

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

A STUDY OF RURAL OFFENDERS IN DORSET

A submission for the degree of M Phil.

DAVID HULMES

This thesis was submitted for examination in April 1990. It does not necessarily represent the final form of the thesis as deposited in the university after examinations.

APRIL 1990



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

ABSTRACT

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

SOCIAL WORK STUDIES

M.Phil

A STUDY OF RURAL OFFENDERS IN DORSET

by David Hulmes

This study has two aims. It attempts to show how the Dorset Probation Service as organised to date (Summer 1985) attempted to meet the needs of offenders despite the limitations formerly imposed by an informal model of organisation.

It seeks to determine the situational needs of rural offenders as perceived by Probation Officers and by the offenders themselves. This aim is achieved through a content analysis of sampled case records and through a self report questionnaire sent out to offenders.

This is essentially a descriptive study from which it is hoped to draw some conclusions about improving the supervision and help offered to rural offenders. It is suggested that the findings will have implications both for casework practice and for the way the local Probation Service is organised.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My very grateful thanks are given to the following who have helped me with this project. My academic and field advisors, Brian Glastonbury, Joan Orme, Elinor Murphy, Malcolm Lacey and Malcolm Cox, for their constructive criticism. My colleagues, with whom I have worked for several years, for providing the material. Ann Bellchamber, Angela Gilday, Val Scriven and Dave Smallwood for their practical efforts in getting the manuscript ready. Finally, my sincere thanks to my wife and daughter for their support and encouragement.

CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1 A review of the literature on rural communities	5
CHAPTER 2 A profile of the area of study	22
CHAPTER 3 The methodology of the research	38
CHAPTER 4 The main characteristics of the caseload of rural offenders	65
CHAPTER 5 The Questionnaire; a postal survey of rural offenders' situations	115
CHAPTER 6 The way forward	144
CHAPTER 7 Summary of conclusions and recommendations	155

BIBLIOGRAPHY

APPENDICES

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
2.1 Service points of five Agencies concerned with offenders in the rural area January 1985.	27
2.2 Responses to questions about creating a volunteer network in Blandford July 1985.	34
4.1 Admitted caseload. Age and sex by district.	66
4.2 Marital status. Sex by age.	70
4.3 Class position. By sex.	71
4.4 Domicile. By sex by age.	72
4.5 Settlement size. Birth place and domicile compared.	74
4.6 Types of offender accommodation.	77
4.7 Educational achievement of adult offenders at commencement of supervision. Sex by age.	79
4.8 Work status at commencement of supervision. Sex by age.	81
4.9 Health problems. Sex by age.	85
4.10 Personal trauma. Sex by age.	86
4.11 Debts. Adult offenders by sex by age.	90
4.12 Involvement of key informants with rural offenders. Sex by age.	92
4.13 Offence type. Sex by age.	97
4.14 Recidivist adults. Sex by age.	97

4.15 Cost to victims. Offence type by district.	99
4.16 Offending and victim involvement. Current offence by previous convictions by district.	100
4.17 An offender profile by area.	102
4.18 Recommendations giving clear and specific advice.	106
4.19 Recommendations giving mixed advice.	109
4.20 Recommendations of a vague and weak nature.	112
5.1 Length of stay at present address. Birthplace by sex by age.	116
5.2 Education level of respondents. Sex by age.	118
5.3 Education and work status. Sex by age.	120
5.4 Time commitment to work. Class of work by sex by age.	121
5.5 Duration and class of work. Sex by age.	121
5.6 Income. Sex by age.	123
5.7 Coping financially. Males and females.	124
5.8 How far respondents travelled to work.	125
5.9 How far respondents travelled to hospital.	126
5.10 How far respondents travelled for main shopping.	126
5.11 How far respondents travelled to local entertainment.	127
5.12 Vehicle availability. Sex by age by work status.	128
5.13 How far would respondents travel to work. Sex by age.	129

5.14 How far respondents would travel to see a show or film.	129
Sex by age.	
5.15 How far respondents would travel to help in a good cause.	130
Sex by age.	
5.16 How far respondents would go to move to a new home.	131
Sex by age.	
5.17 Community feelings of respondents.	132
5.18 Support for respondents in trouble.	133
5.19 Attitudes to the Police.	134
Sex by age by work status.	
5.20 Fairness of result.	135
Sex by age by work status.	
5.21 Attitude to Probation at time of court appearance.	136
Sex by age by work status.	

LIST OF FIGURES

4.1 A social problem profile.	94
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INTRODUCTION

When I left the Probation Hostel in Weymouth in 1981 to manage a large rural area in the north of the county, I was immediately struck by the difference in working practices; whereas in the hostel I had been close to colleagues and to clients, in the rural area I felt close to neither. My personal reaction suggested that rural officers had a detached role made more evident by the fact that I lived far from my new working area. The loss of informal contact with colleagues in particular seemed to me to be a denial of the intimate personal relationships which had characterised the local service when I joined and which had nurtured individual officers.

I was aware that the Dorset Probation Service had grown tenfold in twenty years and that new strategies were needed to meet changing organisational and professional needs. Only two years before I had been an active member of an internal agency working party (a) which looked closely at ways of improving the service to clients and support to colleagues. It seemed however, that in the rural north there was little evidence of new ways of working and that there existed an unquestioned acceptance of things as they were, whether they were relationships with clerks, magistrates, police or clients.

In addition I became concerned that the rural area would lose out in competition with other parts of the county with regard to resource allocation. In 1974 as the result of local authority reorganisation, Bournemouth and Christchurch were combined with Dorset, so that, together with Poole, there was a population of about 316,943 which effectively shifted the centre of gravity of power and influence to the South East of the new county. (b) It seemed to me that resources recently allocated to the west, for example, an increase in the prison welfare establishment,

(a) Probation Prospects - a report of service needs and provision - November 1979 - Dorset Probation and Aftercare Service.

(b) At the time of this study - 1984-85, the projected population figures were as follows:- Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Wimborne districts, occupying a land area equivalent to 19% of the total - 384,600. The rural west, including Weymouth and Portland, occupying land area equivalent to 81% of the total - 233,200.

provision of overnight staying accommodation for prisoners' families and the setting up of a new probation hostel, whilst of great use to the agency as a whole, did not necessarily meet the needs of the rural area itself.

Looking back, it seemed that whilst there were obvious differences between the East and the West of the county in terms of population size and density and service provision little effort had been made to look closely at the particular needs of local areas; neither was there a sound numerical base for measuring those needs. Within the West itself, no distinction was made between the large rural area and the urban area of Weymouth and Portland.

Development in the Dorset Service offered the prospect of improved practice but in its concentration on sharing and more centralised working, it seemed to place the rural area in a disadvantaged light. I felt this even more strongly in 1983 when the opportunity was presented of managing work in an even larger rural area. Following discussions between senior officers in the West in March 1983, approval was given to a plan which allowed officers based at Dorchester, Blandford and Wareham to co-operate in selected areas of work, namely conciliation and reparation. This experiment rested as much on exchange of information by colleagues, as on physical contact between colleagues, and was an attempt to test out some aspects of network theory. The experiment terminated in July 1985 just prior to reorganisation of the agency and it is referred to more fully in Appendix 1 which is a historical survey of change in the Probation Service.

Although the problems facing officers and clients in the rural area seemed to be somewhat ill-defined, some of the obvious differences would benefit from being stated. The Population Density of the new working area, which spanned from Lyme Regis to Studland Bay, and inland from Dorchester to Bourton on the Wiltshire border, was 2.39 per acre. Long distances between officer and client meant a lot of time spent on the road with attendant problems to do with traffic, delayed and missed appointments. Providing a service to the edge of the patch meant

inevitable isolation from office, colleagues and central resources, which the provision of sub-stations at Sherborne and Bridport did not overcome, because it did not facilitate on-the-spot exchange of information and advice between officers.

Whilst many of these difficulties were experienced also by social workers, the high public profile of probation work, which seemed to raise policy and resource issues, made great demands on officers. These demands were often experienced as direct pressure from other agencies, especially where immediate answers were expected about agency policy or where practical help was called for in individual cases, particularly in the court setting.

For example, sometimes requests were made for social enquiry reports on offenders who had not registered pleas, without reference to agency policy regarding the preparation of such reports. In addition immediate practical help was sometimes expected for individual offenders who required accommodation or other services at short notice without reference to its availability.

I also wondered whether it could be that the area imposed its own constraints on our work. It seemed to me that the well recognised problems facing probation clients, for example unemployment and temporary housing, were exacerbated in rural areas by the inability of our Service to provide the same kind of service as obtained in the urban environment. To illustrate this I noted that the day centre for adult offenders, located in Dorchester as a priority resource provision, could not attract clients because there were insufficient referrals from local courts and because the collecting distance proved to be too great. Did this mean that the principle of equality of Justice was being neglected?

In addition I was concerned by the fact that rural offenders - particularly the young ones - were easily identified and labelled. I recall speaking to a parish councillor at Beaminster who expressed outrage at the irritating but innocuous behaviour of youngsters waiting at the village green for a youth

club bus. This seemed to illustrate one area of rural disadvantage for a vulnerable group. Could it be that the rural offender cannot hide away and lose himself in a crowd as might his urban equal?

Questions about the identification of need and provision of services had been raised in a Home Office regional study of 1979 which compared practice in six rural areas in the south-west. Because of the diversity of location and experience it had not seemed possible to make generalisations about officers' style or client need, but the study seemed to support the view that in the midst of change affecting the countryside there was a need to sustain rural probation officers in their efforts to support and help their clients, even at some overall cost to local agencies. That view was shared by the Chief Probation Officer of the Dorset Service, Malcolm Lacey, who also drew attention to the fact that the particular needs of the rural area in Dorset had not been investigated.

Encouraged by these opinions it seemed the time had come to look more closely at the changing character of the rural area for which the agency has responsibility, and at the clients who live there. What follows is a descriptive study of the rural offender in his environment. This is set within the context of the literature on rural community and on offending, and it points to ways in which service provision can be improved.

CHAPTER ONE - REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON RURAL COMMUNITIES

This survey is concerned with three issues to do with community:-

definition of community:

the effect of change on community:

meeting offenders needs and the management of risk:

Throughout the emphasis is on rural communities and the discussion is intended to provide a background to this study.

Defining Community

The problem of defining the word "community" is that there are many theories drawn from different disciplines and as many explanations. Writers have struggled with the concept without being able to invest it with meaning. To one, it ranks only second to "amenity" in terms of imprecision (Martin 1976). The use of the word can produce an enthusiastic response in people of different persuasions. It is at the centre of discussions about the re-organisation of the personal social services (Seeböhm 1968) (Barclay 1982). The phrase "community work" is used to describe particular forms of intervention (Jones D 1977) and in this connection is linked very strongly with another word "neighbour-hood", particularly in British reported research, which traditionally has had its focus on local geographical areas (Bennington 1975) (Bell and Newby 1971, 1974). An appeal has been made to social workers to exploit the "community sense" of local neighbourhoods in order to exploit helping potential (Willmott and Thomas 1983). A "sense of community", that is an awareness of bondings between people who share space, is deemed to be absolutely essential if threatened village populations are to be maintained (Phillips & Williams 1984).

The attempt to give the concept substance by unifying data from anthropology, social geography and psychology, in a territorially localised frame, has only resulted in a re-statement of the problem, best expressed in the discovery that there were over ninety variables (later reduced and re-distributed in sixteen clusters) defining community (Hillary 1955). The concept appears

to have a high level of use associated with a low level of meaning (Pahl 1970).

The concept has been articulated differently. Firstly, holistically as presented in many community studies (which perhaps brings us closest to the notion of the "self-contained neighbourhood"). Then typologically, in studies which draw heavily on the idea of an evolutionary path between primitive societies and highly sophisticated urban societies (this tradition extends from the late nineteenth century to the nineteen fifties). Finally, in descriptions of interactions between community members, which reflect uniquely the special position that particular communities have with regard not only to the mutual exchanges of members but also contact with other societies. The American literature, which is of great importance in understanding the possible contrasts between rural and urban, has been usefully reviewed (Simpson 1965). Complementary studies reflecting European and British contributions have also been critiqued (Bell 1974).

There is one fundamental question. Can any particular way of conceptualising Community help to discover whether any particular collection of individuals and their relationships constitutes a community? (Clarke D B 1973). As that author points out the main problem is that community has been understood historically to be identical to certain structural patterns. In this way Tonnies' two ideal types, that is, Community (*gemeinschaft*), unavoidable, intimate and mutually life enhancing relationships, and association (*gesellschaft*), chosen, impersonal and selectively rewarding relationships, would tend to become mutually exclusive. Thus, Community would decay under urban conditions at the expense of Association. However, this conclusion, on the evidence of common experience, is untenable. Care must be taken to note not only the patterns of social behaviour as they appear outwardly, but also the attitudes of people towards the normative process as a whole, expressed as the sentiment of the community.

A useful drawing together of the different types of process and locality in research studies has been attempted (Frankenburg 1966). Evidence is brought together to show that elements of

"gemeinschaft" and "gesellschaft" - ties of intimacy and association and strong interactive links between local societies and the outside world - can be found in the study of most societies. Valuable insights derived from British Community Studies (Arenburg 1940, Reece 1960, Williams 1956 1963) include the notion of equilibrium between groups in a local society, economic ties with other neighbourhoods, some sharing of social amenities, selective out-migration and in-migration, the development of particular user strategies by both indigent and new-comer groups, and the developing strength of associational ties rather than primary familial ties as the basis for social exchange.

The effect of change in communities

The popular mind has been confronted with propaganda concerning both town and country, and literature abounds with examples. The twentieth century minor novelists in particular worked uncomfortably in a genre which was "particularly unfavourable" to the intelligent expression of creativity (Cavaliero 1977). As a result, there was a blend of romantic illusion and social reality. The idealised countryside is compared with the grimness of town living and there appears still to be a wistful longing for what was past. The myth of countryside is perpetuated today in the literature describing the bucolic country scene and country life set against the grim town situation (Newby 1979).

The post-war Scott Report spoke of a contented countryside. Post-war euphoria brought the dream of the countryside as a place to preserve as an area for satisfactory living. Communities would be "socially mixed", full of friendship, neighbourliness and comradeship (Donnison 1971). The village was seen as a welcome appendage to the town (Cherry 1976).

There was a widespread belief that country areas are benign, and that there is a lack of physical ill health (Newby 1979). There was also a belief that there was less mental disorder because of the low population turnover (Madge and Rutter 1976). There was also an emotional imperative to believe that in contrast to urban pressures, the countryside was peaceful and welcoming.

The basis for ambiguity over community lies in the myth generated as a by-product of the social changes brought about by economic forces in the nineteenth century. The effect of these forces was most obviously seen in the migration of the rural working class into towns (Lewis 1979). The population figures themselves indicate the difference which helped to polarise urban from rural (Blunden and Curry 1985). Some locations under threat were almost denuded of working population (Whitby 1978). Net losses in population due to the imbalance between live births and deaths (Bracey 1958) and migration before and after marriage, show that migration is not simply a "push and pull" mechanism conditioned by economic determinants. These determinants, however, play an important part in the process. In a study of a small rural community in the West Country, which appeared to be stable with strong associational ties between members, the same net loss in the 17 - 25 range age cohort was noted, as is found in many other studies (Glynn-Jones 1979). People in both urban and rural communities move on in order to obtain promotion, aspire to a higher material standard of living, or simply cope with the differential demands of the life cycle (Friedlander and Rohier 1966).

The deterministic move from one cultural milieu representing neighbourhood and indifferentiation of roles to another representing inter-personal distance and highly specialised roles did result in anomie and breakdown (Berry 1958). The concept of urban decay is founded on the density of human interactions but it has been pointed out that similar problems exist elsewhere (Thompson 1968). The images of rural life have never been completely unblemished, nor has the voice of rural protest been muffled (Hobsbaum 1969). Modern idealism is partly a reaction to the horrors of urban decay but individuals have become insensitive to humanitarian values, hastened on by the experience of war and the post-war ideas of planners; people have turned to villages in a cruelly ironic way, refusing to acknowledge some of the uncomfortable realities involved. (Harrison F 1982).

Most writers have sought to locate their ideas in smaller rather than larger societal frames. This is because proximity, even if no link with intimacy can be found between people, has been seen

as a fundamental requisite of community.

Part of the activity base of even a highly mobile individual is the local geographic community (Stacey 1960). The convergence of interest and influence can lead to social relations which include co-operation and conflict. It is for this reason that the study of communities is reasonably grounded in small, spatial frameworks (Lewis 1979). It is stating the obvious to remind ourselves that we "like trees, need roots" (Sherer 1977).

Size is not the most important criteria for an integrated society; the same conditions equally apply within an urban locality as within a rural locality. An appropriate warning has been given about the dangers of over-idealising smaller groupings (Gans 1967), as ways of life do not necessarily coincide with settlement size or pattern.

The small, more proximate community, wherever it is located geographically, is neither secure enough in its personal relationships member with member, nor powerful enough in its manifest authority, formal or informal, to satisfy the life expectations of all its members. Local communities are often found to be prejudiced and partial and the demands of the weak can go unheeded. Active care in neighbourhood can be applied discriminately on an exchange basis, or can be offered unconditionally. The term "neighbourhoodism" applies to more formal care interventions which have not only to provide an equitable service but also to encourage greater community participation (Abrams 1980). It has been pointed out (Mitchell 1950) that "loss of community" and the feeling of void which accompanies it, is a recognition that when change comes those who are trapped in their local situations and lack the capacity or will to adjust, cannot find the mutual support and strength to aid survival. The paradoxical effect is that opportunities do not present to all members of communities, only to those who have the courage or ability to move. Instead of enhancement, those remaining must experience disappointment and frustration (Sherer 1977).

There are several approaches which illustrate the problem of comprehending community and relating the macro and micro

dimensions. In a geographical sense, community may be expressed in levels of specificity - this is, region, sub-region and locality (Haggett 1975). In the hierarchical scale, the territorially small units may be viewed merely as parts of the whole. The difficulties here focus on whether or not, in view of the diverse nature of identifiable local communities, the collective life and relationships can be expressed adequately in a quantitative way (Jones and Eyles 1977). In an interventionist sense, there have been attempts to standardise the provision of services, attempts which have failed because of the impossibility of providing a territorially just provision. If the realities of life in the countryside reflect those in the town then large issues to do with the balance of power between family, community and state intervention demand "the building of structures which promote participative democracy and which serve rather than service the community" (Grant 1976). Attempts to personalised services have invoked issues to do with neighbourhood. It is possible that insufficient regard has been given to the conflict of interests within local communities over the use of scarce resources (Lockwood 1975).

The twentieth century return to the countryside has brought vitality back to denuded areas. There is, however, not the same distinction between communities, as is noted in the rural urban fringe and the growth of suburbia (Bracey 1970). In-coming populations are often self-selecting (Berry 1958) (Bryant 1974). Individuals choose different sites to suit their own purposes, so the population in-fill, whilst noted in remoter areas, occurs mainly in areas where there are good communication links (Roberts and Randolph 1983). The picture is encouraging but it is possible that even within relatively populated areas there are area imbalances, masked in the main by the effects of local authority re-organisation (County Review Committee 1978).

The incursion into green belts and the rise of suburban living space, due directly to improved transportation and the easier transmission of ideas between areas due to the influences of radio, television and the telephone, have loosened the pivotal role of intimate personal ties in community. (Philips & Williams 1984) What is important is the recognition of associational

rather than familial ties as the basis for interaction.

Local societies have been exposed differentially to the effects of change (O'Donnell 1981) (Bott 1971). The speed with which ideas are communicated and change takes place differs from area to area. Interesting American studies show how information exchange is affected as much by local reaction to the information as by the methods adopted to transmit it. Unlike the presentation of a small farm innovation, the changes in a local society have a very long time span and are not so clearly focussed (Ambrose 1974).

Power in community has not been given the attention it deserves in the literature because it has traditionally been related to class and social position (Bell and Newby 1982). Power wielders may be prescribed leaders like Mayors, or grass roots enthusiasts. Both have high profiles. What is in doubt is whether or not other more covert agents form a power elite. In any situation, identifications of power can be made but comparisons between communities, with a view to understanding their separate conflicts is difficult (Coleman 1957).

Although conflict can often be beneficial, the process of resolution polarises groups and hardens attitudes which can reinforce the amplification of effect as far as weak minority groups are concerned. One particularly strident campaign is "Rural Voices" which seeks to raise issues to do with the countryside (Blunden and Curry 1985). A closer look at the constitution of such a group suggests a new elite whose influence, however, is bureaucratically determined, producing derived satisfactions (Lowfield and Higley 1980).

