated individuals in conflict with their environment and society.

All these ideas and possibilities require testing and two methods
of doing this have been mooted. The first would be the
appointment of one officer - see Appendix 'A Community Work Job
in The Inner London Probation & After-Care Service'. Another
suggestion is that of the appointment of an office team based
on a small enough area, to allow for low potential caseloads,
to work together using community work methods with more
conventional tools of the probation officer's trade, again on
an experimental basis. The latter would appear to be a more
effective method of testing the validity of such activity
recognising that it is also the more expensive in terms both
of finance and manpower.

Chapter 7

The Rest of the Country

To set our work in context and provide some comparative points of reference we tried to get some idea of the ways other probation areas are working in the field of community involvement. An impression was all we needed, and indeed that was all we were able to get from the dozens of annual reports perused, since annual reports are not places for making detailed and critical appraisal of a year's work. However, some information came in from other sources also, and we followed up several projects with the local people concerned. Three fairly ambitious ones are given in outline in Appendix B.

The range of work undertaken throughout the country seems to correspond broadly with that found in Inner London, and as in London the boundary is blurred between activities which are seen to support and enhance the basic function of the Service and those which have no such clear justification. It is evident that probation officers are seeing 'prevention' more and more as part of their legitimate professional task, and that there is urgent need for the Service as a whole to clarify and re-define the boundaries of its responsibilities. There is no longer any simple formula for deciding whether this is 'our job' or whether it is not. The legitimacy of some projects e.g. the Sheffield Detached Worker Scheme will be decided, one imagines, purely on whether or not they have a good head for heights and manage to stay on the tightrope long enough to gain respectability. On the other hand, downtown work with hippies in another city disqualified itself by placing in jeopardy the normal working relationship of the police with the Probation Service.

Throughout the country, but with the concentration on urban and/or industrial areas, probation officers are involving themselves in schemes for old people, lonely people and separated wives, in preventive schemes in high delinquency areas, and generally in getting services to people who need them. A good deal of 'community work' concerns communication and liaison with other agencies to provide specialist resources. But sometimes the Service's best work has been in the initiation of schemes to fill particular gaps in provision (e.g. for the care of homeless unmarried mothers) from which the probation officer has been prepared to withdraw as soon as voluntary effort is ready to take over or a more appropriately concerned agency moves in.

One inference that may be drawn from the spread of community involvement throughout the country is that the problems of inner city areas and their high delinquency rates do not lend themselves to traditional casework solutions. Another is that a service identified increasingly with the prevention of recidivism hankers after the more primary kind of prevention as a revolt against being locked at the 'correctional' end of the spectrum.

In the reports we read the work of the Voluntary Associates is an interesting omission. In some areas other community groups are used in activities with clients. In Newcastle and Surrey for instance, pupils from secondary schools have been involved in two different projects: one a day centre for alcoholics, the other a short-stay hostel for young people. What evidence there is supports the case for the use of a wider range of people from the community than that represented by voluntary associates. There is ample evidence that the Probation Service and other statutory agencies are beginning to use ex-offenders as a volunteer resource.

One would surmise that over the range of community work projects referred to in the reports, little preparatory research had been carried out since clarity of goals often seemed to be lacking. One project in a new town was discontinued after some research showed that its primary assumptions were not valid.

What is lacking is any indication in most cases that area policy has been devised to rationalise an existing situation and provide resources and guidelines for its development.

The Home Office Inspectorate with their national overview could offer leadership and initiative in this. They have been interested for a number of years in the 'community work of the Probation Service'. In 1970 the Home Office sponsored a week's course on the subject at the University of York; in 1971 a paper on the theme was read by an inspector at the C.P.O/H.O. Annual Conference; in 1975 a special interest group was set up to consider the community work of the Probation Service; in 1976 an inspector of long standing was sponsored for a full-time course at the National Institute of Social Work on Community Work and Social Policy. We await the fruits of this long period of gestation.