One result of this is considerable social distance between people with status and power and those who are relatively weak. Consequently, the labelling process leads to the self-fulfilling prophecy that offenders, who are potentially amongst the most vulnerable of excluded groups, are deservedly outcast.

The change in power base of local communities is based on "interest rather than proprinuity" - a change provoked by the

presence and increasing numbers of an adventitious class. There is a new kind of collectivism based on "a rational calculation of interest" (Lockwood 1975) which leads to strain and a potential of conflict between class groups, notably the middle class and working class (Cherry 1976). This disparity in values between groups results in differences which could lead to disaster (Dunn 1976).

The characteristics of villages have been marked out (Thorns 1968) (Ambrose 1977). A typical village has a core where indigenous locals live: a housing estate which often shelters the poor and deviant and new commuter estates which house the adventitious new-comers (Lewis 1979). A typology of village development in a progression from closed to open confirms the class base for divisions between locals and new-comers (Thorns 1968). The separation of the various class groups into certain spatial areas has been noted (Blacksell and Gilg 1981), as has also the fact that working class groups are constrained by lack of opportunity and will tend to coalesce as a much more readily identifiable social grouping than the more outwardly looking middle class. The spatial segregation of class in village areas highlights preferred relational boundaries and emphasises the loss of ties across class (Pahl 1965) (Mogey 1957). Group membership in modern societies is very much based on shared interests and values (Clarke 1981). What might now profile a community is the significance of giving support to such ties. The characteristics of secondary association groups based on interest have been set out (Jones and Eyles 1977). Some interesting facts arise from the studies of voluntary groups in villages. Their members are mostly female and belong to the middle class. They associate more freely in communities which rise above the population threshold of one thousand, but in areas which have relatively less accessibility to other more attractive interest alternatives. Whilst secondary associations meet the needs of some groups and are described with enthusiasm by participants (Clout 1972), they are less than representative of total population interests. Rural relationships, in general, are dominated by caution (Bracey 1963); co-operation and participation flow only when a level of trust has been achieved, a trust which is affected adversely by spatial segregation (Newby

1979) (Blythe 1972). There are still differences within villages between indigenous and new-comer class, which affect lines of communication and choice of respondents (Forsythe 1980) (Cohen A P 1982). An analysis of life circumstances of village communities shows quite clearly that each group has interests and opportunities which compete directly with neighbours in vital life supporting areas, for example, housing (Pahl 1970).

The focus on positive discrimination and obtaining territorial justice has been conciliatory rather than confrontational. The resolution of conflict must begin in an awareness that those dependent on the local area entirely are unconditionally committed to resolving the problem. Others with greater opportunities may withdraw; commitment on their part will help to focus more realistically on problems and prevent the hardening of attitudes and the further separation of groups.

If it appears no longer necessary to associate community with propinquity, it is nevertheless necessary to come to terms with territorially based human aggregations, because of the need to plan and provide basic survival services (Cloke 1980).

Population and planning is inter-twined and the economics of public choice determine decisions. In planning terms it is difficult to "wipe the slate clean" once settlements have been established. The economic and efficient provision of services does require concentration rather than dispersal. The difference between the market and the welfare economy and the establishment of the key village concept as a practical solution, reveals problems of service (Seed 1980). In this matter, key centres and communities adjacent to larger urban areas have the edge. Planning techniques concentrate on settlement size, ignoring the benefits of alternative patterns of settlement which has already been indicated and are often based on social rather than economic factors. There is a need to maintain populations, however small, if only because it is impossible to eliminate them (Neate 1981). The three main factors determining planning choices are employment, personal services and housing. Key centres are not seen as providing a universal solution to these problems and there are good reasons for shifting industry to rural areas. The

work of the development commission COSIRA and the Association of County Councils is important in this respect.

It is worthwhile looking at a rural political perspective which concentrates on problems to do with declining industries on the one hand, and expanding ageing communities on the other (Cherry 1976). Actions to steer change in the right direction are for the most part voluntaristic (Blunden and Curry 1985). Issues include the exodus from one part to another; the fall in demand because of changing industrial techniques, and the loss of employment, the breakdown of services in the community and the larger choice between market and welfare economies. The managers of local resources are often reluctant to take a global view of problems brought to their notice (Phillips and Williams 1984) and this is an indication of the potency of the "gate-keeping" role exercised by relatively low-ranking officials.

There are differences between rural and urban, but these are really problem specific. There are problems over the collection of normative data, and its application to specific areas. The urban centralised model is the prototype, and planners have been unsympathetic to problems of the countryside (Association of District Councils 1978). The rural experience has been cast in the shadows of the urban experience, because the concentration on proximate dense urban populations makes measurement easier (Harrison P 1983). However, no spatial definition of need suffices. The essential differences are not between urban and rural but within areas, sometimes adjacent, sometimes rural and rural (Townsend 1984).

Taxonomies of need are difficult to obtain (Bradshaw 1972). Research studies tend to concentrate on the variation in official rates of reported need; "questionnaires" to elicit responses from known client groups and projective studies to anticipate future need (Smith 1969). The interest in client power (Holman 1970) (Sinfield 1969) has raised the status of consumers as respondents in the task of finding useful indices of need. There are methodological difficulties but the reward of incorporating what the consumer says into programmes of action has been remarkably demonstrated in the research into the residential care of

mentally handicapped patients (Bayley M 1973). The interaction of consumer and provider can produce realistic services, even within limited budgets (Jordan B 1975). A guide to the assessment of needs and resources, used particularly in a semi-rural area, has been produced (Glampson Scott and Thomas 1975). Referrals received in the area can be considered in the light of other needs revealed in addition to the presenting factor. It is important that the search continues for indices relevant to rural areas, as conventional indices often distort rural situations (Brogdon 1984). There are question marks over the value of indices (Grant 1984) and concerning the problems of collecting soft data.

There is nothing distinctly rural about deprivation. The uniqueness lies in the accumulation of effect, one factor added to another, producing a weight of disadvantage. Its effect, however, is compounded by inaccessibility to service points, lack of mobility on the part of vulnerable minority groups, and economic constraints imposing huge burdens on families in competition with affluent and choice-conscious in-comers (Walker 1978). The practical methods by which service is delivered to consumers in rural areas have been addressed (Moseley 1979). Distance from central resources promotes the use of mobile services but it is important to distinguish relevant needs from non-relevant needs. The provision of little-used but expensive customer outlets would result if care was not taken to establish relevance.

There is a specific rural perspective which relates the need for provision of services with high cost; this demands a proper analysis of structural issues - for example, unemployment, and locational factors, for example, the ability of statutory and non-statutory agencies to collectively serve local need (Lloyd and Lloyd 1984).

Declining services and diminishing opportunities, and also competition from new-comers, accentuate deprivation in rural areas. The disproportionate level of numbers of people living on low incomes and the decline in the local social services, increase strain, and also the gap between those who have and

those who do not exacerbates tensions. Attempts have been made to determine the net advantage to the poor in remaining in rural areas. The truth is perhaps that such groups cannot leave their local areas and this is often clearly to their disadvantage.

Although there is low morbidity in rural areas, the increase in an ageing population demands more services for maintenance and care. The old and often poor contribute to their own invisibility (McLaughlin 1976), avoiding indebtedness and dependence on others (Black 1983) because this often brings accompanying stigma.

There are comforting reports that self-help and self-reliance are strong motivators in country areas (Wenger 1984). This, however, is an illusion. The early work on social networking related to urban settings (Mitchell 1969). However, the concept is useful in a rural setting, where a picture clearly emerges of attenuated caring links, and situations where, for example, the only carer of aged parents will be the daughter living at home (Finch and Groves 1980).

It is difficult for consumers to make known their appropriate needs. For example, villages which boast green fields often lack play spaces, and young people who have no access to council waiting lists are technically homeless, although they may find shelter with friends. It is often difficult to get hold of the client point of view, and many referrals to Social Work Services in particular are made by other professionals (Glastonbury 1979).

The meeting of offender need and the management of risk

The position of the Probation Officer as main supporter of the offender in rural communities, could be undermined by the fact that s/he represented authority for whom a healthy suspicion was reserved. S/he has never had the knowledge base to inform the work sufficiently, nor the direct contact to influence each offender, but has been entirely accountable for the satisfactory completions of client Orders. (NAPO 1984). This report of a rural experiment, attempted to look at the presentation of Social

Inquiry Reports in a radically different way to improve acceptance rates of recommendations. On the whole, the experiment was not welcomed because it was not specific enough in its focus away from the more traditional personal circumstances of offender to a more radical analytical look at the offence. Bearing in mind the particular setting of rural Courts which are often more punitive and more paternal than City Courts, it is not surprising that Probation Officers wrote their social inquiry reports with Magistrates in mind, protecting their clients' interests by concentrating on family details rather than wider societal issues (Parker, Casburn and Turnbull - 1981).

Interventions frequently demand a careful assessment of the harm that the offender could cause to others in the community. In order for this risk to be assessed, the Probation Officer has to work at maintaining a consensus within the community about reasonable risk; this was done mostly by enlisting the support and understanding of the local Benches.

It is recognised that there are dangers associated with the exercise of social control by external agencies with regard not only to the philosophy of intervention, but also with regard to the techniques of intervention. (Walker and Beaumont - 1981). The main criticism was that differential treatment methods were producing more of the same, the continuation of the theme of treatment which has least relevance to the social and emotional conditions of clients' lives. Methods which concentrated on traditional values like the importance of work again emphasised the same consensual and integrative assumptions which bolster traditional probation. One of those traditional assumptions, though not made explicit in traditional practice, was the need for tighter social control evidenced in the new concentration on community service and quasi institutional life for example, Hostels. The danger of establishing new networks of social control was that they were not seen as alternatives to custody but merely as an extension of the controlling arm of authority to new populations of offenders (Cohen 1974).

A more pragmatic view was that such intervention did have a constructive base, particularly in the current climate of

political opinion with its emphasis on dealing with more serious offenders by non-custodial measures. (Cohen 1987).

There are two contrasting visions of social control; exclusion, which meant banishment and expulsion, and inclusion which meant integration, toleration and incorporation.

Current political forces favour exclusion. Sentencing, however, must express issues of guilt punishment and responsibility, but it is humane and effective to present alternatives to institutional exclusionary thinking. Some way must be found for the community itself to respond to the urgent need to avoid controlling and excluding groups on account of their age, race or moral status. Community based forms of social control involving neighbourhood must be found to deal with the incompetent.

It has been suggested that such a concentration of offenders within the community rather than in institutions is a "Marketable" concept. (Cowgill and Atherton - Ibid). The translation of resources from institutions to community necessitates the formulation of constructive and realistic plans. In embracing elements of social control, therefore, social work has an obligation to demonstrate that it can bring about change (Pincus and Minahan 1973).

The critical choices to be made in the casework relationship, whether that be with an individual offender or with elements in his local community, are in the area of social planning. The "determinants of the worker's beginning actions" should include the need the client feels, the help required, and the capacities and resources available. (Perlman 1972).

Often the worker must attempt to deal with those other persons and rulings that affect the client's problem. The only exception to the general rule that the client should express his problem before an intervention strategy is negotiated are those cases of high risk which require and ask for interventions.

These preliminaries to action reflect the strain that the Probation Officer may feel rising out of the needs of the offender as against the needs of the community, and from the

role. In most cases, the degree of risk surrounding the offender's actions do not require removal from the community. The Probation Officer must exercise authority in a neutral way which encourages voluntary action on the offenders part, leading to greater acceptance by others. (Jordan - 1975). Neutrality refers in this instance not to the casework relationship (the non-judgemental attitude) but to the fact that social workers must, as helpers, develop good professional practice which includes reconciling the needs of both Agency and client.

The investigation of the "interactional field" which tests the individual's abilities to meet the demands of his environment, is crucial to the Probation Officer's work. (Vickery 1974). The social environment places demands upon clients that are far beyond the limits of their coping capacity. Transactions between individuals and their environments and the potential for enhancing or diminishing their prospects of satisfaction are facilitated by a general systems approach. There are risks associated with the unqualified espousal of systems theory (Sainsbury 1974) but in spite of its deterministic base and its apparent legitimisation of existing power relationship it does incorporate the needs and responses of the client. As such, it is seen as a useful aid in the helping process (Davis M - 1975b).

The matrix of several predisposing causes, which includes not only the offenders' pathology but also locational and structural factors, bear down on the offender regardless of any capacity or will to resist (Corrigan and Leonard 1978). Attempts have been made to distinguish offenders from non-offenders (Hood and Sparks 1970), but what is very difficult to explain is the widely observed fact that most members of groups perceived to be vulnerable survive without offending (May 1975). The process of being labelled delinquent can be the result of a fusion of events and predisposing factors which emphasises social disapproval rather than innate criminality (Tonge 1975). It is this combination of chance, personal lifestyle and delinquent act which places offenders at risk on a scale of social acceptability which can be calculated according to the degree of victim involvement (Wadsworth 1975).

The sometimes disproportionate weight given to some offences and

some offenders is, of course, evident in rural communities. Different communities will apply different acceptability scales with regard to public misconduct. A high value is given to the pathological view of crime and the "pariah effect" (Parker et al 1981). A high value is also given to property offences with or without victims. In the absence of conspiracy theories offenders can find themselves stigmatised without explanation and without hope in a less stressful environment than that to be found in urban situations. This can lead to them being forced out with little prospect of easily regaining their place.

Turbulent field theory has been adapted to explain the coping responses of individual offenders in situations of increasing social complexity and strain (Davis 1974). Whilst Wadsworth's work is concerned with social disapproval, that of Davis is concerned with how individuals try to manage the environmental forces affecting their behaviour. What is noteworthy here is the opinion that an intervenor (Probation Officer) seems to make little difference. More intensive work and a thorough grasp of the "predisposing factors" were seen to be of use in relation to only a small group of offenders. These offenders belong to the "bad risk" category. Most others seem to fare equally well whether or not they are exposed to normal intervention strategies. The four levels of causal texturing referred to, range from a random but stable environment in which the individual is not obliged to make rational choices, to a threatening and unstable environment in which the individual is unable to make choices and is prey to any environmental force.

Although individuals can be caught in a turbulent field (the fourth level of causal texturing), rural probation practice deals mainly with those who are seriously at risk but still maintain position in the community.

If we are to believe that these individuals can be held there, we must look again at what intervention means. Interactional fields need to be managed differently (Vickery 1974) and supervision in the community requires of the Probation Officer a greater understanding of the field forces impinging on the life situations of offenders. Understanding includes grasp of the

moral basis of his work and a knowledge of the local environments in which offenders live, enabling him to act in a new role of mentor or enabler (Thomas and Shafto 1974). The vectoring in of interventional energy tends less to do with individualised help and more towards community involvement. There are implications here for the use of resources and responsibility and one major consideration must be the appropriateness of managing individual caseloads.

To recapitulate, it is argued that the positive intervention of an external control agent is necessary, but that the present style of intervention is not practicable. The knowledge of community becomes the prime objective and it is no longer a secondary gain accompanying direct work with offenders.

Administrative Boundaries

The County boundary borders Devon, Somerset, Wiltshire and Hampshire in the north east. There are three District Council boundaries in the area of study, North Dorset, West Dorset and Purbeck excluding Wareham. Wareham is included in the research area. There are about 250 parish boundaries in the area, and 13 town boundaries.

In the study area there is a clear morphological and spatial distinction between larger and smaller settlements which are positioned for historical or geographical reasons differentially along the old communication pathways. In the area of special interest there are over three hundred settlements of which thirteen have populations in excess of 2000. The physical environment determines the position and ambience of these settlements. In spite of their random placement some interconnectedness can be observed between adjacent communities. In most cases however, it represents a particular commercial or traditional link not vital to the survival of either. Only a few of the settlements have a structural relationship in which one is the satellite of the other. One of the interesting visual effects of the terrain and the contrast between hill and dale is the sense of isolation which accompanies one when visiting smaller settlements which, because of the relatively hostile environment, increases the feeling of remoteness.

The noticeable imbalance of population showed in the direction of Poole - Bournemouth does not, as one might suppose, make that conurbation of interest as an attractive centre. The configuration of the western settlements and their proximity to other large centres, allow Salisbury Yeovil and Chard to compete successfully as service providers, where the attraction is in the main personal economic areas of shopping, work, further education and recreation. These other places determine to a large extent the pecking order of influence. For example, the overwhelming influence of Yeovil casts a shadow over most of Western Dorset;

Sherborne and Dorchester for example have their own distinct areas of influence as administrative centres.

Lesser towns, often competing for local demand, come lower down the scale of influence. There are as it were, two levels of influence within the area; the first affects wider economic and personal choice making and is focussed on out of County settlements; the other affects day to day choice-making, in which the focus is the nearest or most convenient central place.

A great many of the smaller settlements have value as service providers but range of provision is restricted. The basic list of essential services which includes, public hall, Post Office, public house, food shop, mains sewerage, garage/filling station, primary school and surgery, is not comprehensively covered even in settlements of 1000 population or more.

Sub-Area Differences

It is possible to delineate the special situations of sub areas. For the purposes of the research, the particular groups are those of West Dorset, North Dorset and Purbeck including Wareham. The different local areas can be discussed with particular emphasis on their special characteristics and their potential for growth. There are seven such areas:

Central Dorset - Dorchester is the dominant town. Land supply problems divert population to satellite settlements like Crossways and Stratton, and to local service centres like Maiden Newton. Most settlements are small and remote, and growth will take place in the Dorchester area. A current controversy is over plans to develop a new village. Although the need is obvious, Dorchester residents have voiced protest against the plan prepared by the Duchy of Cornwall.

Western Dorset - Western Dorset is now a special development area. This was created in 1985 under the general auspices of the community council acting as agent for the Development Commission. This arrangement, in fact, highlights the distinction between the

coastal strip and the inland area. The important towns are Bridport and Beaminster and adjacent Somerset towns. Communication is adequate although there is a poor road system and only limited public transport. The environment is the key issue in West Dorset. COSIRA has helped to develop small scale industrial units in the area, but it is not a growth area and there is a prospect of decline in the settlements.

Sherborne - This area is centred on Yeovil, Sherborne and Yetminster (the only local centre). There was a population growth in the 1970's in the Sherborne/Yeovil area. These towns are complementary. Yeovil is the work-provider and Sherborne is a nicer place to live. The smaller, ill-populated villages do not support Sherborne as a main service provider.

Northern Dorset - This has, since the war, been a good area for population growth, with cheap housing, jobs and well-established market towns. In addition, there is a major rail link between Yeovil and Gillingham. COSIRA have again been active in developing town-based industries. This is the only area in the rural county where growth could increase at minimum cost to public authorities. There are, however, constraints from other places like Wincanton and Blandford. Constraint on further development might increase house prices and reduce the area's attractiveness to younger people. South, near Sturminster Newton, there are very ill-populated communities and poor communication networks.

Blandford - Blandford is traditionally a growth area with good communication links, but it suffers from traffic congestion and land availability problems.

Cranborne - is a very remote area.

Purbeck - this is a fast growing area in the Wool and Bere Regis directions, however, growth is declining between Swanage and Lulworth. Services are relatively wide-spread in the area. As far as growth is concerned, the only possibility is for development at Swanage.

Some of the practical difficulties experienced in boundary setting can be illustrated. The 1974 Local Authority re-organisation, brought together town and country in an attempt to re-negotiate problems to do with equitable service provision.

At local levels, boundaries intersect each other at first sight without rationalisation. For example the finger of territory known as Cranborne, whilst in the North Dorset geographical area, is administered by the Wimborne District centred at Ferndown. Admittedly an isolated area, its small population is tucked between Blandford, Salisbury and Ferndown, on which three towns it is dependent for the provision of services.

All the main agencies have out-posts. The Social Services Department, for example, has three area administrative offices which service West Dorset, North Dorset and Purbeck. The West Dorset area includes Sherborne. Sherborne is an interesting case of a largish population which constantly has its service boundaries altered, often against its will. This is a particularly sensitive area. Not only the Social Services but also the Probation Service have treated Sherborne as an expendable service centre. In the case of Probation, this has caused upset to local magistrates. The Youth Service conforms to the above boundaries. The Library Service has different boundaries. There are only two areas; West, covering most of the research area and Central, which includes Blandford. There are two Area Health Authorities, West and East. Purbeck is caught between the two, with ensuing difficulties over accountability and responsibility for specialist services.

There are three education area offices. Education catchment areas relate not to the usual central place theory, but to the availability of schools. Placements depend on both local policy with regard to streaming at secondary level and to parental choice. They also depend on the presence or otherwise in the neighbourhood of tertiary schooling.

The Government agencies present a slightly different picture. The Department of Health and Social Security operates at a regional level; the sub-regional division covers Yeovil,

Weymouth, Salisbury and Poole, and this, of course, breaches the Dorset county barriers at various points. The Department of Employment also reaches out beyond the County boundary. The conversion to postal application for benefits, and the reduction in the number of out-posted workers in Government agencies, produces real problems for those living in isolated areas. Boundaries get blurred and consumers are often not clear in which direction to turn. This is even the case with regard to the provision of main services like gas and electricity. Consumers are invited to send their accounts to a number of offices spread between Yeovil and Southampton.

Isolation from other statutory agencies is a very real problem in rural areas. This isolation is compounded by the practice of other interventionist agencies like the Social Services Department, Police, Clerks to the Magistrates and Department of Employment, which also provide sub-offices staffed occasionally by professionals. Global out-posting of this kind reiterates the distance between and the separateness from service points and their administrative centres (Table 2.1). Each Agency appears to have its own view of best locations and there is no direct equivalence which would facilitate good communication.

In addition, the administrative centres of the Magistrates Clerks departments are located outside the study area entirely. Great use is made of all Agencies of the occasional contact point - the use of a room at a certain location. This is often a discretionary offer of help by another Agency reflecting convenience rather than user need. Area Health is often the provider of this facility.

In rural areas, great demands are made on Officers because they appear as sole representatives of their Agency and have to take responsibility for interpreting policy without the opportunity of consultation. The Court situation produces three typical examples which can place the Officer at risk: instructions to find bail accommodation and to fund the passage home of offenders not officially recognised by the Agency as clients, and the showing of Social Inquiry Reports to unauthorised but well-disposed officials.

TABLE 2.1 - SERVICE POINTS OF FIVE AGENCIES CONCERNED WITH OFFENDERS IN THE RURAL AREA JANUARY 1985

AREA	MAIN CENTRE	STAFFED OFFICE	OTHER CONTACT POINT
<u>WEST DORSET</u>			
Dorchester	PROBATION POLICE SOCIAL SERVICES	Clerk to Magistrates	Department of Employment (D of E)
Bridport	POLICE SOCIAL SERVICES		Clerk to Mag. Probation (D of E)
Beaminster		Police	SSD
Lyme		Police	SSD
<u>N. DORSET</u>			
Blandford	POLICE PROBATION		SSD Clerk to Mag. D of E
Sturminster Newton	SOCIAL SERVICES		Police
Shaftesbury		Police	Probation SSD Clerk to Mag. D of E
Gillingham			Police Probation SSD Clerk to Mag. D of E
Sherborne	POLICE SOCIAL SERVICES		Probation Clerk to Mag. D of E
<u>PURBECK</u>			
Wareham	SOCIAL SERVICES	Probation	Clerk to Mag. D of E
Swanage		Police	Probation SSD D of E

Finally, personal isolation of Officers from their colleagues and centres of operation can give rise to high staff care cost, expressed most obviously in illness or in idiosyncratic work patterns. This problem has also been related to the perceived function and availability of clerical assistants who afford a

protective shield. According to a CPO's internal memorandum 22 June 1983, there are three aspects of work related to clerical assistants. They are; how work is allocated, reception and telephone duties and work undertaken as personal assistants to Probation Officers.

There are resource constraints to be considered. With regard to the individual Officers, these include difficulties in working flexibly because of the need to programme routine interviews, in achieving reasonable contact time with offenders under supervision, and in providing even minimum surveillance. In May 1984 one rural Officer travelled a total of 1500 miles over a daily range of 55 miles. General duties included Social Inquiry Reports preparation, Court work, prison visiting, civil work and supervision of probationers. All the journeys were to fixed venues and no account was taken of diversions to other work calls en route.

Some of the difficulties in managing groups of offenders in rural areas include obtaining a reasonable group size, finding someone else to share leadership, selecting group members according to offence or age or sex and in finding a suitable venue. The composite problems of service delivery in rural areas are reflected here. Firstly, the distance members have to travel. Secondly, organisational arrangements which can be easily frustrated. Thirdly, the lack of privacy which usually attends meetings held at other than urban venues. Lastly, there are selection constraints based on the fact that there is very little in common between offenders. Discrete geographically defined sub-areas, and sporadic settlements, force uneven Service provision with consequences for choice and for territorial justice. Examples included the Magistrates' dilemma over Attendance Centres, I.T., and Day Centre facilities, which were available to only a small proportion of the offender population in the area. Magistrates at Gillingham could use an Attendance Centre in Bournemouth, but this required a one hour bus journey in each direction extending the Saturday attendance to over eight hours. Sherborne Magistrates were close to facilities at Yeovil (Somerset Probation Service) but distant from all Dorset facilities. Bridport Magistrates could, in theory, use the Day

Centre in Dorchester, but it was impracticable unless special transport could be laid on.

Some need is public and is obvious. The major needs are for housing and employment. There are many local constraints which make both these need areas chronic problems in Dorset.

Population, Housing and Employment

Much of the following data is derived from the Dorset (excluding SE) structure plan discussion papers.

Deaths per 1000 exceed live births per 1000 in the area. The population is therefore not replacing itself naturally. However, recent trends in population change show a net growth. The rate of growth has accelerated since 1966 and the current expansion rate is of the order of 8%. This expansion is due almost entirely to the immigration of older people.

The 1977 estimate of settlement indicated that 60% of the population live in towns: 12.5% in larger villages and 27.5% in smaller settlements. This concentration of population in towns is a recognition of the importance of the towns as central places; the discussion about the future structure and development of the area takes central place theory as its starting point.

In the towns there has been some population movement away from central areas to suburban space but these outer urban areas together with adjacent small settlements seem still to be dependent on the towns. The critical size for a settlement functioning at an essential service level appears to be 500-750 population. Beneath this figure there are some settlements whose existence is threatened unless special initiatives are begun, to support immobile or imprisoned communities.

In 1977 23% of the population was over State retirement age. Although older people choose retirement areas of beauty (often along the West Dorset coast), most retire to larger settlements.

The migrants also include late age working people. They are

often self-employed or have access to high technology, and they do choose remoter settlements from which they can easily commute. The Outmigration of large numbers of younger age working people is a matter for concern. They choose to locate their energies, skills and experience elsewhere in the search for satisfying jobs. This movement leaves behind a residual group of less qualified youngsters.

The area has nurtured many who have come for particular purposes, for example, education; training (Armed Services); incarceration (Prisons and Mental Hospitals) and rehabilitation (Pilsden Community). The number of non-private households is increasing although the main traditional sources, the Armed Services, have reduced their establishments.

Population increase for whatever reason demands adequate housing. Since the War there has been development limited only by a sense of taste reflecting the importance of preserving the amenities of pleasant countryside. This laissez faire approach has been modified area by area according to local pressures. There has been no major effort to demolish and reconstruct because old dilapidated property is not visibly present to offend the eye. New building has taken place mainly as the result of free market pressure. Owner occupation is the main category of tenancy.

Privately rented accommodation is less prevalent because of the lack of existing large properties and of economically viable renting populations, and also because of the huge increase of temporary accommodation which services the tourist industry. Local Authority housing, depending for its development on established numbers in need, lags behind the other sectors, save where the need is so pressing that there must always be a planned response. That need is identified in areas with a strong agricultural base. Recent reductions in the availability of national subsidies have flattened Local Authority new project building and the sale of council housing to sitting tenants has further reduced the stock available.

Much of the total housing stock is now post-war and the amenity levels are compatible with national standards. This is one

important consequence of the post war interest by planners. The effects are not equitable, however, because some isolated areas are still without mains services.

By 1978 there were 16,300 public sector dwellings and local authorities housed about one in five households. Priority is given to elderly and families with children who are considered to be in need. Single persons and couples without children are given a lower priority. Waiting lists suggest that there are about 5,000 applications. Nearly every settlement has some council houses on it, with the exception of very small villages and some "estate" villages. Shillingstone has council housing - a lot of it in the form of "run down" farm labourers' cottages. New developments seem to have been concentrated in larger villages and towns. Key worker housing schemes operate in most areas. The prospect of house purchase causes concern, because this means less opportunity to place tenants close to their employment, and importantly that the house which is sold is removed from the local authority stock.

High rates of house construction have been achieved throughout the 60's and 70's, mostly as the result of private developments which seem to be concentrated in towns and villages. Few council houses are now built in the rural areas.

In 1976 there were about 59,000 jobs in the area, mostly concentrated in the towns or in the few large establishments (particularly in the defence sector) outside towns. Also outside of towns, jobs were found in agriculture and the service sector. Various out-of-area employment facilities "poached" people from within the area. The household questionnaire survey 1979, showed that in the majority of the areas a high and growing proportion of employed people travelled to work in one of the main employment centres, namely - Bridport, Crewkerne, Yeovil, Sherborne, Dorchester, Blandford, Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Poole.

Activity rates masked the real level of unemployment. Many women did not put themselves forward as job seekers. Most importantly,

the activity rates are based on those registering for unemployment pay, which perhaps did not take into account the true numbers.

Community Involvement

Recreational facilities in the County are used in the main by holidaymakers and visitors from nearby areas. This suggests that many residents of Dorset either go elsewhere for their recreation, enjoying other people's outlooks, or they abstain. Most villages have resources of some kind to provide recreation. A survey of village halls (1985) reveals underuse, created by local management preferences or by lack of information.

At the voluntary level, there are many societies catering for a universe of interests spread throughout the communities in the area. Chambers of Trade, Rotarians and Lions Groups, Venture Scouts and Church Groups - all organisations with interests in the community - make a concerned contribution towards the meeting of community need. Attempts have been made to identify hidden needs. The 1979 the Dorset (excluding SE) Household questionnaire listed the following as typical concerns in the community:

Infrequency of public transport

Limited choice of jobs with particular regard to young people

Poor facilities for young people

Inaccessible Medical Services

Summer traffic congestion

Inaccessibility of schools

These concerns are reflected in the results of the village survey conducted on behalf of the Local Authority by the Dorset Community Council in 1979. This survey spanned fifteen years through comparison of available statistics and the recollection of informants. Many villages did not possess some of the basic facilities and services. Churches and chapels remained the most widespread facilities and over half the settlements had a pub and a meeting place. 40% had no shop or post office, but only a third had a primary school or a garage. One in seven had a surgery, fewer still had a bank or a chemist.

Few respondents spoke in terms of hardship. The vulnerable, by virtue of age, handicap or circumstance, have most to lose but little evidence of want came out of the replies. Some of the more important concerns expressed included the need for low priced housing for locally born families and the lack of suitable jobs for most workers beyond the parish boundary. This concern was linked with the need for adequate bus services which would also facilitate shopping outside the local settlements. There was a general concern about the decline of mobile retail and postal services.

The village appraisals, for example Sydling St. Nicholas appraisal 1976, which are the product of local residents getting together, tend to reflect matters of local interest and are generally about the environment and the conservation of neighbourhoods as desirable residential areas. With regard to the voluntary agencies, partiality of interest has produced a multitude of separate helping resource providers, many of which overlap unwittingly in the areas of need and staffing. In Blandford, for example, an attempt was made in a mailed questionnaire to attract all those involved in a concerned way in sharing information, experience and concerns about the recruitment and use of volunteers.

The resulting list of organisations and their willingness to discuss is reproduced and discussed over leaf. A summary of opinions expressed by respondents is presented in Table 2.2.

The following responses draw attention to several important issues. Consciousness of need is greatest in groups which have an external operational interest and link, and the two main concepts are exchange of information and resource. Purposive social action is wanted by two unaligned groups with experience of time wasting and unforeseen delays in existing programmes. The existence of an operational local information bank helpful to caring agencies was revealed. Some groups are small and represent particular interests but do not feel the need to share either resources or experience; others represent "non caring" interests primarily but are involved in charitable work and are known to support humanitarian causes. They, like associations of

businessmen, are not primary contributors to a volunteer exchange.

TABLE 2.2 - RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ABOUT CREATING A VOLUNTEER NETWORK IN BLANDFORD - JULY 1985

ORGANISATION	GENERAL
WRVS	Own outreach - elderly membership
Sturminster Young Wives	Too small a group - very interested but busy
Blandford National Childbirth Trust	
Tarrant Keynton Ladies Circle	Too small a group
Girl Guides	Officially not able to be involved
British Red Cross	Many local papers now provide information
Area Director SSD	Interested in seeing where need lies
Winterborne Stickland Methodist Workers	Concern about overlap of services.
Blandford St Mary First School	Elderly group.
Blandford St Mary United Reform Church Workers Guild	Interested in information exchange
Shillingstone Youth Club	Not interested
Inner Wheel Blandford	
Solicitor *	
Blandford Youth Centre	Premises could be used
Valley Wives Group	Too busy
Blandford Round Table	Parochial stance needs to be challenged
Blandford Area Stepping Stones	Needs commitment
Blandford Adult Literacy	Prefer to remain unattached
Library Service	Not interested
North Dorset Mental Handicap Group	Urgent need for positive action
SSAFA	Need for careful management and to avoid duplicating work
	Library offers an information service
	Small group. Use resources in response to requests from ATC - SSD
	Co-ordination would help organisations

* Representing an existing but non-active community concern group

Source: Questionnaire 1985 sponsored by Dorset Community Council Working Group on "Networks".

The special needs of deviant groups or those who are experiencing personal problems but who cannot be readily identified, is a difficult issue. There are a number of voluntary organisations who cater for people in special need, and a lot of work has been put in by the volunteer bureaux and groups in the community.

Community concern meetings held in most of the major towns are mainly forums where statutory and voluntary workers meet to identify problems, enunciate feeling and try and organise networks of care. Many people with specific problems, however, are too proud or too independent to seek help. These particular groups include the aged and the handicapped and the young unemployed.

Attempts have been made in two areas - Bridport and Blandford - to cater for the several needs of the unemployed. The needs of less obvious and more socially unacceptable groups are less well publicised. Dorset houses many institutions of varying kinds - prisons, hospitals, hostels and private schools. The move to normalise mental patients by releasing them into the community has been undertaken without due consideration of the feelings of local communities, and whether in fact the resources within the communities can cope. What has to be tested is whether Dorset neighbourhoods can react constructively to the presence in their midst of identified large groups of deviants. The caring aspect of looking after deviants has been handled, to date, by groups like NACRO, the Probation Service, and a newly formed Advisory and Counselling Service for Drug Addicts (CADAS). It is not known however, how many specialist organisations exist for the care of deviants.

There is much in common between offenders and the rest of the population. Alan Kennedy in his book 'Shadows of Adolescence' gives examples from West Dorset young people of the difficulties they have with regard to public transport, making best use of educational facilities out of school hours and finding work in a traditionally agricultural area. Offenders have an additional handicap because they are so easily identified in their local communities. Within the existing Probation caseload were examples of individuals who could not gain employment because of their reputations. This tended to increase the distance between them and others in their local communities, leading to confrontation, based largely on ignorance. Surprisingly this ignorance is often shared by those who hold local power. The interconnectedness of activity in committees, for example the Local Authority Statutory Committees, shows the same individuals performing in roles which

although distinct, depend on shared private knowledge and the generally high status of the participants. Magistrates tend to be influential local society members. The middle class bias of most committee members militates against a complete understanding of their business if it touches upon the needs of offenders.

In 1984 there were local reminders of the confrontation between powerful groups as many police officers were drawn away to special duty on picket lines. In that year also local police stations were used as bail facilities to house offenders from the London area as the result of prison disputes.

The menacing approach of the tidal wave of crime, accelerated by the publication of alarmist crime figures for 1984 produced local reactions. The Dorset Echo heralded a local crime wave. The next year the enemy were not criminals themselves but the drug barons who, allegedly operating from close by ports and airfields, were influencing local youth. The escalating scale of offending from glue sniffing to hard drugs was made the focus of a special community related crime prevention scheme by the Dorset Police.

One of the major drawbacks in the fight against crime is the inability or unwillingness of concerned parties to combine and work together. As a result, the local image of crime has been enlarged and distorted by rumour and this has distanced the offender still further from the community. Much of this image is kept discretely in mind and its effect is only clearly seen when permissions are requested for special opportunities for offenders, for example, the planning of hostel places, or when local people, interviewed by the paper, express their grave doubts concerning the reception of different groups within the community.

The commonality shared by offenders whatever their location demonstrates the potency and influence of global socio-economic factors like unemployment and inadequate housing in determining delinquent careers. The associated problems are manifest in large communities. The sheer size of this problem renders the individual offender an insignificant part actor; one whose

presence testifies to the effect of an overwhelming problem. The offender in rural Dorset has a high profile in his own right but lacks the personal and community resources to defend himself. He labours with the disadvantage that stereotyping can bring with it. Under the surface may be a person worth reclaiming. The forces of social control are reaching out into rural communities in response to the notion that breakdown is imminent. The rural offender might not merit this kind of attention. Not enough has been known about him to determine whether or not his personality can be enhanced or diminished by interventionist strategies.

The general context of the research

The main characteristics of the Dorset Probation Service have been described in Appendix 1 which was devoted to profiling a small Agency against a background of change and conflict. Developments between 1965 and 1985 took place at an accelerating rate in a situation which did not make it easy for Probation Officers to discover their roles, a dilemma made explicit in statements from local National Association of Probation Officer Branch notes, and from colleagues. The NAPO 1984 discussion paper on community involvement, drew no formal response from the local branch during 1985.

In addition there was the perceived problem of falling probation caseloads referred to in The Chief Officers letter to all staff dated 6th February 1980, which clearly demonstrated a preoccupation with numbers rather than with process (Pratt 1985 pp 96 & 102-103). Home Office monitoring was in a transitional state - becoming more advisory and encouraging rather than inspectorial. There were four partial inspections by Home Office personnel between 1969 and 1985. The first was a traditional investigation with emphasis on thoroughness, casework sensitivity and maturity. The last visit was noticeably different. The local management was much more involved in the planning and execution of this work, which was a shared learning process. Through its thematic approach these inspections did, in fact, lay the base for an evaluative study of work.

The rational approach to work was further encouraged in the Impact Experiment in which the Dorset Service played a key part between 1972 and 1976 (Folkard 1974 Vol 1). The experiment employed a methodologically strict approach, and was supervised from the Home Office Research Unit. The use of the Mooney Problem Checklist introduced during the experiment and designed to measure a whole range of attitudinal responses, was not subsequently much used by Dorset Officers; a fact which seems to highlight a lack of understanding which surrounded both the experiment itself and some of the methods used.

Broadly speaking, it is difficult in a culture not prepared for applied research and in an area distant from, and not exposed to, academic influence, to undertake investigative work. The main problems relate to the management of data *per se*, and to the attitudes of those who may become respondents (Carew 1979 pp 262 ff) (Boswell 1987 pp 74-75). Therefore, any research programme needs to be tailored in its purpose and design to meet situational requirements. In that sense, it must be opportunist and entrepreneurial. The tradition in Dorset has been that enthusiastic individuals have combined private study with their public duties and responsibilities within a supportive but largely uncomprehending environment.

The ideational matrix underpinning all investigations and practice has included a concern for the development of the Service professionally, and for the recognition of the value of work in two areas - the enhancement of the Probation Officers' role and the provision of adequate material resources. These researches have not, however, been conducted within a framework of an orderly, hierarchical arrangement of aims, strategies and methods, and have depended very much on the exchange of goodwill between colleagues. Examples include the attempt to monitor the clientele and the practices at the newly set up Day Centre East, the attempt to monitor Civil Work, the setting up of the Havelin Road Project at Poole designed to involve clients in intensive activities of an outward-bound kind, and lastly the work undertaken County-wide in 1978 by an independent researcher, Ann McDonald, into the perceived training needs of newer Officers. Each piece of work produced results which could not easily be fitted into an overall picture of how the local Probation Service operated. The Home Office Rural Research of 1979 (Stevens 1979) apparently endorsed the view that it was impossible to lay down general guidelines for the evaluation of Probation practice across a regional area. It did, however, imply that that possibility existed with regard to single Agencies.