Chapter 8

Summary

The first point to make in considering this section is that
community involvement can never really be categorised by a
particular type of project. There are in fact as many kinds
of project as there are kinds of need and resources available.
What categorises community involvement is a particular approach
to the individual and the community to which he belongs.

This follows on directly from the new perspectives in the Service
which are discussed elsewhere, and which provide a justification
for this form of work. The fundamental question is not should
the service be involved in the community but can it best serve
its clients this way. Here we come back to the gap already
noted that has been allowed to develop between our practice and
our thinking. Most modern theory for social work seems to be
concerned with pathology and diagnosis. Where we lack
theoretical framework is in relation to social intervention as
distinct from individual orientated treatment.

Community Involvement as a Process.

We should emphasise again that our division of projects into 3
categories is not intended to indicate three different ways of
working but rather as 3 stages in a complete process.

Any effective community work that is initiated from outside
rather than from the community itself must begin with some form
of agency or inter-agency discussion and co-operation. This
is the area of identifying needs and resources - fact finding
and support seeking. This can be done within the agency itself -
in our case within the office - or by also seeking the support
of other interested agencies.

Only if this is done can one effectively move to the second stage -
of actually setting up a project - and this must, because of the
nature of the relationship between agencies and the community
they serve - be something in the nature of a service for special
needs.

Only once this has been started, and through the medium of
such a project, can attempts be made to involve the community
further, to take such a project over and make the beginnings of a
self-help group.

We have a ready made example of this in the Haggerston Project,
Appendix A.

Community involvement will inevitably take different forms depending
on local needs and structures but the process will always be the
same and will always need to start from the same base of agency
or inter-agency co-operation. This is not to say, however, that
the Service needs to be always in at the start - it can always
become involved at different stages in the process.

Some criteria are clearly required and we therefore suggest the
following framework for considering community involvement projects:-

1. Is this method likely to best meet the needs
of the client, i.e. does it help the client?

2. Are we the only, or the most appropriate,
agency able to provide this?

3. Are there community resources available
which we can mobilise to meet the need?

4. Have we the necessary skills, organisation
and resources to meet the need?

It must be appreciated that this is merely a skeleton which can
only be of use if we have at hand the information required to
put flesh on the bones. We have this information if we can
provide the answers to the following questions: What are the
client's needs? What other agencies are there and what resources
do they have? What resources does the community itself have? and
how can these resources be mobilised?

Every book on community work makes the elementary point that one
can begin community work only if one is equipped with information
about the community. It is not always clear from projects already
underway which of these questions have been considered and answered
beforehand. It would seem that in many cases either some basic
information has been lacking, or not enough attention has been
paid to fundamental factors. Primarily we must ask ourselves:
are we the most appropriate agency, and are there community
resources which we can mobilise. Too often the first questions
have been what are the needs and how can we do something about
meeting them. A more fundamental perspective is needed if we are
to achieve clarity and consistency in the way we work.

Chapter 9

Implications for the Organisational Setting

If the service is to be involved in community involvement as an
initiator then we need to look much more closely at the way in
which we work and our own 'community' of office team and service.
There is little point in preaching community involvement if we
are unable to put some of the theory into practice in our own
structure. Traditional work is always based on the principle of
individual work with clients and the organisational structure both
supports and maintains this. The implication therefore is that
to work in a different way - and community work is inherently
different from individual work - requires some change in the
way we relate to each other as well as in the way we are
structured as a service in the working situation. A good example
is the changes required for paired working with families. One
possible explanation for the limited nature of community
involvement so far is the narrow individual base from which many
projects have started while some projects, which appear to
have been the most successful have clearly had a much firmer base
within the office team. It seems clear that for any project to have
a chance of success it must start from a firm working base - not
simply toleration but active co-operation, support, sharing,
criticism, encouragement and close relationships between officers -
none of which are particularly noticeable features of many
office teams, nor are they factors which appear to have much
importance in planning and organisation.

However, during the past ten years there has been considerable
change in the physical settings in which probation officers work.
This chapter suggests that these changes sometimes create
barriers between the Service and the communities we profess to
serve.