Probation prospects did not separate out the need for particular responses area by area within the Agency. Dorset, as a small Probation area, found itself competing with other areas for attention with regard to professional development and resource

provision. External validations of the Agency's readiness to develop professionally and of its need for better resource provision appeared at first sight to be the regular but infrequent visits from the Tavistock Clinic to promote good practice and the concern of the Home Office about adequate staffing of penal institutions, always a useful negotiating point locally in the recruitment of more staff. Neither of these external influences were of course necessarily related to any specific local objectives.

During the period under review Officers in Dorset developed self-consciously the need to improve and expand the work of the Agency. This was done without commitment to overall aims and strategies and in particular, without any close analysis of the Agency's work team by team. On the one hand, there was a firm indication from The Chief Probation Officer in a letter to all staff dated 29th June 1979, that all innovative ideas should be submitted to Headquarters for approval before action, e.g. the provision of money for the construction of small coastal water dinghies, and on the other hand there was the undisputed fact that funds were available for certain projects which had not been subject to the closest scrutiny. This resulted in a competitiveness which impeded rather than enhanced prospects for growth and diminished prospects for a truly evaluative study of the Agency's work.

The particular context of the research

Within the general context of change and competitiveness lay the particular issue of resource allocation, which seemed to polarise the situations of the east and west. In practice it was obvious that there were omissions in provision concerning the west. For example, Community Service was not available between 1973, when the Scheme began, and 1980. An attendance centre was only available to a small Court in the north of the rural area. It seemed impossible to organise and manage groups of offenders in the rural area. The main reason for the imbalance was that the east sheltered 80% of the total caseload.

Although staff were deployed proportionately throughout the Agency, the higher profile of offenders in the conurbation necessarily drew attention to the work in the east. In addition, internal research in 1981 concerning the progress of petty persistent offenders through Magistrates Courts failed to produce any significant statistics for the rural Western Courts. (Cox 1981) It became a habit for eastern Officers to be gently dismissive of western workload, a somewhat contentious issue which resulted in the raising of fantasies about "the easy life". It was assumed that the western caseload comprised for the most part first offenders and that rural criminality was not seen to be a problem. It was also the unhappy experience of an Officer transferred from a rural to an urban office to engage for the first time with the highly recidivist offender, and also with a large active caseload.

Though caseloads in the west might well have been tied up with issues to do with distance and the demand of several small Benches, it was difficult to see, either in the recorded notes of meetings, in Social Enquiry Reports, or in conversations with colleagues, any clues that these other issues had been identified or treated seriously. An analysis of social enquiry reports by a senior Probation Officer colleague in 1979 failed to identify any uniquely rural factors in offending behaviour.

It was not therefore possible to match the situation in the east with that of the west by comparing area Service deliveries which did not depend on numbers alone, a fact compounded by a management which had for years based the provision of resources on quantitative rather than qualitative considerations.

The origins of the study

The origin of this study goes back to 1981 when the researcher moved from the Hostel in Weymouth to become Senior in the rural north (see Introduction). At first hand, he became aware of a sense of isolation experienced as disorder, that is the absence of any guiding principles relating to the work. This was related to the fact that individual influence seemed to be expressed in

special relationships with others. A lack of immediacy with regard to offenders themselves was noticed, reflected in an insistence on proper reporting arrangements and planned contact, which seemed at times not to correspond with the urgency of offenders' situations. In addition, there was an unease brought about in the apparent mirroring of childhood memories. The researcher grew up in an isolated rural area in the north of England in which it was normal to think of people in stereotypical ways - those belonging to the village and those who were strangers; those from bad homes; those with money, and so on. There was the inconvenience of being far from vital services without benefit of public transport, and also the dependence on others created by this lack, a particularly trying experience for someone with interests and important commitments in a town several miles away.

In 1983 a new Chief Probation Officer was appointed and there followed a rigorous inspection of work throughout the County with a prospect of an imminent Agency Intervention Strategy being formulated. The CPO letter to all staff "Making the most of the Inspection" 1983, set the experience within a framework of clear objectives and prioritised work. The impetus created for this search for local needs and a fairer distribution of resources helped to determine the general area of an enquiry which was already forming in the researcher's mind.

At the same time, the local group of Senior Probation Officers in the west, battling with issues to do with resource priorities, debated the need for a more flexible approach to Service provision than was currently instituted, that is the organisation of work based on small but not mutually dependent Area Offices. The subsequent development of the notion of networking within a rural area was a practical expression of local concerns shared with fieldwork colleagues. In particular, it fell naturally to the researcher to play a major part in managing that aspect of work. Through presence in the area, increasing knowledge and experience of the work, and position as a Senior Probation Officer, it was practicable to undertake a more detailed study of probation practice.

There was no general agreement in the literature about the causation of crime and it was acknowledged that singleton offenders, whether in town or in village, account for much of the recorded crime. (Downes 1966) (Willmott 1966) (Clarke 1976) (Cohen 1972) Secondly, although there seemed to be a greater frequency of family adversity in urban areas, (Buger and Chaffer 1982) this might well have been to do with the lack of information concerning family units in rural situations. (Fogelman 1983) Thirdly, the finding that more troublesome children tend to become recidivist (West and Farrington 1973) (West and Farrington 1976) highlighted the damning effects of environment and raised questions as to whether children living in rural areas suffered in the same way.

On the face of it, there seemed to be little difference between urban and rural crime. Problems appeared to be marginally different because of distance and the types of employment and leisure-time occupations available to rural young people. If it was true that criminal statistics were directly proportional to density of population, then the existing rural caseload could be the product of either intense personal disequilibrium or an overt control mechanism which could quickly identify and isolate those deemed to be deviant.

Probation Officers deal with a variety of offenders with regard to age and circumstances, and it is not surprising that probation-centred research has been concerned with particular problems. A review of such project based work shows an overriding interest in intervention strategies, (Home Office Research Bulletins 1971-). Those strategies have been worked out in urban situations where a sufficiency of numbers has facilitated quantitative evaluation. These preoccupations have been reflected in the occasionally published Directory of Probation Projects. (1982 1st Ed) The researcher was unable to discover between 1983 and 1985 any rural-based project managed specifically by a member of the Probation Service. The only piece of rural practice work which came to notice was a piloted (then discontinued) study in North Wales concerning appropriate Service provision.

The late arrival on the sociological scene of rural issues as a subject worthy of study in itself produced a flood of information about the size and extent of poverty, communication problems and despair in rural areas which might only be solved by national or regional planning. (Walker 1978) Some attempts have been made to provide partial solutions to local problems through co-operation between Agencies. The literature does not support the view that the Probation Service has taken seriously its commitment to community issues, mainly through its preoccupation with the need for more resources. (NAPO 1984) Collaborative exercises usually begin from an appreciation of how the local team of Probation Officers can best do its job. (Celnick 1985 pp 226-228 & 239-240)

The focus is on internal workings of the Probation Service rather than on the external influences being brought to bear on it. (Millard 1979) (Harris 1977 p 438) The literature search revealed little which might have indicated awareness of community. At the time of the research there was great concern about the fate of mentally disadvantaged offenders. A preliminary investigation concerning the feasibility and appropriateness of using a multi-agency approach to difficult and often uncategorised offenders with personality disorders, was launched by the Hereford and Worcester Probation Service in 1985. Otherwise, interest was centred on management problems for example, the definition and actualisation of the concept dangerousness, in the High Risk Offenders Guidelines Dorset Probation, 1979.

The one piece of Home Office research which affected local Officers most was that of the Impact Experiment designed to evaluate the intensive practical intervention in family work and leisure situations of high risk probationers. (Smith 1977 Vol 1 & 2) This experiment, as a model to follow, was in fact flawed in several ways. Half way through the agreed objectives and the criteria for measuring work were changed by the Home Office and this was accompanied by a change in the local personnel working the experiment. In addition, there seemed to be a great deal of imprecision with regard to sampling procedures and finally, there appeared to be a dearth of suitable cases for the experiment, a problem experienced not only in the west of the County, but also in the eastern conurbation.

What the experiment did overall was to suggest that those with least criminal tendencies but most personal problems fared better under supervision.

All this preliminary work seemed to highlight the need to investigate further the situation of rural offenders, in order to come to a decision as to whether to ignore those offenders completely and concentrate resources in other areas or to commit resources to the rural offender particularly in view of the perceived need that those in rural communities have for general Welfare Services. There was a practical reason why a descriptive study was proposed as a necessary preliminary enquiry before a more quantitative study might take place.

This was based on the belief that it was possible to make sense of offenders' situations, and that it was reasonable to believe that ways could be found to communicate information about offenders' situations and that there were methodological tools available to translate that belief into action in ways which, in the future, might be replicated. (O'Donnell 1981 pp 559-561 & 563-564)

Choice of perspective and role

The key problem facing the researcher was how to study a familiar situation and keep a necessary distance from the material, and how to separate out what was really important for the study. (Lees 1975 p 19) The "Hawthorne Effect" describes a situation in which the researcher is unwillingly drawn into a collusive association with respondents and with the data in pursuit of a desired result. (Sherif and Sherif 1956 pp 125, 132 & 139) This effect, as far as sociological research is concerned, appears to be lessened if participant observation is not used as an intervention technique. (Downes and Rock 1988 p 41)

The main issue was that of perspective - the standpoint from which the research material could be viewed. (Burgess 1984 p 23) There seemed to be no problem about entering a culture familiar

to the researcher, whose very position within the Agency gave freedom of access, credibility and respectability. The Senior Probation Officer role provided authority to request information from colleagues. A consensual view of the judicial process was held in which the work of the criminal Courts was seen in a generally favourable light producing in the main fair and equitable decisions. (Plummer 1983 p 90) Finally, the researcher's own personal situation was that of an Officer with nearly twenty years' experience in the local Agency covering four main aspects of work. Namely, Probation supervision, prison welfare work, hostel management and Divorce Court liaison duties.

As a field Senior Probation Officer, the researcher was responsible for part of the area from which cases were drawn, and for the oversight of three of the officer respondents. During the three years in this particular post, there had been some disagreements about the style and direction of work, but also some positive sharing in a difficult situation illustrated in mutual support concerning relationships with others, concern about administrative problems and relationships with Headquarters, and in the more physical activity of some direct shared work with clients. The researcher's association with other members of the Officer respondent group centred on the rural networking programme (see Appendix 1), a significant venture which sought to achieve consistency of work through agreed aims and mutual support, making best use of limited area resources. The attractions that this group offered lessened the feeling of isolation - a particular concern of some Officers. Areas of work in which practice could be reviewed included assessment, conciliation and reparation. Sharing concerns and experience generated a mood of optimism and an identification of local problems and new approaches, all of which activity was commented on favourably by the Chief Probation Officer. (Letter to staff June 83)

There were constraints about the insider role as it affected others. (Moser and Kalton 1971 p 250 f) Firstly, change itself; the Working Party on organisational change had produced a general wariness about the effects likely to be produced by re-organisation. This general wariness was compounded by a

widespread belief that Probation Prospects (1979) had heralded change but had not led to any disturbance in either the structure of the organisation or in methods of work. There was, in addition, the feeling that Senior Probation Officers were perhaps more aligned to the Headquarters office rather than their own Teams, a point developed in the Grubb Institute Report. (Palmer B 1979) Nationally at this time the nascent National Association of Senior Probation Officers was making its voice stridently heard as a separate negotiating force for middle managers. High pressure recruitment drives directed at SPOs concentrated on the pivotal role of Seniors. The point was not lost on other colleagues that this was elitist.

Secondly, there was the precious distinction between private and public meanings attached to work. Colleagues with great experience and many years of service were confronted by the researcher's interventions over issues of confidentiality, intrusion into professional space, the highlighting of gaps and the identification of possible myths about their work. With reason, the researcher could be seen as an investigator/reporter. It was at this time that fresh attention was given to the meaning of supervision and the relationship between supervisor and supervisee. A series of planned meetings was held in 1976 about the dynamic interaction of supervisor and supervisee with implications for accountability and responsibility. Matters were taken further in December 1980 in a discussion paper prepared for the Western Area Senior Probation Officers Group by another colleague. Although the basic purpose of the researcher's intervention was the acquiring of information from records, nevertheless it was impossible to disassociate that research need from the supervisory need to ensure quality of work.

Thirdly, the researcher had to countenance the possibility that the research might fit in too closely with a need for organisational solutions or indicators with regard to well articulated problems raised by the management group; a group which at the outset seemed to have an appreciation of the purpose of the research and the parameters of the study and offered conditional support. The researcher had to reserve the right to maintain a position which could be critical. (Lees 1975 p 5)

It was decided that the researcher should actively engage with colleagues with as clear an understanding as possible that the research complemented other duties but that there was a responsibility to find out more about rural offenders' situations, with a view to improving the Agency's service to them. The purpose of negotiation, therefore, was to encourage the sharing of information. The ways of facilitating this in the first instance, was to use any formal or informal opportunity, particularly Joint Team Meetings and supervisory sessions and general conversations. The Joint Team Meetings included all staff, Officers, Ancillaries and Sessional Supervisors from three area centres, Dorchester, Blandford and Wareham. The meetings did not include clerical staff. In addition to these monthly meetings, there were four sub groups which met regularly. Finally there were supervision sessions with individual Officers and other staff meetings. To explain the purpose of the study, it was made clear that the researcher was not addressing himself to the process of supervision nor to the process of change, nor even to the mechanics of routine contacts with clients (covered in the 1979 Home Office Research), but that the central purpose of the research was to acquire information about clients' personal and social situations.

The use of the survey as the main methodological instrument

The main influences on the choice of the survey method were the researcher's own knowledge of the setting and the fact that the target population was known and accessible, not only in terms of continuous contact with supervising Officers but also as far as the written record of such contact was concerned, located in secure but easily reached offices. It was not therefore necessary to create a new vehicle for the transmission of information concerning offenders. In fact, the case record is the sole carrier of such information and because of its universal use its format and content are generally understood by other Probation Officers, therefore increasing its potential for replicative studies. (Moser and Kalton 1971 p 2) In addition, because the case record is not primarily a research instrument, its value as a descriptive tool is increased. (Baillie 1968 pp 9-10) That is not to say that the record was ignored for diagnostic

purposes, researching client behaviour and Office responses. Various sub groups met regularly for training purposes between 1971 and 1982.

It is necessary at this point to go back in time. From 1981 onwards the researcher made use of key informants in the working areas as much as possible. Included in this list were police officers, magistrates, youth leaders, teachers, members of crime prevention panels in rural areas, careers officers, army garrison personnel, ex-hostel residents and current offenders. These encounters were of an informal or a formal nature which contributed to an impressionistic view of the rural community in which offenders were not seen as violent and anti-establishment figures, but as unfortunates needing guidance in order to conform. These necessarily partial statements showed a mixture of attitudes concerning control issues and concerning care issues. The researcher experienced difficulties in focusing on required information. Prejudice was apparent but well meaning. A discursive approach brought that prejudice into focus and it became clear how private viewpoints affected public action. This concern about the plight of individuals seemed to highlight the fundamental premise of probation work in its earliest phases of development. The original command for the Probation Service was to "advise, assist and befriend" offenders. These conversations suggested that the dilemmas facing offenders in environments which provided work and usually satisfactory accommodation, had a great deal to do with visibility and the notice given to even the lesser deviant in small but acutely observed situations. The contrast between high profile of deviants and the low profile of need, e.g. accommodation, work, opportunity, is striking.

In 1982 the researcher monitored 20% of the North Dorset case records for content. Firstly, information was not always found in the right place. Secondly, the full extent of the record had to be used in order to discover wanted information. Thirdly, there was supplementary information from other sources, in particular reports from other colleagues and from medical officers. Fourthly, Officers seemed reluctant to use a "proforma" approach, which was reflected in individual styles of recording. Fifthly, there appeared to be a limited vocabulary

usage, as every profession seems to have its own restricted use of words. Local Probation Officers tended to use a limited number of technical words, for example the word "immaturity" which might allow for multiple meanings. There was a crusade by local Magistrates Clerks to avoid jargon, e.g. "sibling rivalry", although such expressions were not present in great numbers in local records. Key words were usually related to personality and relationships with others and not to do with socio-economic situations, e.g. "unemployment". Suitable advice from the Magistrates to the Probation Officers was to be found in "Writing Social Enquiry Reports" (Dorset Clerks to the Justices 1974). Lastly, time was required to interpret the record and complete the task of information gathering. (Appendix 7)

The use of the obligatory probation record as the main working aid in the reflexive process has been challenged by critics with regard to purpose, content and method. Home Office Circular 194/74 made it possible for an experienced Probation Officer to state clearly in a report any specific recommendation in favour of, or against, a particular form of decision being reached, taking into account the Officer's assessment of the offender's needs and likely response, and any other relevant factors. To facilitate this various recommendations have from time to time been made. The Streatfield Report (HMSO 1961) suggested that Probation Officers could provide Courts with information about the social and domestic background of offenders, which was relevant to the Court's assessment of the offender's culpability. Probation Officers could also express an opinion as to the likely effect on an offender's criminal career of probation or any other specified form of sentence.

It was not suggested that proformas should be used as individual cases varied so widely. The Morrison Report (HMSO 1962) recommended that Probation Officers should be free to select any information considered to be relevant to a particular case and to present it to the Court in a way that best conveys the assessment of the offender's situation. Again, it was not thought to be necessary or desirable that a standard form of report should be universally adopted. It is acknowledged generally that Social Enquiry Reports are written for a particular purpose and that

that purpose affects the writer's style as well as Report content. (Millard 1977 pp 2-9) Reports may be "overtly diagnostic" (Bean (1976a pp 568-589) (1976b pp 585-587)) and influenced by the receiving audience who might also respond better to an explanation of crime which corresponds more closely to their own. (McWilliams 1986 pp 255-256) (Carter and Wilkins 1976 pp 78 ff) In the crisis situation surrounding the preparation of a Report, the Officer might also be persuaded by the defendant's circumstances, to be more sympathetic, subscribing in so doing to the welfare rather than the justice principle. (Mathiewson 1976 pp 224-226) (Osborne 1984 pp 368-370 & 376-377) (Hardiker 1977 pp 132 ff). This is perhaps related to a more general issue with regard to the Probation officers management of his workload. (Fielding 1984)

Probation Officers exercise judgement and skill in writing Reports. drawing deeply from their experience of both the offenders and their environment in preparing documents which are aids to sentencing. (Davis and Knopf 1973 pp 32 ff) (Perry 1975) Although it has never been made very plain what information is required in a basic Social Enquiry Report, (Pease (1985) in Sutton 1987) attempts have been made to prepare guidelines. (Bean 1971 pp 174-178) (Mathiewson and Walker 1971) Such guidelines, however, are "aide-memoires" as it is considered unlikely that all of the listed items of information would be required in any one Report. (Herbert and Mathiewson 1975) The variations and possible explanations for them have been studied and reported in Thorpe J 1976. (pp43-) One of her more unfavourable findings was that only two of the nineteen topics listed as important in a background report were consistently covered in the sample cases. Her main conclusion was that the problem of providing relevant and consistent information to sentencers is tied up with the problems relating to the objectives of sentencing. On the face of it, eliciting information from Social Enquiry Reports as the basis for an offender profile seems to be fraught with difficulties. An early attempt in Dorset to use proforma for SIR work raised the issue of confusing the information gathering process with the end result - the report. The process can begin with the first encounter and lead through the Court appearance to supervision itself. It must, however, be remembered that at the

time most of these criticisms were offered up, attempts were already being made to improve the quality of Reports, and this matter will be taken up again later with regard to local usage.

The use of biographical material in case records is problematic and various issues need to be examined carefully. All such material implies that subjects are willing to respond. Consent is easiest when there is an end in view, even as with the Dentist and the Bank Manager, there may be accompanying pain. Probation supervisees are not usually "courted" for their attentions and there is a hard edge to these encounters which encourages frankness. At first sight it seems that adequate information can be exchanged; it is, however, necessary to view with caution any material had of others, a matter complicated in probation records by the fact that several investigators may have contributed.

Styles of intervention which can, in the case records, change from one Officer to another, might lead to misrepresentations making interpretation and analysis difficult.

There is a long history of interventions in the lives of others with a view to learning about their worlds and their personal situations. (Thomas and Znaniecki 1927 Vol 2) It was recognised early on that there had to be a complementary awareness on the part of the investigators that supportive data was required within the respondent's worlds, had if possible from independent sources. (Shaw Ed 1966) (Allport 1942) Qualitative accounts of whole communities and special groups have illuminated our understanding of society. (Park 1931 pp 154-175) The lack of statistical evidence in support of conclusions in spite of the method's well proven record in anthropological and sociological research, (Bogdan and Taylor 1975) (Langness 1965) (Wahlen 1981) (Denzin 1978) and the early recognition of the distinctive contribution of qualitative as against quantitative approaches has cast doubt on the enduring value of such work. There has, however, been a revival of interest based on the phenomenological account of relationships. (Watson 1976 pp 95-131) The meanings attached to the actions of respondents have an intrinsic value which can be communicated to an observant interviewer. (Frank 1979 pp 68-94) (Cohen and Marrion 1980 pp 24-25)

In biographical accounts the researcher draws conclusions and generalises these to profile the behaviour and attitudes of the class of person to which the individual subject belongs. There are instances recorded when researchers have inferred beyond the facts. A celebrated example is that of Malinowski who wrongly inferred that the ritual-like dances of young Trobrianders were significant in terms of the life cycle and bonding.

The difficulty relates to obtaining accounts in a way which preserves validity and reliability and which are accessible to the researchers. This has led to attempts to codify the method. Dolland's (Dolland 1935) seven point criteria allowed for the representation of the subject situation to be transmitted within the context of his social environment. Firstly, the subject must be a specimen of his cultural series, that is as far as the present research is concerned, an offender within a rural community, but not necessarily a person who is indigenous to that community. Secondly, the organic modus of action must be socially relevant, that is to say, that actions must be described in terms of cultural and social needs and not as biological or neurological events. Thirdly, the peculiar role of the family must be recognised in the transmission of culture. Fourthly, the specific methods of elaborating the organic material into social behaviour must be shown. Fifthly, the continuous related character of experience from childhood to adulthood must be stressed. Sixthly, the social situation must be carefully and continuously specified as a factor. Lastly, the life history material itself must be conceptualised and organised.

The researcher's interpretative role is to draw out facts from the written and spoken word understood within the framework of the subject's own cultural milieu and kept separate from the researcher's own life and world view. The methodological difficulties are expressed in studies which emphasise the importance of triangulation as a means of confirming the connectedness of one action/event with another in a conventionally consistent way. Of particular importance in Denzin's typology (Denzin 1974 pp 269-282)(Denzin 1978 pp 214-255) are the fourth and fifth principal types of triangulation used in research - investigator triangulation (which engages more

than one observer) and methodological triangulation (which uses different methods on the same object of study). There has been some disagreement about the value of the use of data sources other than the subject. (Frazier 1978 pp 122-139)

Corroboration of data obtained in other ways may be in the public domain or in the possession of private individuals. The resolution of problems to do with these issues depends ultimately on two things. Firstly, the degree of rapport existing between subject and original investigator and the researcher. Secondly, the availability of relevant statistics. It must be recognised that difficulties do exist and that there is likely to be some unreliability. The aim is to relate what the subject says to what his environment can add, not least because in this way inconsistencies can be minimised. The most important concern in the biographical method relates to the influence of the investigator with regard to the material offered up to him.

The subject is persuaded to offer up actions which can be interpreted within his current life situation, as part of an investigation designed to yield information for the Court and to provide a data source for an ongoing relationship thereafter. Implicit in the method is the belief that sufficient structure and objectivity exists to allow retrospective study. There are a variety of ways in which life history accounts are drawn together, including diaries, letters, official records and statements. The sole criterion is that the statements are the subject's and not an interpretation of a third party. If the material is not prepared especially for research, then the reason for its original creation will need to be borne in mind in its analysis. All documents are, to a greater or lesser extent, influenced by their intended readership and so some bias will need to be accommodated in the use to which documents are put. (Lofland 1971)

Further developments

A training exercise begun in 1982 with Senior Probation Officers and completed in 1983 with teams, aimed to prevent recording becoming a process in itself rather than being a part of a process involving Officers and clients. It was an attempt to meet the criticism that case records might be exercises in "self

justification".

The Home Office Guidelines on Recording (1976) stated that the case record was designed primarily to assist Probation Officers to achieve the most effective work with clients. Records served a secondary purpose in providing the means of administrative check. Part A is the permanent record of information about the client, his social circumstances and developmental history. The record of Court appearances should be kept up to date by recording each significant event. The Part B is the thinking part of the permanent record; it should be a reliable source of reference whenever it is necessary to determine the state of progress, for example, in the absence of the Supervising Officer. It should remain as a permanent part of the record. The Part C provides for making notes of the Officer's day to day contact, entered promptly, and is the basis of the casework assessments found at Part B. It is not intended that Part C sheets should remain in the permanent record indefinitely.

Differential methods involving groups of offenders and more than one worker have moved towards the client's right to know what is in his record. Working with more serious and high risk cases were all compelling reasons why there should be easily accessible information. The requirement of excellence focussed greater attention on what should be general good practice, if records were to fulfil their several purposes, not only as personal tools and containers, but as vehicles of communication. It was felt that simplicity should be of paramount importance and that the introduction of monitoring techniques including checklists would lead to greater sharing between Officers and more organised files. In 1983 records were generally in a state of flux as a result of the current debate about client participation.

The general feeling about the training exercise was that it gave proof of individual and innovative projects being undertaken, and that records were being regarded by all participants with immense seriousness, perhaps due to the knowledge that there was a statutory responsibility with regard to their maintenance.

in the Probation Officer's cabinet correspond exactly to his statistical return for reasons to do with transfer, the issue of warrants and so on. Secondly, by means of unofficial cross-checking it was quite clear that the admitted caseloads almost coincided with the total number of cases held by Officers. The unofficial cross checking included reference to officers' personal indexes and diary contacts; retrospective confirmations of commencements/ transfers and terminations and message traffic via reception.

The population the researcher sampled was cross-sectional including males and females of all ages, and from three different clusters of Petty Sessional Divisions. It embraced clients of different status including young people under supervision (CYP Act), probation supervisees, Money Payment Order supervisees, and offenders who had been in prison, borstal or Detention Centre, all belonging to generalist caseloads worked by colleagues on a patch system out of an established centre of duty.

The data source was the case record. This is not to be confused with the case record of other Agencies, e.g. DHSS. The Probation record places a greater emphasis on interpretation of fact but nevertheless, in the context of this study it also implies accuracy and usefulness as a data source. This was confidential to the Officer (and in some instances, at least in part, to the client or the legal representative) and constituted an account of the offender's offence, offending pattern, domestic and social circumstances, and personal problems. Parts A, B and C have already been described. In addition, the case record usually included a Social Enquiry Report prepared by either the supervisor or a colleague, other Reports prepared either by colleagues or by members of the medical profession, correspondence and informal notes. These sometimes gave insightful data about offenders (letters, self appraisal questionnaires, revelations). The problem for the researcher has been to mentally cut off from incursion into unnecessary and unwarranted detail in view of the restriction of the case record use to "early stage of supervision material".

Preparation of the instrument

The opportunity to conduct the survey itself was presented in January 1984. At that time of the year, a caseload peak was registered in line with previous experience. It was also a time when some cases are traditionally shed so that what remains is normally the hard core.

A further reason for choosing this start date was that all Officers had, through the training exercise "Record Roundabout", been sensitized to the new realism about record keeping, and sufficient time had elapsed for the effects to have been observed.

Discussions were held with individual Officers concerning the value of collating information from the records. In particular, some of the technical words most commonly used were tested out for meaning. In some instances this was possible via supervision sessions. In other instances, via general discussion. The preparation of the list of variables relied very heavily on the existing schedule (that is the case record with its formal headings relating to personal and situational characteristics). Attention was also given to the criminological literature in order to ensure that the importance of schooling, family ties, length of criminal career and employment records would be reflected in the chosen variables.

Pre-coded values were assigned to each variable with a view to data being fed into the Agency computer. The actual collection of the data was accomplished in long separate structured interviews with colleagues. These interviews afforded the researcher an opportunity of negotiating further access to the case records themselves, not necessarily for the purpose of confirming data, but to allow for the possible extension of the enquiry if both time and the purpose of the study allowed.

Because of uncertainties with regard to the Agency computer the researcher undertook the laborious task of handling the data manually. This was later transferred to the computer which handled the task of cross-tabulation.

The results of this investigation profiled the typical offender as very much like other offenders elsewhere, and there appeared to be no obvious characteristics deserving of further study. This seemed to be an unsatisfactory state of affairs in view of the persistent but apparently unseen effects with regard to the servicing of offenders' needs in the rural area.

The continuing process

The adoption of a non-linear approach made it possible for time to be set aside to take note of developments going on within the Agency, and to study seriously the impact on the rural area of structural and locational problems - an understanding derived mainly from the contemporary literature on need. A major contributory factor to the development of the study was the researcher's involvement with the Dorset Community Council, as a member of its Executive Committee. This introduced a range of specific problems to do with the identity of the rural area and Service provision and also to do with particular groups within the area representing a wide range of subject interest. These included age specific groups but also interest groups with special concerns about the countryside and its development. The partiality of such groupings seemed at times to emphasise the feeling that local communities were divisive. Returning to the case records after a period of several months enabled the researcher to build up a fuller picture of offenders' personal situations, and to the construction of further tables extending the profile presented in the original survey. In particular, attention was directed to the possibility of variations in the caseload area by area. Methodological techniques were applied to provide a social needs profile of offenders, a social disapproval profile, and an offending profile. (see appendices 8,9 & 10)

The results of this work again showed that on general humanitarian grounds, there existed a class of individuals (that is, rural offenders) whose needs were being appropriately or otherwise identified and partially met by Probation Officers. These findings related to resource management issues involving the Probation Service and other Agencies. It was always in the researcher's mind to try and elicit from offenders themselves

details about their circumstances and what it felt like to belong to a rural area. The possibility of extending the enquiry still further without going beyond the theoretical and practical limits of the study led to a re-formulation which did stress the importance of service needs and of involving, to some extent, offenders themselves as respondents. That re-formulation led directly to preliminary work on the construction of a questionnaire.

The preparation and administration of the questionnaire

The preparatory work was undertaken with a group of key informants, in particular voluntary associates, youth leaders and employment officers and teachers (because of their involvement with offenders), six-formers at a local school, members of young farmers' clubs, some offenders who were coming to the end of their supervision periods, and some ex-offenders. It must be emphasised that informants were hard to come by and that it was impossible to see them as a group, for practical reasons. Bearing in mind that the questionnaire was to be a survey drawing upon the same population that constituted the main survey population and hopefully extending the characteristics of particular aspects of the main survey profile, the preliminary work was not so much concerned with raising new variables as with testing out the potential usefulness of further enquiry.

Every opportunity was used to discuss a draft schedule which apart from classificatory material looked into five areas of offenders' situations. (Appendices 11-15)

Discussions with key informants showed great concern about the need for anonymity and the advantages of using checklists in order to encourage positive responses. At the same time it was felt necessary to allow some space for people to express their views on some subjects freely.

The schedule itself was discussed with a pilot group including four voluntary associates, two friends, three young offenders and two older offenders, two ex-offenders, two young farmers, one youth leader, and one teacher. This was not necessarily the same

group as before. Some informants were shed at this time, e.g. police, clerks, magistrates and Education Welfare Officers. Others were added, e.g. careers officer, youth leader and Young Farmers. The offender group included more younger people (under 25) than older. Colleagues were deliberately excluded. Their comments led to certain minor emendations with regard to the wording of the introduction and ending, and the use of simpler language; a more consistent layout of questions, a simpler coding procedure, and the elimination of one or two questions which were thought inappropriate.

Personal and situational characteristics were sought requiring factual or attitudinal responses. Attitudinal responses were problematic; the use of Likert type scales was decided upon as it dispensed with need for judges and also allowed for flexibility of response. Discussions with key informants, together with a close examination of issues relating to both Probation work locally and the community, enabled statements to be collected. These were edited, partly as a response to obvious criticisms from the key informants. The question clusters were based on previously used schedules.

The opportunity to present the schedule occurred in the early summer of 1985. Preparatory discussions with colleagues regarding the purpose and time scale led to the target respondents being advised by their Supervising Officers that they would be requested to help. The questionnaire was mailed with an introductory letter. The first response rate was later analysed, then a reminder was sent out which produced a smaller second response, leading in all to a total response of 43.7%.

Simultaneous to this presentation, use was made of an opportunity to look at the current admitted caseload in a survey which replicated the original work in January 1984. In this way, the original sample was extended, and one additional Officer's work was included. The main purpose of this second survey was to produce a data base concerning rural offenders immediately prior to reorganisation, which in fact took place in September 1985.

Evaluation of the research methods used

The use of several methods of data collection justifiable at the epistemological level carries with it possibilities of methodological difficulty. Some of the issues are now touched upon.

Statistics produced by different agencies for different purposes make it difficult to trace observable patterns for use in research, even though at first sight they appear to be relevant to the enquiry. Cases in point are police and Court statistics. Police figures relate to the number of offences detected rather than the number of offenders actively engaged in crime. In addition, they can suggest trends, for example, an increase in the number of burglaries when, in fact, there is no causal relationship between those figures and the chronology of crime. In short, these statistics do not offer the Probation researcher more than a general impression of how crime is being managed. The Court registers produce much interesting information which indicates quite clearly how much time and energy is devoted by the judicial system to processing of relatively insignificant material, for example, the non-payment of rates. One of the major drawbacks about the information in Court registers is that it is not standard. No two local Clerks appear to record information in the same way, and quite often valuable data, for example, postal address or age, was omitted. Care had to be exercised before accepting statistics as either a true record or as helpful to the enquiry, and the researcher had to be cautious about how such figures could be interpreted.

The interrogation of key informants provided interesting background about area, but again it was difficult to bring different viewpoints together in a way which confirmed facts capable of being observed. Whether or not the key informant was being approached formally or informally, the usual courtesies of polite enquiry which gave full recognition to the fact that they were giving up time and energy to respond, usually led them to stake out their own attitudinal position.

The range of informants with whom the researcher spoke included Magistrates, Police, School Teachers, Youth Leaders, Clerics, Voluntary Associates and ex-clients. The problems of research in this area relate to biased opinions covered by the personal attitudes of the respondents.

The temptation to be over-ambitious in pursuing all avenues in obtaining information resulted in too many lines of enquiry remaining open. There are effective limits to practical research, and the difficulties of combining research and a responsible full time job cannot be over-emphasised, even when, as was true in this case, the subject of the research bore directly on the full time work. One particular area of disappointment was that a repertory grid exercise begun with colleagues and hopefully to be concluded with their clients, was never completed. A great deal of time and energy was put into constructing a suitable instrument, explaining it to colleagues and then helping them in the course of long interviews to both understand its use and to complete it. The exercise proved to be too ambitious. It might, however, be taken up at a later stage by someone with an interest in exploring the perceptions of Officers and clients.

The questionnaire presented the researcher with problems in the area of construct and content validity. The instrument was designed to concentrate on certain descriptive areas with the offenders' personal and situational environments. Questionnaires were completed in a surprisingly detailed way which suggested that the questions and the direction had been understood. However, the 43% response rate which although towards the lower end, is an acceptable return for mailed questionnaires, probably represented those who were most highly motivated or articulated their responses well. What had been overlooked in the preliminary stages was the high proportion of offenders who were likely not to understand a mailed questionnaire. However, it was thought likely that there would be an encouraging response because of the facility by which most offenders are motivated to cope with the betting shop and the lists of runners in daily papers. Also, there appeared to be a willing interest by most in straw polls and personality quizzes. More seriously, there had

been use over the years of checklists and requests for autobiographical material in the course of supervision. Bearing in mind the caution of some researchers (e.g. Maitland 1986) over the use of questionnaires in Probation research, it must be said that the present study probably drew comment from an articulate section of the offender group. The issue had been debated, particularly with the key informants who had had experience of offending.

A related problem was that of contaminated responses, that is those which probably had been completed with the help of others. It was decided that this was not a serious problem; the whole presentation of the questionnaire allowed for consultation and joint answers and indeed, in one case the proof that it had been helpful to respond in this way was clearly given in a late conversation between the researcher and a respondent's supervising officer.

To sum up, there was a problem in compiling reliable statistics from existing material because of different methods of information gathering which made interpretation difficult. The repertory grid exercise proved over-ambitious in attempting to pursue too many lines of enquiry which relied heavily on the assistance of colleagues. The client questionnaire was essentially administered successfully. However, it was likely that the more articulate and better motivated offenders responded. Possible collaboration with others in completing the questionnaire was not regarded as a serious problem.

Although the research had some methodological weaknesses, the findings appeared to offer some useful insights into offenders needs and attitudes. These are examined fully in the following two chapters.

CHAPTER FOUR - THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CASELOAD OF RURAL OFFENDERS

This chapter presents the data concerning rural offenders and looks in some detail at their personal situations. Their situations are described as they have been reported in the casefiles of Probation Officers. An attempt is made to present what is known about them and to assess the seriousness not only of their situations but also of the crimes they have committed. At the end of the chapter there is a detailed examination of the way in which Probation Officers have interpreted their needs and intervened as supervisors.

THE SAMPLE

The sample is drawn from the admitted criminal caseload of eight Probation Officers working in rural Dorset, excluding Wimborne. It was made up of two parts. The first sub-sample was drawn from the caseload of January 1984 and the second from that of July 1985. The phrase "admitted caseload" describes those cases volunteered to the researcher by each of the Officers taking part. The official instruments of measurement of caseload were Form 30 (Officer's summary record of work) and Form 20 (a data sheet for each case). During 1984 The National Association of Probation Officers imposed a ban on Form 30 and form 20 completion. The recovered information about monthly returns for January 1984 and the normally completed returns for July 1985 show general agreement with the admitted caseload. Up to September 1985 (that is, covering the period of the research) criminal caseloads were mixed, including Probation, Children and Young Persons supervision, Money payment supervision, Detention Centre, Borstal and Prison aftercare. The numbers in each category represented in the sample are given in appendix 3.

The following table summarises basic data about the sample. As in all the Tables which follow, Female data is given in brackets.

TABLE 4.1.

ADMITTED CASELOAD. AGE AND SEX BY DISTRICT n=284

DISTRICT	SUB SAMPLE	<17yrs	17-24yrs	25-34yrs	35+yrs	TOTAL
West	Jan 1984	3	20 (2)	5 (4)	9	37 (6)
Dorset	July 1985	13	31 (5)	13 (2)	9 (4)	66 (11)
North	Jan 1984	5	16 (6)	6 (2)	8 (5)	35 (13)
Dorset	July 1985	1	9 (5)	10 (2)	4 (1)	24 (8)
Purbeck	Jan 1984	3	20 (2)	9 (4)	7 (4)	39 (10)
	July 1985	2 (1)	13 (5)	5 (1)	4 (3)	24 (10)
TOTALS		27 (1)	109 (25)	48 (15)	42 (17)	226 (58)

The relationship between the general population and the sample population

The population of the study area appears to show the typical characteristics of a rural area, that is to say, low density per acre and a numerical balance in favour of older people. (Appendix 4) The most noticeable feature is the decline in numbers throughout the area of males and females aged 20-24 years, continuing for males aged between 25-19 years. If, as may well be the case, outmigration is selective, then the residual group membership is probably collectively impoverished and underskilled. It has been suggested locally that it should be possible in a social environment in which delinquency is a relatively minor phenomenon, to predict in a simple way the proportion of the general population at risk of offending and being placed under supervision. Table 4.1 tends not to confirm this belief because it shows that the majority of offenders both male and female are under the age of 25 years. Allowing for the fact that the early age indices in Table 4.1 do not correspond exactly with the census data, the bulk of Probation Officer work

is with teenagers and young adults. This result compares well with both National and other local area statistics for the incidence of crime and the use of supervision. In point of fact, 81 of the 109 male offenders who are the youngest adults are aged between 17 and 20 years. In addition, 13 of the 27 male offenders in the first age group are aged 16 years. Together, those aged between 16 and 20 years represent a large vulnerable group placed between school dependence and adult responsibility.

Older age offenders of both sexes decrease in numbers as might be expected, 42 are age 35-44 years, 12 are aged 45-54 years and only 5 are aged over 55 years. For the purpose of this study all Tables will show four age groups; less than 17 years, 17-24 years, 25-34 years and 35 years plus.

Females are represented more evenly through the age ranges than are males. 12 are aged 17-20 years and 13 are aged 22-24 years. 15 are aged 25-34 years and 12 are aged 35-44 years. Although the majority are young adults, proportionately more are older than is the case with males. The youngest share the same socio-emotional experiences as males but it seems that their formal entry into the labelling process is later.