Whereas probation officers in London used to be accommodated
in relatively small and well-established court buildings, houses,
premises above shops and church halls, office units now tend
to be located together in large office buildings, sometimes
integrated with new court complexes which are not situated in
recognisable communities or related to the delinquency problems
in the area which they service. Boundary changes related for
administrative reasons to petty sessional divisions have not
always followed Probation Service boundaries and have sometimes
cut right across established communities. The Probation Service
has sought to achieve some sense of community by working to
borough boundaries; nevertheless, some teams are located
outside the area for which they are responsible. This is
contrary to a basic concept of community work; the Service
therefore needs to reconsider its office location policy.

Barbara Butler of Brunel University advocates one way to
alleviate unnecessary suffering and bewilderment caused to people
as they come up against welfare systems: this is to develop
community support units. On the assumption that human beings are

not readily adaptable to mass group life, this means essentially going 'small-scale'. Certainly some officers think that multi-team groupings make involvement in communities difficult.

The non-accessibility of some offices may be interpreted as a defence against the community. The potential client may be discouraged from entering an imposing building under the scrutiny of court officials and finding his way through a sequence of foyers, lifts and stairs, landings, corridors and waiting area until he eventually appears before a receptionist. Perhaps an even less subtle defence against the community is the requirement sometimes imposed for officers to lock the front door at 5 p.m.

In addition to location and size, type of accommodation is important. As the range of possible treatments becomes more varied, so is there greater need for accommodation that can be used flexibly. One example of this related to the current emphasis on group work. Client groups are likely to represent part of a community of interest - a group of unsupported mothers, for instance - and need as a basic requirement a room large enough in which to gather. At one office, the Differential Treatment Unit, this problem has been overcome by using as a clubroom the room originally allocated to secretarial staff. Not all offices at present are likely to be capable of this kind of readjustment.

Another factor related to community involvement is the method of work allocation. In the past, the 'patch' system allowed officers to get to know intimately a relatively small geographical area, and to form relationships with key people within it. Some teams have tried to match clients with officers with the result that a caseload may be comprised of clients from different geographical communities. This makes it difficult for the officer to feel identified with any one community. Increasing work pressures add to the difficulty because to even out work loads, work arising from a neighbourhood needs to be shared among a team. A team approach, which is becoming increasingly fashionable, may operate against a feeling of identity with any one particular community. The possibility of lessening involvement in the community therefore needs to be taken into account when work methods and allocation systems are appraised.

Staffing policy is relevant here. In the past many officers remained in one neighbourhood for most of their working lives, and as a result became identified with it. The high turnover of staff nowadays both within regions and within the Service as a whole militates against this.

Few officers live in the neighbourhood which they serve, and this is another factor which limits involvement with the community. One remedy is for the Service to make available for probation officers housing in the centre of communities.

In summary, the extent to which the Service fulfils its commitment to be involved with the community depends partly on the way it organises its physical context, the location, size and type of its office accommodation, its method of work allocation and work sharing, and its staffing policy in so far as staff are encouraged to become mobile. Increase in efficiency in one direction may be accompanied by a lessening of community involvement in another. The organisation of the Service's personal and physical resources as an unconscious defence against the community remains a real possibility.

Chapter 10

Implications for Resources

The Working Party recognised that in any discussion of different
ways of working, the question of resources would be a vital one,
particularly in times of financial crisis. It should be
stressed therefore that greater involvement in the community
requires not so much extra resources - though some will be
called for - as a closer look at the way in which we make use
of our present resources.

Manpower is of course our most important resource, and potentially
the most flexible. Although it was felt that there is limited
scope for a Community Specialist within the service, such as
outlined in Doreen Armstrong's paper in Appendix C, the overall
emphasis should be on all officers becoming more involved in
the community in the course of their work. Clearly involvement
in meetings, groups, clubs etc. is time consuming and should be
given overall recognition as part of individual officers'
workloads, but if such involvement is part of a team or regional
plan, re-allocation of work without extra manpower can and should
be achieved.

The difficulties associated with our other main resource,
buildings, have already been discussed in Chapter 9 and the
requirements are quite clear - not more buildings but much
more consideration given to community aspects in the design
and siting of office buildings.

One resource that is required, and which should be a practicable
possibility is cash. Many projects require some initial, and
usually small, expenditure to get off the ground - this might
vary from buying coffee and biscuits for initial meetings
to purchasing equipment for a club or hiring a hall for a
meeting. Although community projects should be as far
as possible self supporting and independent, a fund of quite
limited proportions available either centrally or regionally
would assist to get many projects established and remove the
financial burden often imposed on those who are willing to
try something new.

Another resource, the organisational structure of the Service,
requires no addition for greater community involvement. We
already have DCPO's with responsibility for particular tasks,
and a regional system which is well placed to take responsibility
for community involvement within geographical areas. The
present regions seem to be the ideal starting place for a
review of what is being done and what could be done in this
field while the basic unit for involvement in the community
should be the office team.

One area which we felt should rightly be considered under
resources and is in many ways a resource that is lacking,
is that of authority. Overall there appears to be a general
absence of authority for greater involvement in the community.

While recognising that this stems in part from a lack of
information and experience, we felt that without clear leadership
there is unlikely to be much progress towards greater involvement
in the community. There are often problems, however, about
the source of authority and the Working Party had difficulty in
identifying the area to which we should look for the authority
community involvement seems to require. As the author of
ILPAS '78 (Chapter 1) points out:

> "..The division of responsibility for administration
> between Headquarters staff, the committee and the
> Home Office still tends to leave the officer at times
> with a feeling of uncertainty as to the ultimate
> source of those policies which shape and influence
> his working life."

We spent some time looking at the Probation Rules but they do
not in themselves seem to present a clear way of providing
the required authority. The Probation Inspectorate might
have a more valuable role in offering leadership and initiative.
Clearly, in a Service which is increasingly governed by
considerations of cost effectiveness more research is needed
into the usefulness of community involvement. Although we have
gone some way along this path, a more authoratitive study is
required such as that which could be carried out by the Home
Office Research Unit.

To summarise: greater community involvement requires only
very limited additional material resources. Of more
importance is the need for greater flexibility in the use of
our present resources of buildings and manpower, and it is the
non-material resources of authority and resourcefulness of
which we are most in need.

Chapter 11

Recommendations

Having gathered and considered the evidence of community involvement projects both within ILPAS and elsewhere, we conclude that there are community work concepts which are valid for the Service and that many aspects of our work can legitimately and properly be extended in community work terms. The nature of such involvement cannot be laid down as a general rule but we have attempted to provide guidelines so that the Service may focus more closely on community aspects in its work with clients.

We make the following specific recommendations:-

1. We recommend that greater authority be given to ways of work which embrace involvement with the community and we request that the CPO considers how such authority can be provided and takes steps to provide clear leadership to the Service. (Chapter 10).

2. We recommend that the Inner London Probation & After-Care Committee consider co-opting a member who would have expert knowledge of community work and who could advise the committee as appropriate.

3. We recommend that a DCPO be given Headquarter's responsibility for community involvement within the service and that Regional Officers should have the main responsibility for planning and co-ordinating community involvement activities. (Chapter 10).

4. We recommend that the office team be seen as the basic unit for community involvement and that each team look at ways of improving its service to its clients by greater involvement in the community. (Chapter 10).

5. We recommend that the Service accepts the definition of community involvement proposed in Chapter 2 (page 9).

6. We recommend that the framework discussed in Chapter 8 (page 23) be used as criteria before involvement in a community project.

7. We recommend that the collection of information on needs and resources in particular areas be seen as the first stage in any greater involvement in the community and that agency and inter-agency co-operation be seen as a vital part of this.
    We recommend a re-assessment of our present involvement in such co-operation so that its aim becomes the 'bringing of services (including our own) and the meeting of need in closer relation with each other.' (Chapter 4).

8. We recommend that the Intelligence Officer be asked to consider how community involvement might be weighted and included in workload returns.