The consistency of the caseload over time

For over ten years the rural Probation Officers criminal caseloads have been low. The main purpose of sampling the caseload again after a time interval was to discover whether there were any obvious reasons for this. Notwithstanding the addition of another Probation Officer's caseload the overall caseload of July 1985 turned out to be almost exactly the same as that of January 1984, that is, 144 as against 140. Thus, at two different periods of the year and separated by more than the practical length of the average supervision order, the sub-samples hardly differed in the way offenders were distributed across the age ranges. A small group of 17 offenders featured in both subsamples. These are referred to as Recurrers and their situations are reviewed on pages 103-105.

The increase in juvenile males in the July 1985 subsample can be explained easily. West Dorset had more because of the additional Probation Officer's interest in the local Intermediate Treatment facility based in Dorchester. The variations in numbers of older male offenders, particularly those aged between 17 and 34 years is more difficult to explain. There were no obvious external effects like riot or affray which could influence numbers. Indeed the opportunity to misbehave in the absence of large numbers of police officers called to duty at miners picket lines is not reflected. Variations might have more prosaic explanations. For instance, it is known that some of the 17-24 year olds in West Dorset were on special placements. In addition, others had migrated to the area because of the sympathetic emergency reception policy of the local District Housing Department. On the other hand, police action in Purbeck against car thieves and joy riders virtually cut off the only road between Wareham and Swanage thus reducing opportunities to thieves in an area where offenders of all ages carry high profiles.

Hardly any patterns over time emerge. Overall caseload size does not seem to be linked directly with increases in reported crime and police detection rates. There are however several possible reasons for this. If we take 17-24 year olds for example, and look at the sentencing patterns of local Magistrates Courts during 1983-85 we can see that, whilst in other areas the use of custody was gradually reduced, in the rural courts there was consistently high use (Appendix 5). In addition, it should also be noted that fines were imposed more often. Probation and Community Service were used extensively but each targeted the same age group, the 17-24 years olds and it is not clear whether local courts saw these disposals as mutually exclusive.

A major constraint to the effective disposal of clients was the lack of uniform resources throughout the area to meet offender needs. This explains some of the imbalance between Districts. For example, North Dorset was serviced by an Attendance Centre at Bournemouth. The relatively high numbers of females supervised in North Dorset (21) and Purbeck (20) possibly reflected conscious concerns of Magistrates about women getting into

trouble. Finally, the overall expansion of Probation Officers Workloads was the result of a growth in non-criminal work, for example, Divorce Court Welfare. This probably contributed to a reluctance to recommend all but the most necessary cases for supervision.

The largest group of supervised offenders is aged between 16 and 24 years. Although this reflects the national trend it is not clear whether at the local level this has resulted from a conscious attempt by Probation Officers to target young offenders and it is possible that constraints exist which limit caseload size.

MARITAL STATUS, CLASS, OFFENDER LOCATIONS AND ACCOMMODATION

Marital Status

The greatest number of adult male offenders are single (117). That is, they have never entered into a socially binding and space sharing enduring relationship with another person. Although most are aged 17-24 years, there are a significant number of older age single males. None of these appear to have had the support and influence traditionally associated with heterosexual relationships outside of the family of origin.

From 25 years of age on this group is supplemented by separated males, those who are no longer married or who are living away from a spouse without sharing living space with a female. This whole group of single males might fit uncomfortably within a society where close personal bonds appear to be the rule. To what extent there are local pressures to either enter into or withdraw from heterosexual relationships is not known.

Table 4.2 suggests that female offenders enter into heterosexual relationships earlier than do males.

TABLE 4.2 MARITAL STATUS SEX BY AGE n = 284

CATEGORY	<17	17-24	25-34	35+	TOTALS
Single	27 (1)	95 (8)	13 (4)	9 (2)	144 (15)
Married		13 (11)	23 (6)	22 (12)	58 (29)
Separated		(4)	8 (2)	10 (2)	18 (8)
Cohabiting		1 (2)	4 (3)	1 (1)	6 (6)
TOTALS	27 (1)	109 (25)	48 (15)	42 (17)	226 (58)

Some females have early experience of separation and of alternative emotions relationships. In three cases females aged 17-24 years have had several liaisons with males. Those experiences have all been with males who were identified as criminals. Whether these females were useful as helpmates or were contaminating influences is hard to tell but their situations could not be described as stable. The network of relationships surrounding females who have had several liaisons seems to engender close ties between otherwise separate family units. The only tendency towards premeditated group delinquency is seen in these situations.

The greatest number of adult male offenders are single, either unmarried or separated. Female offenders enter into heterosexual relationships earlier than males and therefore some have earlier experience of separation and act as links between the families of successive partners.

Class position

The allocation of class position is not specifically undertaken by the Probation Officer. Reference to class in this study is based on the Registrar General's five-fold classification of the revealed occupations of parents. This method is used with some

caution. Firstly, class distinctions do not necessarily coincide with wealth or with jobs held. Secondly, intergenerational mobility has tended in the last twenty years towards stability or even to a slight polarisation which increases the relative inequality between the highest and the lowest classes. Therefore it is assumed that relative stability will have tended to encapsulate the offenders in this sample, those who are mainly younger than 25 years and of the lower classes. Thirdly, the results presented here come from a personal evaluation by the researcher.

TABLE 4.3 CLASS POSITION BY SEX n = 271

CLASS	M	F	TOTALS	PARENTAL JOBS REPRESENTED
11	6	2	8	Teacher, artist, civil servant, industrialist, managing director
111n	16	3	19	Marine engineer, project engineer, farmer, business man
111m	102	18	120	Builder, decorator, industrial technician, bus driver, weaver, publican, tractor driver, machinist, Merchant Seaman, Service man, policeman, telephone operator, confectioner, printer, butcher, car mechanic, railway signalman, oil refinery foreman
IV	66	13	79	Skilled farm worker, building worker, cook
V	27	18	45	Unskilled farm worker, builder's labourer, road-sweeper
TOTALS	217	54	271	

The distributions in Table 4.3 are as might be expected. Most offenders belong to the lower middle and upper working classes in the following proportions, expressed as percentages of District Offender populations. Female percentages are given in brackets. West Dorset 83.6% (60.0%) North Dorset 69.4% (38.0%) and Purbeck 66.0% (55.0%).

These results indicate a range of target groups for intervention. Because of the differences it is important to consider particular strategies. For example, in North Dorset there appears to be a marked difference of class between the males and the females which might require differences of approach. One important but small group is that which includes offenders with a Services background or connection, either military or civil. The Armed Services have four permanent bases in the study area and the Ministry of Defence, one. The Home Office Prison Department has institutions at four locations and the Dorset Constabulary have fully manned stations at six locations. 39 offenders have links with the uniformed Services. The particular common difficulty for each has been the obvious distress caused by breach of acceptable rules, a situation which calls for sensitive management by the Probation Officer.

Most offenders belong to the lower middle and upper working classes, but offer a range of target groups for intervention, demanding a variety of strategies. Offenders with a services background require particularly sensitive management by the Probation Officer.

Offender locations

Plotting the addresses of offenders helps in planning services notwithstanding the belief that offenders live in out of the way places. Table 4.4 indicates the real situation for the rural caseload.

TABLE 4.4 DOMICILE BY SEX BY AGE n = 284

Location	<17	17-24	25-34	35+	TOTALS
Town	23 (1)	81 (19)	29 (7)	24 (12)	157 (39)
Village	2	17 (2)	13 (6)	10 (4)	42 (12)
Small Settlement	2	11 (4)	6 (2)	8 (1)	27 (7)
TOTALS	27 (1)	109 (25)	48 (15)	42 (17)	226 (58)

The majority of offenders live in towns (196). There are a number of indices of settlement, for example by size or by service provision but there is no adequate single measure. The one used here is used in the Dorset Excluding South East Dorset Structure Plan proposals. A town has 2000 or more population. A village has a population between 500-1999 and a small settlement has a population under 500.

Even the towns are very small ranging from Dorchester (15000) to Beaminster (2000). Although living in a town suggests that there will be adequate public utilities and personal services, the situation is not simple. Range of choice is limited and specialist outlets are rare and cater for specific interest groups. The will to seek out provision is probably lacking in many offenders. Cinemas, swimming pools and sports stadia are few and far between. Most settlements of any size have youth clubs and Scout troops but even open use of buildings policies will not attract offenders who lack motivation.

Most of those who live in villages (54) are exposed to worse service and can be some distance from central service places. The Dorset Household Survey of 1979 ranked settlements as service providers. Many of the smaller settlements are dependent upon others which themselves are not major providers. The essential services used in the survey included Post Office, General Store, Service Station, Doctor's Surgery and Village Hall.

The smallest settlements shelter 34 offenders. These settlements attract both retired and still-working people. The particular appeal is a visual one and interest groups flourish which promote environmental issues. Offenders must therefore endure high profiles in what are becoming disinterested local cultures as far as deviance is concerned. Two matters are of importance, the offenders' geographical positions and the gossip networks which prevail. It is tempting to see this particular group of offenders as the main subject of the study. That would probably be a mistake, for two reasons. The first is that remote rurality is a difficult term to define. Indices of remoteness based on distance from the nearest service centre fail to measure isolation experienced by small settlements adjacent to but not

cut off from neighbouring centres. Secondly isolation may not mean physical separation but emotional and psychological separation of people sharing the same territory.

Although most offenders live in towns or villages, there is some evidence that more have settled in smaller communities than were actually born and brought up in small communities.

TABLE 4.5 SETTLEMENT SIZE BIRTHPLACE AND DOMICILE COMPARED
n = 284

	Towns	Villages	Small settlements	TOTALS
Birthplace	208	54	13	275*
Domicile	196	54	34	284

*Not known = 9

It is possible that some offenders are forced out into smaller settlements in search of basic survival needs like housing and work. Three offenders at least have solved the dilemma of homelessness by finding shelter in the country in sub-standard accommodation. Such enforced migration has not brought them within the local mutual aid network. Further discussion about the position of those offenders living in smaller settlements follows at page 95. For the moment, the view is put forward that it would be misleading to focus on them. The general lack of provision and limited range of opportunities throughout the study area affects all offenders.

The majority of offenders live in towns of over 2000 population. Towns, however, do not necessarily provide adequate services and facilities even if the offender is motivated to seek out existing amenities. Many smaller settlements depend on larger units which are not themselves adequately serviced. Although offenders in the smaller settlements might appear to experience the most physical and emotional isolation they are not necessarily worse off than other rural offenders who are equally deprived of adequate service provision.

Where offenders live

The actual locations of offenders are shown in the District map (Appendix 2)

West Dorset The map shows that there are twenty-five offender locations. Six are towns, nineteen are classed as villages or smaller settlements, each of which houses up to three offenders. One location is Netherbury. It houses four offenders but it is an area encompassing four sparsely populated parishes. Piddlehinton is another, smaller, settlement which hosts the emergency accommodation site of the Local Authority and it shelters four offenders.

Offender populations vary as far as the towns are concerned. Beaminster has very few, Bridport and Dorchester, although different in population size, have roughly equal numbers. Although the agency's work is organised from the Eastern side of the District (Dorchester) most of the offenders live to the West.

North Dorset The map shows that offenders are located in twenty-one places, six of which are towns. Fifteen are villages and small settlements, each of which houses one or two offenders. The towns cannot be classified easily in terms of size and offender populations. An interesting feature is that Blandford has nearly equal numbers of male and female offenders. There is a spread of offenders in the District but most are located within a cone bounded by the Blandford-Sherborne and Blandford-Gillingham vectors. The agency's work is managed from Blandford in the S.E. corner.

Purbeck The map indicates that there are fourteen offender locations. Five are towns. Nine are villages and smaller settlements. Bere Regis (a village) had seven offenders and it is seen as a population growth area. Most offenders live in the Purbeck area itself (the S.E.) and to the N.E. in the developing suburban area of Upton. Upton belongs physically and culturally to the Poole-Bournemouth conurbation. The work of this District is managed from Wareham. Although apparently central it is in fact remote from these two areas.

Offenders are located arbitrarily throughout the area in ways which do not necessarily relate to population density. However, the fixed points of Probation Service delivery happen to be away from where most offenders live in all three Districts.

Accommodation of Offenders

Housing is deemed to be a human right. The quality of rural housing stock is generally satisfactory but the precariousness of some of the personal situations of offenders renders problematic their experience and even entitlement to the right of housing. The issue is not as sharply focussed as it is in urban situations. It is suggested that rural offenders might be under pressure either from the enforced intimacy of living with family or from living in structurally inadequate housing units.

As Table 4.6 shows, the majority of offenders live in private accommodation (151) most of which is owned or rented by them or their intimates. One-fifth of this group live in commercial lodgings or in temporary accommodation and are subject neither to contracts with landlords nor enforceable standards of provision.

Public housing accounts for most of the rest of the offenders (126). The majority are tenants of council properties on local estates. A small number live in emergency accommodation (Part III) and this is provided in a number of ways, for example, in guest houses and Inns and other refurbished properties. In addition, use has been made of temporary structures like shacks, prefabricated huts and caravans. Another small group of offenders live as guests in council properties tenanted by relatives or friends. These offenders have no statutory rights.

Most offenders live at addresses familiar to them as family homes or marital homes. Only a small number live isolated lives as singletons or as lodgers in commercial digs. Five offenders among those who have given a permanent address have used what might be described as mail drops. Whatever their reasons, their stated address were no more than convenient post boxes for communications. They should perhaps be considered alongside the

smallest group - the homeless. Only seven were identified and they were surviving in a set of bizarre environments including hedgerows, old sheds in gardens and motor vehicles.

TABLE 4.6 TYPES OF OFFENDER ACCOMMODATION n = 277

There are several issues arising from this Table. Firstly the data about local authority housing provision shows both the size of the need and also that the need is met in different ways. Public housing stock is decreasing in all Districts. The extent of the need varies from District to District and is most marked in West Dorset. There are many instances of poor quality housing stock and needs are sometimes being met at cost to quality of life affected both by condition of fabric and by location. This situation is reflected also in the private housing sector.

Secondly there is a real problem of homelessness. Local Housing Department lists are notoriously short with regard to acute need because of the low visibility of potential claimants. The

numbers cited in Table 4.6 suggest that nearly a fifth of the total sample live in insecure environments determined by their lack of status as either owners or tenants. A combination of factors makes this situation worse, including government proposals for the young with regard to eligibility for income support, the lack of opportunity to move areas, genuine emotional ties to locality, the effect of disagreements at home and the lack of suitable alternative accommodation.

Most offenders live in privately owned or privately rented accommodation. A further large group live in public housing and a small number in emergency accommodation or as guests in council properties. A few have been identified as homeless. One issue of concern is the decline of public housing stock which is reflected in the number and quality of properties available. A similar situation exists in the private sector. There is a problem of homelessness compounded by the financial insecurity and lack of status of some offenders.

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Education

It has long been suggested that the school performance of offenders is unsatisfactory. Many offenders leave without any record of achievement or formal qualifications. In the following Table exclusive categories have been used in order to obtain the widest possible spread of educational experience. Thus a hierarchy of achievement is used to position offenders. Juveniles have been excluded.

As can be seen in table 4.7, the largest group is that of unqualified offenders. It might have been anticipated that many of this group would be older. The fact is that the majority of those aged 17-24 years have no qualifications. This suggests that no advantage seems to be obtained for them as a result of attempts to engage their interest at school. The present ways of assessing their performance might be inappropriate to their needs. This group includes the majority of non-attenders at school. In the sample, 21 cases are noted of individuals who have presumably come to public notice.

TABLE 4.7 EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT OF ADULT OFFENDERS AT COMMENCEMENT OF SUPERVISION. SEX BY AGE n = 256

ACHIEVEMENT	17-24	25-34	35+	TOTALS
No qualifications	70 (16)	32 (10)	26 (12)	128 (38)
School qualifications	18 (5)	6 (2)	5 (2)	29 (9)
Trade qualifications	12 (3)	5 (3)	6 (1)	23 (7)
Other vocational qualifications	7 (1)	2	5 (2)	14 (3)
Further education	2	3	5	5
TOTALS	109 (25)	48 (15)	42 (17)	199 (57)

A link between non-attendance and delinquency has been suggested in an internal report by the Dorset Probation Community Service Department. However a contrary opinion is expressed in a research project on Dorset children in care undertaken by the Principal Education Welfare Officer in 1986.

Only a small number of offenders have secondary school qualifications. The value of these, when tested in the market place is often debased. Local Employers, through their Chambers of Trade, have made it clear that they demand basic skills and they hold local schools accountable for non attainment. The average number of passes per qualified offender for whom detailed information was available was 1.5 CSE (Grade 3).

Trade training takes several forms from apprenticeship to unregistered help. The emphasis is now on practical work rather than theory. There were very few trained personnel with highly specialised skills. Some of the best had been trained in the Armed Services. Seven offenders had engineering and mechanical

skills as a result. Few of them, however, by virtue of their offences or changes in circumstances, continued to use them.

Government Training schemes included Youth Opportunities and Manpower Services. The figures suggest that state provision has been selective otherwise many more offenders should have become involved. Again, as with Trade training, few offenders follow through their learning with relevant work.

A very small number of individuals with experience of further education have turned to crime. Without exception, these persons have not used their advanced knowledge systematically to offend and all displayed personal instability.

The majority of offenders aged between 17-24 years have no formal qualifications. There is a possible but disputed link between non-attendance at school and delinquency. Qualified offenders have an average pass rate of 1.5 CSE (Grade 3). Some of those with trade training have benefited from courses in the Armed Services which provided skills they no longer used. More highly trained offenders have not used their knowledge for criminal purposes. Fewer offenders than expected have participated in Government training schemes.

Works Status

Dorset has traditionally found work for most of its economically active population. In fact, the county has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country. Nevertheless, the employment market is characterised by the lack of skilled labour, a lack of work opportunities for those with skills and by a traditionally deferential approach by the work force to management. The most obvious examples are in the catering and tourist industries. Table 4.8 shows that the majority of offenders are unemployed.

The pattern of unemployment appears to begin early, as the data for the under 17's suggests. In every adult age group there are more unemployed than employed offenders. Current training programmes, exclusively Government sponsored, absorb a small number of offenders.

TABLE 4.8 WORK STATUS AT COMMENCEMENT OF SUPERVISION BY SEX BY AGE n = 284

Status	<17	17-24	25-34	35+	TOTALS
Unemployed	7	53 (7)	29 (4)	21 (5)	110 (16)
Employed	4 (1)	45 (10)	19 (4)	18 (6)	86 (24)
Government Training	1	6 (21)	(1)	(1)	7 (4)
Not economically active	15	3 (6)	(3)	3 (5)	21 (14)
TOTALS	27 (1)	109 (25)	48 (15)	42 (17)	226 (58)

Features of unemployment and employment

Unemployment The following features have been identified in Probation Officers' accounts. 99 cases out of the 126 unemployed in the sample provided adequate information. The reasons for unemployment are summarised under two heads:

Firstly, personal inadequacy A poor attitude to work was noted in 36 cases and evidence of misconduct in 9 cases. Disagreement with bosses leading to walking off site and dismissal were noted in 6 cases. Pathology - a clear clinical condition militating against holding down a job - was noted in one case. Offending as the primary explanation for unemployment was noted in 30 cases. Physical illness and mental handicap accounted for eight cases.

Secondly, other causes These include the lack of sufficient social skills for engaging in work of any kind, noted in three cases and the lack of opportunity to work, noted in three cases. Redundancy featured in 13 cases and failure in self employment in three.

Most of this data refers to males. There is no age specific

quality about the findings. The most obvious causes noted are poor attitudes to work and offending. Female unemployment status appears to be equally damaged by offending but not by poor attitudes.

It can be seen that unemployment is related to several factors. These are, personal inadequacy, criminal behaviour, the effect of injury and the disabling condition of poor intelligence or mental handicap. In addition there is the physical barrier of distance from work opportunity and the adverse effects of market forces. One of the disturbing aspects is the length of time some offenders can be out of work. Out of the 37 cases in which a precise chronology of work was given, 23 had been unemployed for over twelve months and this number included eight in the most vulnerable age group, the 17-24 year olds.

It is suggested that the state of unemployment is not one brought about entirely by the wayward stance of offenders, but by the unfortunate interplay of several forces. The tenuous hold that offenders seem to have on work as an important life function leads to an examination of those in the sample who were described as Employed.

Employment Table 4.8 shows that only about one-third of all economically active males are employed. The proportion of females in work is higher - more than one-half if the fourteen housewives are included. 43 out of the 57 adult females were either married, separated or cohabiting. Marriage patterns possibly dampen the necessity for commitment to work but it seems that females do have better opportunities for paid employment.

Employment covers different categories of time commitment, including full time, part time and spare time. Some at least of those in work may not have had secure jobs which provided financial stability. 67 males and 28 females were directly employed by others. 22 males and 9 females worked for themselves or were undergoing training. Employment characteristics will be described under two heads, stable work and casual work. The number of employed offender cases in which a full history was found totalled 76.

Stable work This is not necessarily related to single tasks over time and the continuous application of the same skills but it is marked by regular jobs and a general consistency of attitude. Features include the use of trade skills (15 cases), Government courses (17) and on site practical experience (10 cases). Personal determination to work is separately noted in several cases and this includes offenders with severe handicap (3 cases) those with no particular skill or experience to offer (3 cases) and those in pursuit of better conditions (3). All these make a total of 47 cases.

The variety of jobs undertaken is enormous and the total of tasks noted is 23. They range from highly skilled to simple repetitive ones and jobs fall equally within the industrial and service sectors. The major task groups include building, odd jobbing, catering, domestic service and mechanics. Very few jobs in agriculture are noted. There seems to be only a slight connection between acquired skill and eventual work. Engineers were employed as waiters and labourers as mechanics and servicing technicians. Anybody seemed to be employed in hotels and restaurants. This observation is particularly true of Government trainees. There were few large industrial institutions (for example car factories) and the public sector institutions did not as a rule employ people contaminated by crime. What is of note is the general interest of small employers in the recruitment and performance of offenders, evidenced in 27 cases. Not the least important feature of this interest was the effort made to provide transport to work.

Casual work This was most marked by discontinuities in employment and 29 cases were noted. In 22 of these there was evidence that offenders were neither working full time nor claiming income support. It is possible that in many cases there appeared to be no contractual link between employer and worker. The life style of the casual worker appeared to be an important determinant in 10 cases. The extent of part time work and whether offenders combined jobs was not known.

It is difficult to determine what allows choice of any kind in obtaining work. A certain number of offenders seem able to

decide the pace and direction of their paid work, perhaps exploiting limited but vital demand/supply situations and by joining the black economy. Casual workers shared some of the same skills as stable workers including trade training (3 cases) Government training (8 cases) and practical on site experience (6 cases).

It is suggested that many offenders in employment are not obtaining job satisfaction nor making best use of skill training. The transition from job to job with attached risk inherent in waiting time and possible unemployment is reminiscent of the Victorian hired man.

The range of jobs within the sample appears to be limited in both quality and opportunity for advancement. The different ways of coping with unproductive labour and the diffuse numbers involved make it imperative that each offender's personal situation is looked at carefully.

In spite of the high employment rate in Dorset, the majority of offenders are out of work in all adult age groups. The main reasons are personal inadequacy and criminal behaviour, though lack of local work opportunities and national economic factors contribute. The proportion of those unemployed for over a year gives cause for concern.

Only one-third of all economically active males are employed. Females appear to have more paid work opportunities. Those in stable work showed some consistency of attitude and adaptability. Small employers appear more responsive than larger industrial or public employers to the possibility of employing offenders. Casual workers are often not contractually bound to employers and determine their own employment pattern, moving readily from job to job with periods of unemployment and no real stability.

HEALTH AND PERSONAL TRAUMA

Dorset is an attractive county to visit for holidays and to retire to principally on the two grounds of scenic beauty and the slow pace of life. Area health budgets allow for proper attention to be given to priority groups but it is assumed that

there will be low incidence of avoidable ill health. The issue of personal fitness is approached in two ways in this study, firstly by looking at the incidence of ill health and secondly the incidence of domestic trauma reported in the caseload.

Health problems The categories of ill health include physical (bodily handicap, malfunction or severe injury) mental (genetic handicap or a psychotic condition) and emotional (observable neurotic condition). One important observation concerning Table 4.9 and others to follow is the large number of cases in which no information was available. In this particular Table it is assumed that information about ill health would be included because of its obvious effect on offenders' lives. Nevertheless, it is not clear whether all cases were identified.

TABLE 4.9 HEALTH PROBLEMS SEX BY AGE n = 119

Type	<17	17-24	25-34	35+	TOTALS
Physical	-	12 (5)	6 (4)	4 (4)	22 (13)
Mental	-	7 (1)	-	1	8 (1)
Emotional	6	21 (5)	7 (5)	8 (4)	42 (14)
Combination	3	6 (1)	5 (11)	2 (1)	16 (3)
TOTALS	9	46 (12)	18 (10)	15 (9)	88 (31)

These figures are disturbing. The connection between ill health and delinquency has been noted in the literature. The possibility exists that more than those identified have problems. The incidence of emotional ill health occurs first in the youngest age group. Although there are therapeutic communities for juveniles represented (Clyffe House School, Tincleton, Stinsford School, Dorchester and Hooke School, Beaminster) some of the youngest offenders either attended or had just left State schools. The continuation of emotional health through the age groups affects both males and females.

Physical ill health is accounted for mainly by accidental injuries, including road crashes (8 cases) and chronic illness (25). Two cases of congenital deformity were noted. Mental ill health or handicap was not strongly represented. Two of the seven cases exhibited psychotic traits. The other five had varying degrees of mental handicap.

All the categories were intended to be exclusive and attention was given as far as possible to one major feature in each case before classifying the results. However, there were a group of offenders who suffered from more than one major handicap, usually a combination of emotional and physical ill health (14 out of 19 cases). This last group, combined with the others, provides the evidence for the involvement at some stage of other professional workers whose contribution should be acknowledged in the case records.

Personal trauma The second way of looking at the health of offenders was to catalogue the number and variety of domestic trauma affecting their lives within the intimate personal relationships of the family of origin. As most of the offenders were young, these experiences would be almost contemporaneous with their present situations. A summary of the findings is given in Table 4.10.

TABLE 4.10 PERSONAL TRAUMA BY SEX BY AGE n = 196

Incidence of Trauma	<17	17-24	25-34	35+	TOTALS
One	14	54 (14)	22 (6)	27 (10)	117 (30)
More than one	4	25 (4)	7 (4)	3 (2)	39 (10)
TOTALS	18	79 (18)	29 (10)	30 (12)	156 (40)

Trauma of any kind affects thinking and behaviour. The categories of trauma selected out were, parental separation and divorce, the experience of loss through death, injury or handicap

with reference to a family member, the experience of surrogate care and the contaminatory effect of family crime and deviance. As with ill health, it was discovered that some offenders had major experience of more than one trauma.

Parental separation There were 86 cases noted but precise information was to hand in 60 cases. In 39 cases the father had left home. The mother left in 13 cases. Both father and mother left their children within three years in 8 cases. Females suffered the loss of the father in 9 cases and the loss of the mother in 6 cases. Only one female suffered the loss of both parents.

The timing of loss through first parental separation was as follows:- before 11th birthday - 48 cases, after 11th birthday - 12 cases.

Loss relating to death of parent or sibling There were 30 cases noted and in 25 cases there was precise information, mostly of lost male parents (18). In four cases the victim was a brother. The timing of such losses appears to be fortuitous, from infancy to mature adulthood.

Effect of severe handicap or injury Nine cases were noted in which a family member was severely handicapped. Incapacitated fathers and mothers accounted for six cases. The remaining three involved siblings.

Surrogate care Care arrangements, formal and informal are mentioned in 59 cases but precise information is found in 38 cases. Some offenders were looked after by relatives or were adopted (13 cases). The others were received into the Local Authority and had experience of Childrens Homes (4 cases) foster placements (10 cases) special education (4 cases) and correctional facilities (5 cases). Only two foundlings were noted and they had no experience throughout childhood of surrogate family life outside an institution.

Separation and loss could be seen as naturally occurring trauma to which individuals might adjust whilst care proceedings on the other hand seem to imply intervention from others in properly

planned and constructive ways. There is little to support the view that offenders would fare better one way or the other. One of the matters followed up was the number of offenders who had experienced extended family situations and more complex personal relationships as the result of trauma. The results are as follows:

Separation Twenty-eight offenders experienced the nuclear family only and 30 experienced later an extended family situation, e.g. as the result of remarriage of surviving partner. There was therefore, a balance between the two groups.

Loss Seventeen offenders experienced the nuclear family only whilst seven had experience of a wide family situation. Here the emphasis appears to be on the surviving partner "going it alone" and coping as well as may be.

Surrogate care All offenders (38) had experienced extended relational systems and for some at least there would be no awareness of the potential strengths of family life.

In none of these groups was there a guarantee of successful coping with stress and anxiety. It can be reasonably conjectured that old battles between warring spouses for example would ensure that offenders would not gain in absolute terms from extended care networks.

All instances discussed so far are of socially tolerated, if not ideal situations. In the next sections three types of socially unacceptable trauma are discussed.

Contaminatory effect of family crime or deviance In 13 cases the fathers of offenders had criminal records. There were only two delinquent mothers but both were recidivists. Siblings of six offenders had been in trouble. The severity of offending was serious in three cases and in one case the whole family had been delinquent with one sibling currently in prison. In nine cases criminal records were dormant or completed and in two cases there was evidence that past delinquent parents were extremely concerned about their children's behaviour. Whilst not socially

tolerated, the level of family delinquency appeared to be low and in general, of minor seriousness.

Domestic violence Ten offenders were the direct targets of physical abuse at the hands of parents. With two exceptions (a mother and a guardian aunt) the perpetrators were men. Six of the eight were fathers. Eleven offenders were unwilling witnesses to acts of parental violence. Without exception these acts were perpetrated on wives by husbands or boy friends.

Abuse of alcohol Note is taken in 43 cases of parental illness or inadequacy as the result of alcohol abuse.

The legacy of family trauma is plainly observed in offenders' subsequent criminal careers. For example, there are six cases in which serious risk to children is identified. Alcohol abuse is noted in 58 cases and drug abuse in 29 cases.

Of the three categories of ill health, emotional ill health was the most prevalent and began earliest. Physical ill health was mainly due to chronic conditions or accidental injury. Mental ill health was not strongly represented. Some offenders suffered from ill health in more than one category, the most common combination being physical and emotional ill health.

Concerning trauma, most offenders had suffered one or more family traumas relatively early in life. The most common was parental separation which in most cases happened before the offender was 11 years old and involved the father's leaving home. The next most common trauma involved surrogate care by adoption, fostering or institutional care. A smaller number had experienced the death or severe handicap of a close family member.

The complication of family relationships as the result of trauma was measured. After the separation of parents approximately equal numbers experienced the nuclear family and an extended family pattern. Predictably, all those in surrogate care had experienced extended family relationships. Those who had lost a close family member tended still to be part of the nuclear

family. It was felt that extended family relationships might not benefit traumatised offenders.

Socially unacceptable traumas included family crime and deviance which, while present, appeared to be of minor importance. Domestic violence had been present in a minority of cases, almost always perpetrated by men. Alcohol and drugs were a significant factor in offenders' subsequent careers.

DEBT

One of the major consequences of poor management is the accumulation of debt, creating even more problems for offenders. The case records indicated problems with regard to Fines and compensation as well as civil debt. In Table 4.11 distinctions are made between Fines and compensation (penalties imposed by Criminal Courts, including legal Aid costs) County Court debt (civil debt enforced by order) loans and fuel bills. Once again, note should be taken of the number of identified cases.

TABLE 4.11 DEBTS. ADULT OFFENDERS BY SEX BY AGE n = 110

Type	17-24	25-34	35+	TOTALS
Fines and compensation	23 (8)	8 (4)	4 (9)	35 (21)
County Court	2 (6)	1	3 (1)	6 (7)
Loans and fuel bills	7	5 (3)	1	13 (3)
Combination	3 (5)	6 (4)	5 (2)	14 (11)
TOTALS	35 (19)	20 (11)	13 (12)	68 (42)

The burden of court debt lies heavily on offenders. Although the number of adult offenders thus committed is only 56 (out of a possible 256) their fines are mostly for petty crimes other than those for which they are on supervision. It is important to note that Rural Courts in particular fine defendants regularly and heavily (Appendix 6). Figures taken from the author's survey of Rural Court registers in 1984 show that across the study area Fine Defaulters owed on average more than the average weekly wage for unskilled worker (that is £75). Three examples are given.

At the Sherborne Magistrates Court sitting on 5th July 1984 seven offenders owed a total of £568.00. At Dorchester Magistrates Court sitting on 11th July 1984, 14 offenders owed a total of £1125.00. At Wareham Magistrates Court sitting on 18th April 1984, 15 offenders owed a total of £2700.00. The average waiting time for recovery for all courts was four months. Regular defaulters courts were not common at the time of the survey but examples such as these emphasise both the punitive intention behind fines and the difficulty in recovery.

The high proportion of females caught up in debt is disturbing. Females may carry the burden of paying bills and of putting creditors off. For example, non-payment of fines with regard to TV licence fraud, featured females more than males in the 1984 court survey. They may be also seen as providers to delinquent dependents, whether or not they can cope financially.

Debts feature significantly in the age range 17-24 years. There is ample proof from other sources that offenders experience great difficulties over the management of money but Probation Officers cannot perhaps be fully sensitive to the problem.

Many offenders experience great difficulty over money management. Court debts resulting from fines add an extra burden to routine bills and civil debt, but heavy fines are regularly imposed by rural courts. On average fine defaulters owe more than the average weekly wage for unskilled workers. A disturbing proportion of females and of 17-24 year old offenders find debt a particularly pressing problem, and could possibly be given more help by Probation Officers.

KEY INFORMANTS

Given the high profile of offenders and their problems, it is likely that other professional workers or community figures will be involved with them. The next Table shows that such involvement is indicated in less than a third of the sample. The large number of cases in which nothing is recorded about links with other workers cannot be explained easily as there is provision on the summary data form (Form PBN blue) for relevant information. Key informants include professional social workers in statutory and voluntary agencies, health officials, family friends and neighbourhood figures. They may have been closely involved with offenders or their social situations and could be in possession of much helpful information. They might also be ideally placed to help the Probation Officer further.

TABLE 4.12 INVOLVEMENT OF KEY INFORMANTS WITH RURAL OFFENDERS -
SEX BY AGE n = 104

	<17	17-24	25-34	35+	TOTALS
G.P	2	8 (1)	4 (4)	7 (4)	21 (9)
Psychiatrist	4	4 (2)	2 (3)	4	14 (5)
Psychologist	1	2	2		5
Health Visitor		(5)	(1)		(6)
Social Worker	3 (1)	6 (6)	2	1 (2)	12 (9)
Addiction Worker		3	4	6 (1)	13 (1)
Youth Workers	1	3			4
Non professional	1	2		2	5
TOTALS	21 (1)	28 (14)	14 (8)	20 (7)	74 (30)

The majority of offenders appear not to have had contact with other agencies and concerned individuals. This may not be entirely correct. In 13 cases among this larger group the researcher found evidence of substantial contact between offenders and others, contact which was not formally recognised in the parts A and B of the case record. Nine of the thirteen cases referred to help from neighbours and employers. Three explanations are possible for the general lack of information concerning the involvement of others. Firstly, other professionals maintain high levels of confidentiality about their work, for example Child Guidance workers and the Clergy. Secondly, that there is a lack of awareness by Probation Officers that support systems exist in the community. Thirdly, it is conceivable that Probation Officers choose not to recognise the help that might be available in the community. Some support for this last point comes from the Table itself. Only ten key informants are non-professional, including neighbours, friends and employers. This seems to diminish the influence of people who might have much more to do with offenders in their everyday lives than do professionals.

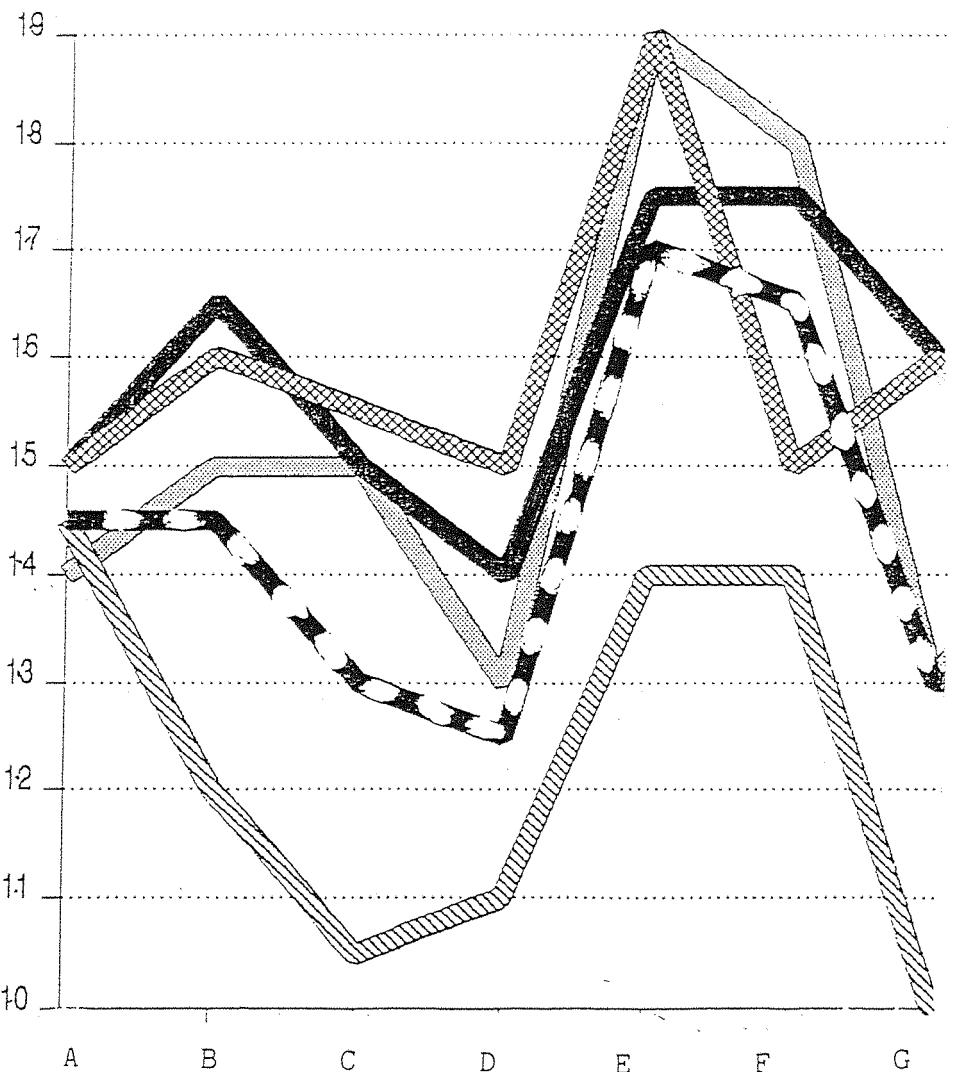
There appears to be a profound distance between these findings and the commonly held belief that formal and informal care networks bring to light information which can then be used constructively.

Involvement of other professional workers or community figures with offenders is recognised in less than a third of the cases studied. Such people may offer valuable supplementary information and support. In some cases the substantial involvement of offenders with others is not acknowledged. This could result from the professional need to keep confidentiality. Probation Officers might be unaware of other sources of support or refuse to recognise their value. In general, formal and informal networks produce less useful information and help than might be anticipated.

A SOCIAL PROBLEM PROFILE

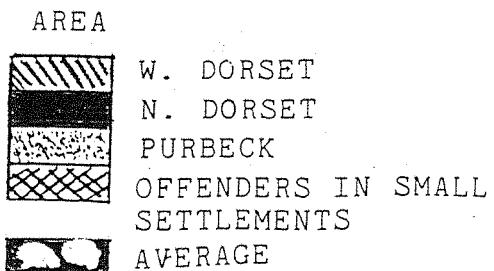
An attempt has been made to present the personal experience of rural offenders in a way which might serve as a useful reference for possible comparison with others. The profile shown in Figure 1 has used all the problematic variables discussed so far and the resulting scores are District averages of problem severity ranging from low (1.0) to high (1.9).

Fig. 4.1 A SOCIAL PROBLEM PROFILE



KEY

- A WORK
- B EDUCATION
- C HEALTH
- D DEBT
- E DOMESTIC PROBLEMS
- F DEVIANCE
- G KEY INFORMANTS



North Dorset emerges as the area with the highest average problem scores reflecting a general poverty of experience among offenders. On the other hand, West Dorset, recently (1985) designated an area of special need, appears to show the least acute problem scores. Purbeck has two high scores but otherwise occupies the middle ground.