9. We recommend that approaches be made to the Home Office Research Unit for assistance in evaluating the effectiveness of community involvement. (Chapter 10).

10. We recommend that when resources permit, consideration be given to mounting an experiment along the lines proposed in Chapter 6 (page 20).

11. We recommend that those responsible for staffing policy and the provision of office accommodation pay regard to the concerns expressed in Chapter 9.

12. We recommend that a modest fund be established, preferably available at regional level, for assistance in starting new community projects. (Chapter 10).

<u>Appendix 'A'</u>

What follows is a personal account of the Haggerston Project by
Grant Evans, late of Hackney and Tower Hamlets Region, and a
member of the Working Party.

It formed part of a presentation by Old Street B group to a
Regional Training Conference. Their theme was the community
work effort of the team, with the title 'More Than a Drop in
the Ocean'. It started life as a letter to a C.P.O. justifying
their involvement in this area of work.

> "The philosophy of community work is simple: it has to
> be since no two community workers seem able to agree on more
> than the most rudimentary aspects of their work. It appeals
> alike to the left and right-wing schools of thought, being
> in one way an extention of 'power to the people' and direct
> action, and in the other an extension of Victorian self-help.
>
> The idea was presented to us by a member of our staff who
> had just done a course on it in York. We had been wondering
> about the problem of community involvement and Voluntary
> Associates for some time, very conscious that when working
> in a totally impoverished area our casework contribution
> was a drop in the ocean. We immediately saw the concepts
> as relevant to our work with clients, but whether there was
> more to it than the basic idea of helping a community to
> help itself, I simply do not remember from those days. That
> was the simple fascinating idea and we set out as a group
> to find the means to implement it.
>
> As probation officers we did the natural thing and looked
> for the area with the greatest concentration of referrals
> to ourselves. This approach violates all the best community
> work ideals but in itself validated our involvement. We
> considered all our listed supervision, probation and after-
> care cases, and the densest pocket was the Haggerston Estate,
> a badly run down G.L.C. property surrounded by Hackney estates,
> giving all the outward appearances of dereliction and decay.
> Even if we had thought of involving tenants in our planning,
> we were not able at the time to think of anyone suitable.
>
> After investing in a series of very wearing meetings, the
> Project Management Committee was formed. With it came the
> first direct benefit for myself: I rapidly developed a wide
> network of contacts, people who were involved closely with
> Haggerston in all sorts of ways, and whose co-operation has
> made my day to day work so much easier. In particular I
> should mention the health visitor whose caseload substantially
> overlapped my own, and Centreprise, whose advice and
> experience was invaluable.
>
> As a young and inexperienced officer, like so many London
> officers at any given moment, I acquired through an area-
> based operation a network of positive contacts which might
> otherwise have taken years to grow. We worked together as
> a team and by Spring 1972 launched a play group to be run
> by local mothers in the hope that this might provide the

first grouping from which other things might grow. It was
quickly followed by a Summer holiday project for all the
school children in the area. Before the thing was even
off the ground its practical value was clear. The Fire
Brigade put on record the fact that school holidays involved
them in a trip to the estate every two days on average, but
over this six-week period they were called only once.
Vandalism is an important indicator of social breakdown.
Our intervention was almost immediately justified and
demonstrated in the field of juvenile delinquency.

The Summer holiday project led naturally into the permanent
mainstream project in the Autumn, but having launched the
project, some of us were very reluctant to let it go. We
gradually realised that we had to, and this was the point
at which I learned about backing out of the initiative.
We gave the project a push in the form of Peter Chambers,
who moved over from the Summer project to be our community
worker, and left him very much to himself to learn about the
tenants, make friends and find out which issues would draw
people together. The successful rent strike in Richardson
House was one of the first results, and others quickly
followed. With the first definite (but unstable) group of
tenants came the search for outside support. Through our
community worker having favourable ideas about the people
who had employed him, it was inevitable that the tenants
should ask the Probation Service for support, which also
gave a little status and stability. I was horrified to find
this was going to involve me in a weekly Monday meeting
at 7.30 p.m., generally to last a good two hours of heated
debate. At this stage it is significant to note that all
but one of the committee members had been before the courts.
Many of them were our own clients and they were already
bargaining direct with the G.L.C., their M.P., the D.H.S.S.,
organising play facilities, planning a youth club and
successfully launching a food co-op.

A lot has happened since then, but perhaps the most significant
move was when the Butler family were brought in. They
had the worst reputation in the area. The seven sons were
seven villains, and the mother had been on probation to
Thea Booth - a fearful prospect for any probation officer.
But the Butlers responded magnificently, soon becoming the
heart of the whole project. Around them grew a new and
stronger group of tenants. Bill had dedicated himself
to the task and I have had to force him to take a holiday
when his twenty-four hours a day 'office duty' has pushed
him to extremes. With the Butlers we have learned the
lesson that given the right situation clients may be seen
as resources and not just as a series of problems.

We saw on the next estate an early spin-off from Haggerston
when a couple of our most problem-laden families initiated
their own play group. I would never have dreamed of asking
them to do so from my own social work perspective, but they
had the drive, and the achievement might have helped them

with their problems. Some of our clients are very well
integrated in their own area and have a great capacity to
take on social work tasks despite their personal problems.
If we have given them the right opportunity, the resources
we use up in doing so turn into permanent capital
investment as we increase the resources available in an
area to cope with social problems.

At the same time as my perception of the tenants was
changing, so was theirs of me. A local mum knew my
involvement in the struggle for better conditions and
naturally consulted me in her struggle to keep her son
out of trouble. Young delinquents already know me in a
more favourable way before they are caught. This sort
of situation cannot but improve the local people's
perception of the Service - in public relations alone
it is justified. We are learning more about each other
and my knowledge of the social groupings and behaviour
problems of some of the young people must improve my
ability to deal with them when we meet in the context of
my statutory functions. There is also the opportunity to
extend through the youth club a genuine preventive service,
for example, in referrals to Hafod Meurig which we have
just started. The possibilities are endless and all of
them are directly relevant to my work as a probation officer.

The cost in terms of man hours was considerable to my team
at the outset. It is now about four hours a week to
myself and up to eight hours if we have a really bad
week. A bad week means a racial fight in the youth
club, the borough cutting off funds, the van breaking
down and Bill Butler accusing Peter Chambers of embezzling
the funds and resigning (again). Peter has done his job
in pulling out some leadership in making a group and he
left three months ago. I have not found the project any
more demanding since he left and Bill is getting support
from a variety of people. Apart from our time it has
cost the service nothing and this is a pity, since it would
have been permanently on the record as a gesture of good
faith.

Finally I believe the Probation Service is in an ideal
position to engage in this kind of work, both in terms
of what it can put in and get out of it. I think this
is partly due to the overt nature of our authority which
means that we arouse less suspicion than community workers
and social workers whose purpose is more difficult to
understand. The Nile Project has just begun and we have
learned one lesson from Haggerston in bringing local people
in at the outset, using an area with contacts that
can be built on. The great change of emphasis is surely
in this beginning to see our clients as resources. They are
our primary contact with the community. The Service has
been accused of lacking a commitment to working itself out
of a job. Projects like this do just that, not only at the
moment of handing over resources and skills but also during
the exciting and nerve-racking process of handing over to
local people the initiative to use these skills in promoting
their own welfare as they see the need for it."

Some Community Projects in Other Areas

1. Nottingham

There are two projects: one is St. Mary's House, which is based
on an old nursing home converted into a community centre. The
conversion itself involved the participation of people from the
community, offenders and probation officers. It is a hostel
and centre for various activities, founded and funded by the
Probation Committee under Section 53 of the C.J. Act 1972.
The co-ordinator is a probation officer. This is described as
an interesting and exciting development which only came fully
into operation during 1975.

The other is a complex of five community work projects which
have five paid workers, one each in five different deprived areas
in the city. This is essentially preventive work in the
community. None of the workers is a probation officer although
one is an ex-officer and two are ex-offenders. The project as a
whole was initiated by the Probation Service and handed over to
other people and agencies. It is funded by Urban Aid for a period
of five years.

2. Liverpool

This is one of the twelve Community Development Projects set up
by the Home Office for five years in 1969. The office of the S.P.O.
is known as the Community Services Centre. It is a multi-
service centre which houses a number of different agencies under
one roof. Staff include probation officers, social service, five
neighbourhood community workers, a visiting solicitor, and the
work is co-ordinated by a director and two assistants (the S.P.O.
and staff). Inevitably the Probation Service gets involved with
community aspects and there is a good deal of sharing of issues;
for instance, on the day we received the information all centre
staff, including probation officers, were holding a meeting to
consider the city's eviction policy and to evolve a plan of joint
action. When the officially sponsored projects have wound up
there will be a great potential for reinforcing and developing
the work so far undertaken.

3. Sheffield

An advertisement put out by the South Yorkshire Service reads:

> "Wanted: Detached Probation Officer to join three
> others in a community-based unit. Accommodation
> provided in area of work. Challenging. Demanding.
> An informal and flexible approach to the problems of
> Probationers and other people in need."

Qualified social workers or probation officers are invited to apply.

The work of the four detached probation officers is based on a house
run by them in a very seedy part of the city and their object is
to make contact with and care for drug addicts and prostitutes.

They have facilities for putting people up over night and then
they continue work with them in the community during the day.
They have some contact with other probation officers but seem
to work mostly on their own. They have run an evening club
at the Day Training Centre and have started a 'drop in' centre
attached to the probation offices.

A Community Work Job in the Inner London
Probation and After-Care Service

Prepared by Doreen Haggar (now Armstrong) July 1973.

DEFINITION: from the Gulbenkian Report - 'Community Work and
Social Change.'

"Community work is essentially concerned with affecting
the course of social change through the two processes
of analysing social situations and forming relation-
ships with different groups to bring about some
desirable change.

It has three main aims:

the democratic process of involving people in
thinking, deciding, planning and playing an
active part in development and operation of
services that affect their daily lives

the value for personal fulfilment of belonging
in a community.

the need in community planning to think of
actual people in relation to other people
and the satisfaction of their needs as persons,
rather than to focus attention upon a series
of separate needs and problems."

ASPECTS OF THE COMMUNITY WORK FUNCTION

"Direct work with local people. The worker will
normally make himself known in a small neighbourhood
for the purpose of helping local groups to define and
achieve some goals they want. He may work for or on
behalf of groups with particular needs.

Facilitating agency and inter-agency co-ordination
and sustaining and promoting organised groups. This
includes facilitating common discussion and action
between existing organisations, statutory and voluntary,
and between them and the people they seek to serve in
order to bring services and the meeting of need in
closer relation with each other.

Community planning and policy formulation. This
includes the collection and presentation of relevant
social data, analysis of the effect on people and on
existing organisations of economic and technical
developments, and of population changes on the need
for services and facilities, and drawing up proposals
for social policy decisions in the light of this
information."

A good deal has been written about the content and direction of social change - my view is that the key to this is the allocation of resources in the direction of disadvantaged groups and disadvantaged areas.

A PROBATION SERVICE PERSPECTIVE

A large proportion of offenders are recognised to have disadvantaged backgrounds and the fact of labelling as offenders or ex-offenders tends to further disadvantage in areas such as employment, housing etc. This is no news to the Probation Service and typically efforts towards change in attitudes, policy etc. take up a large part of a probation officer's time. Community work adds a perspective in terms of method.

The Probation Service has acquired considerable expertise in using resources within the community - cultivating landladies, employers, schools, agency personnel and latterly the services of Voluntary Associates - for the purpose of assisting individual clients. Less has been attempted in the areas of working with established groups towards achieving their goals (which supplement those of the Probation Service) - The National Council for Civil Liberties, Recidivists Anonymous, Radical Alternatives to Prison, Preservation of the Rights of Prisoners etc. - helping groups of clients to look at ways of doing something about their common needs and problems, or building links with local groups - legal advice services, Tenant's Associations, squatters' groups etc. - working towards the improvement of facilities (material and information) on a local level.

A JOB DEFINITION

In the light of the above I take the view that a community work job would be best approached from a base independent of the new projects already planned in Inner London, as an experimental project in its own right. This with a view to expansion rather than a vehicle to fit any further training to the Service on a once and for all basis.

Ideally such a project requires more than one worker; a clerk/typist and office accommodation separate from, but close to, a probation office in a needy area. The geographical area in which work is undertaken would coincide with that covered by the local probation officers. An expert consultant in the community work field would be necessary.

THE AIM of such a project would be to integrate the Probation Service, and its clients, more closely with the local community.

TASKS

1.   To look, with probation officers, at the geographical areas from which clients come.

2.   To identify the needs and problems of clients (other than their delinquency) related to poverty, housing stress and unemployment etc.

3. To make links between 1 and 2 - i.e. between environmental stress and delinquency - including types of delinquency.

4. To look at the geographical areas isolated in terms of services, material facilities, support networks etc.

5. To make contacts with local groups, social services personnel, voluntary agencies etc. with a view to discussion of the needs of the area and action in respect of these.

6. To offer support to local groups as necessary by making available advice, information, secretarial help, duplicating facilities and a place to meet.

(5 and 6 clearly involve the Service in offering support to local action aimed at bettering the lot of its clients and the neighbourhood in general. Examples of typical community work involvement in an area which fall under these heads are:- working with groups concerned with improving play facilities, formation of a Women's Centre, squatters groups, Claimants Union etc. which would be of benefit to prisoners' wives, unsupported mothers, clients who are homeless, unemployed, sick etc.)

7. To consider supporting groups of clients with common needs to work together towards meeting these - e.g. prisoners' wives, Recidivists Anonymous etc.

8. To record the process used and collate the information obtained in the project.

9. To make an on-going evaluation of work undertaken in relation to the aim of the project.

LIKELY BENEFITS TO THE I.L.P.A.S.

1. Increased information about resources - formal and informal - in an area.

2. The possibility of recruitment of locally based voluntary associates.

3. A widening of the perspective of local probation officers in terms of seeing their clients more as part of a whole than as isolated individuals in conflict with their environment.

4. The opening up of localised projects for offenders subject to Community Service Orders.

5. Greater credibility for the Service as a concerned and interested body in local terms.

6. Increased co-ordination with other service agencies working in the area.

Appendix 'D'

Bibliography

Doreen Armstrong: The Probation Service and the Community:
A Reciprocal Relationship. Paper presented
at a S.E. Regional Training Course, 1975.

T.R. Batten: The Non-Directive Approach in Group and Community
Work. O.U.P. 1967.

Barbara Butler: Comment in Social Work Today, Vol. 5, No. 20,
9.1.1975 "Where have all the people gone?"

E.M. Goldberg: The Social Worker in the Sixties. Social Work
October 1961.

Gulbenkian Report: Community Work and Social Change.
Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968.

Gulbenkian Community Work Group: Current Issues in Community
Work. Routledge & Kegan
Paul, 1973.

Florence Hollis: Casework: A Psycho-Social Therapy.
Random House, New York, 1964.

H.O.R.U. Report No. 2, 1969, (Martin Davies). Probationers
in their Social Environment.

H.O.R.U. Report No. 21, 1974. Social Work in the Environment.

F.V. Jarvis' Probation Officers' Manual. Butterworths, 1974.

Mark Monger: Casework in Probation. Butterworths, London 1964.

Mary Richmond: Social Diagnosis. The Russell Sage Foundation
New York, 1917.

M.G. Ross: Community Organisation Theory and Principles,
Harper Bros. New York, 1975.

Report of the Committee on Local Authority and Allied Personal
Social Services (Seebohm Report) H.M.S.O. 1968.

END