Allowing for the possibility of reporting bias on the part of Probation Officers, the apparent difference requires some interpretation. Firstly, it is likely that each Probation Officer elicits only that information about personal circumstances that is deemed to be relevant. However, the consistently high scores for North Dorset cover areas of enquiry which most officers would agree are so relevant, e.g. work and family trauma.

The issue of isolated offenders with particular reference to the social problem scale can now be examined. The graph for such offenders (who total 34) indicates a relatively high score on most variables. An inventory of their problems reveals that as a group they have particularly high representation concerning domestic traumas, no school qualifications, unemployment, ill health and debt.

One interesting fact is that less than half of the 34 offenders are thought to have key informants which suggests that they do not receive support from their local small neighbourhoods. Most of these offenders live in West Dorset (19). This would of course move West Dorset's profile further to the right compared with other districts thus narrowing the differences between districts.

Offenders in small settlements form only a small part of the total sample and cannot be given priority in terms of service provision unless their claims are based on real hardships. Some do live in primitive conditions and some may suffer the loss of friendly gossip networks. However, the information derived from this study suggests that this particular group serve to highlight problems shared by offenders throughout the area.

It appears that North Dorset offenders have the highest average problem scores. The cause is not immediately apparent, though it reflects a general poverty of experience among the group. Isolated offenders also tend to have relatively high social problem ratings possibly reflecting the lack of suitable informal support in small communities. This idea is reinforced by the fact that the majority of isolated offenders appeared to have no key informant. Their problems however are typical of rural offenders in general.

CHARACTERISTICS OF OFFENDING BEHAVIOUR

Issues dealt with in this section deal with the classification and seriousness of crime, and the perceived needs of offenders as seen by the Probation Officers who had to manage their supervision.

Offence categories Table 4.13 lists groups of offences. By far the largest group is Theft and this includes break ins of all kinds and larceny of motor vehicles but excludes offences with violent components.

The next largest group covers a miscellany of offences including drugs, taking and driving motor vehicles, criminal damage, drunkenness and non payment of fines. These may be considered to be petty offences in the main.

The third largest group is Fraud and this includes cheque, credit card and personal payment gyro offences and illegal abstraction of electricity. Most of these offences appear to have been opportunistic and some reveal poignant struggles to survive financially.

The violent group includes homicide, threat to kill, grievous bodily harm, assault and aggravated burglary. Together with the offenders in the last group, sexual offences, they form a nucleus of socially very unacceptable crime.

TABLE 4.13 OFFENCE TYPE SEX BY AGE n = 284

Type	<17	17-24	25-34	35+	TOTALS
Theft	17	62 (12)	21 (6)	15 (10)	115 (28)
Other	2 (1)	24 (2)	11 (2)	4 (1)	41 (6)
Fraud	2	10 (2)	8 (6)	8 (5)	28 (18)
Violence	4	8 (4)	6 (1)	7 (1)	23 (6)
Sex	4	5	2	8	19
TOTALS	27 (1)	109 (25)	48 (15)	42 (17)	226 (58)

These results are comparable with other areas. There is no crime which is specific to the rural situation, for example, poaching. The nearest the researcher got to that was an offence taken into consideration with others, namely, theft of a frozen carcass of beef.

Seriousness of offending What must be remembered is that all offenders in the sample were by virtue of court orders, those subject to some form of supervision. Many offenders before the court do not receive supervision. Bearing in mind that some degree of choice exists for Probation Officers who make recommendations and Magistrates who sentence, an attempt was made to assess the seriousness of offending within the sample. The group of Recidivist offenders is examined. The term recidivists is used to describe all adult offenders with four or more previous offences.

TABLE 4.14 RECIDIVIST ADULTS BY SEX BY AGE n = 48

17-24	25-34	TOTALS
19 (3)	23 (3)	42 (6)

Recidivism was identified in the age range 17.34 years. Within that group there was an even distribution of those with the most previous convictions.

Previous offence patterns which suggest increasingly serious offending were identified in 18 cases. These included three cases of recurring negligent driving, ten cases where there appeared to be sustained attempts to survive by thieving, two cases in which a string of minor offences is broken by one major offence, two cases of drug related offending in which the need for ready money and supplies resulted in serious crime and one case in which the offender's mental condition made him an increasing danger to others.

The rest of the group (30 cases) did not appear to show a pattern of increasing seriousness. What is most noticeable was a general lack of commitment by offenders with regard to particular offence types. In other words, most recidivists appeared to have turned their hands to a variety of crimes in their delinquent histories.

Previous offence histories which showed tariff based sentence patterns were identified in 27 cases. In those cases there was some indication that offenders had been dealt with lightly at first before supervision and then custodial disposals were tried. It is noted however that not all offenders received their sentences from the same courts, or within the same judicial areas, so there is no evidence to support one sentencing philosophy against another. Neither was it possible to tell clearly whether offenders had all been through the cautioning process.

The remaining cases (21) show non-tariff sentencing patterns. In four cases, custody was introduced as a first disposal. In nine cases financial penalties were imposed on several consecutive occasions. In six cases there was consecutive use of supervision and in two cases there was repetition of Community Service.

Varying intervention strategies were suggested in Social Inquiry Reports. In 23 cases recommendations were made with energy and confidence. Eight of these recommendations appeared to have

clearly defined counselling aims. Five offered practical help. Three seem designed to divert offenders from prison and the remainder (7) made no proposals for supervision.

Courts must have dealt with the cases on the most recent occasions with punishment in mind. However, most of the offenders (29 out of 48) were dealt with by measures which kept them within their local communities.

Measuring Seriousness One way seriousness can be indicated, as far as property offences were concerned, was by estimating the actual cost to victims.

The following Table summarises this information. Commercial theft includes shoplifting and break ins at business premises. Commercial Fraud includes misuse of public funds and offences against public boards like DOHSS and fuel boards. In each of the personal categories, theft and fraud, there are wide ranges of estimated cost, covering items like Mars Bars worth pence to machinery worth over £2000.

TABLE 4.15 COST TO VICTIMS BY OFFENCE TYPE BY DISTRICT n = 181

Offence Type	West Dorset	North Dorset	Purbeck
Commercial	£ 3868	£ 2709	£ 3752
Theft			
Personal	£ 1248	£ 120	£ 172
Theft			
Commercial	£ 3502	£ 500	£ 890
Fraud			
Personal	£ 630	£ 2076	
Fraud			
TOTALS	£ 9248	£ 5405	£ 4814

Although most offences involve commercial victims, it is noteworthy that the average cost, corporate or individual, is about twice the average weekly wage for an unskilled worker in the rural area (£175 at 1985 prices).

Injuriousness The potential cost to victims in terms of aggravation and hurt is difficult to describe and measure.

One way of attempting to do so was by adopting a profile which focussed on injuriousness, the degree of actual physical contact, contamination plus hurt, between victim and offender.

In Table 4.16 offenders in the sample were profiled according to their latest offence and number of previous convictions. In the Table, A represents offences in which there was least contact with victims, for example shoplifting and drugs, B represents offences in which there is more noticeable contact, for example, theft of a car and burglary, and C represents assaults of all kinds.

TABLE 4.16 OFFENDING AND VICTIM INVOLVEMENT. CURRENT OFFENCE BY PREVIOUS CONVICTIONS BY DISTRICT n = 284

A	B	C
6 previous offences		
WD 10	2	1
ND 0	5	3
PK 4	3	1
4-5 previous offences		
WD 1	3	0
ND 3	3	3
PK 1	3	2
1-3 previous offences		
WD 35	14	14
ND 21	21	5
PK 11	20	4
No previous offences		
WD 25	13	6
ND 5	6	5
PK 8	16	7
TOTALS 124	109	51

Three features should be noted. The first is the predominance of work with those who have offended least often and those whose offences are of middle order seriousness with regard to victim involvement. The second is the presence of petty persistent offenders - those with longer criminal records who have committed less serious offences.

The third feature is the number of violent offenders who were previously lightly convicted or unknown. The emphasis expressed throughout this Table is not on district differences (which may or may not be associated with Magisterial decision) but on distinct groupings of offenders. These different groups demand discrete handling. The main difficulty with regard to this profile was that it dealt only with the injuriousness of the current offences and nothing much can be deduced concerning general behaviour. What was more informative about the overall seriousness of offenders' criminal careers was the profile, discussed in the next section.

An offender profile The following Table attempts to relate five factors in the offending problems of offenders. Reference should be made to Appendix 10. The scales used range in severity from least severe (1) to most severe (5). For practical reasons the seventeen Recurrers have been left out.

There are differences which merit attention with regard to onset age. West Dorset appears to label offenders as delinquent earlier than do the other two districts. No evidence is to hand with regard to cautioning rates. It is possible that juveniles were brought to attention more quickly in West Dorset and entered a process of assessment and treatment arranged by personal social service workers before the judicial process was begun. Only nine cases in the sample had found cautions recorded and five of these were from West Dorset, whilst two other cases were cautioned out of the county. Onset age in Purbeck, in particular, reflected the proportion of offenders whose delinquency had been delayed for some reason. Such delinquency was often related to specific personal problems. With regard to previous convictions, West Dorset produced a large number of lightly convicted offenders.

TABLE 4.17 AN OFFENDER PROFILE BY AREA n = 267

Area	<u>SEVERITY SCALE</u>				
<u>West Dorset</u> n = 116	1	2	3	4	5
Onset age	40	54	8	12	2
Previous convictions	35	40	19	13	9
Chronicity	81	20	8	3	4
Repetition	30	39	8	4	3
Severity	10	16	66	10	13
<hr/>					
<u>North Dorset</u> n = 76					
Onset age	19	9	25	14	10
Previous convictions	24	25	14	7	8
Chronicity	46	18	3	3	6
Repetition	14	23	13	4	2
Severity	5	9	42	8	12
<hr/>					
<u>Purbeck</u> n = 75					
Onset age	26	5	26	15	8
Previous convictions	26	18	20	1	10
Chronicity	50	13	4	1	4
Repetition	35	12	4	1	2
Severity	11	6	44	7	7

This is different to the other two districts where the largest numbers fall within the "No previous conviction" category. Together, however, all these figures show that the caseload has within it many offenders who are lightly convicted at the time of supervision.

Chronicity - the density of offending over time - produced the same main result in all districts at the least serious end of the scale. This result tends to support the view that offending was infrequent and often undirected and that it was not the result of intense bursts of activity over short periods of time.

Repetition of the same offence. The Table shows that in Purbeck there was least repetition and that offenders were indiscriminate in their choice of offence. The picture is very much the same in

the other districts which tends to support the view that delinquency was not organised to any large extent but was opportunistic.

The last variable - severity - was used to index the seriousness of the sentences meted out to each offender over time. All three districts recorded middle of the scale results which suggests that there might have been a balance between punitive and treatment based sentences. It may also suggest that there were few offences serious enough to be dealt with severely.

Reference has already been made (at page 98) to the intervention strategies suggested by Probation Officers. This issue is now taken further with reference first to the group of Recurrers then to the recommendations in Social Inquiry Reports and assessments of work.

The majority of recidivists did not have a pattern of increasingly serious offences, but committed different types of minor offences. Just over half had experienced tariff based sentencing, increasing in severity with later offences but still most recidivists were dealt with by measures designed to keep them in their local communities. Serious crimes against property were comparatively rare, the average loss totalling approximately £ 175.00. Injurious offences were predominantly committed by those with few or no previous convictions, though persistent petty offenders were also represented here.

The offender profile for the area suggested that the caseload included many lightly convicted individuals and that offending was infrequent and often undirected and opportunistic rather than organised and premeditated. All three areas sentenced with medium severity, apparently striking a balance between treatment and retribution.

PERCEIVED INTERVENTION FOCUS

Recurrers This small group of offenders was looked at particularly for information about the professional management of

cases. The group comprises those offenders who appeared in both subsamples, that is, January 1984 and July 1985. The total number was 17 of which 13 were males. Nine of these were aged 17-24 years. Two of the four females were aged 17-24 years. Two basic groups were identified, those whose supervision had been infraction-free and those who had been brought back to court.

The infraction-free group included 12 cases. Three had long orders (Probation for three years) and the rest had two-year orders so that in every case the records of 1985 could present a long view of offenders' situations and response to supervision. Three offenders in this group were identified as Recidivists. Only one was a prison through care case (recently paroled after a four and a half year sentence).

The members of this group faced diverse problems, for example, inadequacy and the struggle to mature, debts, drunkenness and particular stigmas like homosexuality and subnormality. If treatment methods were examined it was clear that the connection between plans outlined at the beginning of the case and subsequent actions was sometimes tenuous. In six cases the supervision appeared to have become nominal. In one case there seemed to have been no positive recommendation at the outset for supervision but the record clearly showed that there had been change for the better. In two cases specialist resources, namely Day Centre and Hostel, had been used. In most other cases, including five in which outside agencies were known to have had a special interest, no extra-agency help had been successfully recruited.

The breach of order group consisted of five cases which had been brought back to court. None appeared for failure to abide by conditions, all appeared as the result of new offences. Only one had been on a three year order. Two offenders were identified as Recidivists and all were Probation supervisees. The same range of problems was encountered as in the other group. Failure in the supervision of two offenders seemed rooted in a complete lack of co-operation and a show of negative attitudes. In one case, breakdown may have been associated with changing physical circumstances and transfers between Officers but that particular

female offender had a traumatic previous history of emotional neglect. The other cases concerned young men with disturbed family environments who moved rapidly from one address to another.

It is not obvious how plans for intervention related to the observed action in the cases in this group. However, given the opportunity to review events in the light of further breakdown, the Probation Officer made a definite recommendation for disengagement from the situation in only one case.

Recurrers in the infraction-free group were in many cases not following a clearly defined supervision program. Specialist resources had been used in two cases but Officers had recruited no other extra Agency help. Recurrers whose orders were breached had in all cases committed further offences and shared similar problems with those who had remained out of trouble.

Probation Officers' recommendations In order to understand more clearly how Probation Officers responded to expressed needs a study was made of the written material available at the early stage of supervision, that is, Social Inquiry reports and assessments. The presentation of the offenders' current life situations to the court was an important responsibility for Officers who had the task of making effective recommendations. The following Tables indicate how recommendations appeared to have been handled by rural Probation Officers with regard to offenders within the area. Each of the following four sections relates to degrees of positive commitment concerning recommendations.

Four categories of appropriateness are listed, concerned with the general aims of supervision. Each of these categories is further subdivided with regard to what particular forms of work seemed to have been chosen.

TABLE 4.18 - RECOMMENDATIONS GIVING CLEAR AND SPECIFIC ADVICE

n=201

AIMS	WD	ND	PK	TOTALS
i. To assist with clearly defined treatment aims	26	28	32	86
ii. To assist in crime prevention	42	13	16	71
iii. To assist in prevention from custody	11	10	2	23
iv. Recommendations for supervision inappropriate	6	9	6	21
TOTALS				201

It is to be expected that under this heading, the most confident and professionally sound opinion will be expressed. The majority of recommendations are directed towards assisting with clearly defined needs (i):

- maturing	43
- dealing with specific problems	34
- arranging specialist input	9
(e.g. Psychiatrist)	—
	86
	—

The next group by size focuses on crime prevention (ii). This the most proactive aim, is subdivided into:

- facilitating work with offender in the community	25
- work with families	15
- example and case discussion	31
	—
	71

The third group focuses on preventing custody (iii) and is subdivided into:-

- need for space (e.g. hostel)	4
- directed attitudinal change (e.g. day centre)	6
- allowing reparation, including differed sentences	2
- sanctions implicit in probation orders alone	11
	—
	23

The last is an important group. No proactive recommendation was made in cases where a custodial result seemed inevitable or supervision was thought to be unworkable (iv), subdivided into:-

- nature of offence or previous delinquent history	7
- unwillingness to co-operate	9
- mental instability	2
- no identified need	3
	—
	21

Perceived intervention focus of supervision

If one now compares these groups of recommendations with the perceived intervention focus (PIF) expressed by the supervisory Probation Officer in either the initial assessment or the first summary the following results show:-

<u>In group (i)</u>	practical help	32
	discussion/decision making	24
	monitoring	19
	nominal supervision	11
		—
		86
		—

<u>In group (ii)</u>	practical help	17
	discussion/decision making	15
	monitoring	25
	nominal supervision	14
		—
		71
		—
<u>In group (iii)</u>	practical help	8
	discussion/decision making	4
	monitoring	7
	nominal supervision	4
		—
		23
		—
<u>In group (iv)</u>	practical help	5
	discussion/decision making	1
	monitoring	5
	nominal supervision	10
		—
		21

This suggests that there is a lack of precision about matching offers of help with actual situations, a circumstance which might be brought about either by changing events or by unfulfilled hopes. There are resource and negotiating implications.

Recommendations in reports emphasised the need for Probation Officers to provide assistance with clearly defined needs. Crime prevention work with the offender and his family and the prevention of custody were commonly expressed objectives. Probation was thought to be unworkable in a minority of cases. In general, the offered help is not always precisely relevant to the offenders' actual situations which may change rapidly.

TABLE 4.19 - RECOMMENDATIONS GIVING MIXED ADVICE: n=34

AIMS	WD	ND	PK	TOTALS
i. To assist with clearly defined treatment aims	2	2	2	6
ii. To assist in crime prevention	5	2	4	11
iii. To assist in prevention from custody	6	2	4	12
iv. Recommendations for supervision inappropriate	2	1	2	5
TOTALS	15	7	12	34

The emphasis here seems to be giving the bench more than one option. With two exceptions; advice is less confidently offered and less professionally sound because the choices are not by the nature of things, complementary. There appears to be a degree of uncertainty in which "doubleguessing" seems to be operating.

The majority of recommendations focus on prevention from custody (iii), again using subdivisions as follows:

- need for space (e.g. hostel) 1
- directed attitudinal change 3
 - (e.g. day centre)
- allowing reparation, including differed sentences 0
- sanctions implicit in probation orders 8

12

The next group by size is, assist crime prevention (ii):-

- facilitating work with offenders in community	5
- work with families	4
- care discussion	2

11

The third group is assistance with clearly defined aims (i):-

- maturing	4
- dealing with specific problems	1
- arranging specialist input	1

6

The last group includes, as before, cases where no positive recommendation was thought to be appropriate(iv):-

- nature of offence or previous delinquent history	1
- unwillingness to co-operate	4
- mental instability	0
- no identified need	0
	5

Using the same analysis as before these groupings are related to the PIF of supervisory officers.

Perceived intervention focus of supervision

Group (iii)	practical help	7
	discussion/decision making	2
	monitoring	2
	nominal supervision	1

12

Group (ii)	practical help	0
	discussion/decision making	4
	monitoring	5
	nominal supervision	2
		11
Group (i)	practical help	2
	discussion/decision making	0
	monitoring	2
	nominal supervision	2
		6
Group (iv)	practical help	1
	discussion/decision making	0
	monitoring	1
	nominal supervision	3
		5

This category does not deal exclusively with "the most difficult" cases, i.e. Those about whom judgements are risky. Only 12 of the recidivist offenders come within these groupings and only 2 offenders whose crimes are *prima facie*, very serious or dangerous.

Again the selection of a monitoring role, active or passive diminishes the expectation within the S.I.R. or positive intervention.

Recommendations giving mixed advice often reflect the Probation Officers own uncertainty. The predominant focus is on the prevention of custody, then on crime prevention.

Lastly, recommendations of a vague and weak nature which are summarised in the table overleaf.



TABLE 4.20 - RECOMMENDATIONS OF A VAGUE AND WEAK NATURE

n=38

AIMS	WD	ND	PD	TOTALS
i. To assist with clearly defined treatment aims	3	2	-	5
ii. To assist in crime prevention	1	1	2	4
iii. To assist in prevention of custody	7	4	2	13
iv. Recommendations for supervision inappropriate	6	5	3	16
TOTALS	17	12	7	38

It is assumed that the recommendations reflect unease brought about by offender situations which seriously warrant tough consequences. Such situations unnerve Probation Officers especially if offender co-operation is lacking.

The largest single group is to prevent custody (iii)

- need for space (eg hostel) 1
- directed attitudinal change 5
(eg day centre)
- allowing reparation 0
- sanctions, implicit in probation orders 7

13

The next group by size is: assist with clearly defined aims (i):-

- maturing	4
- dealing with specific problems	1
- arranging specialist input	0
5	

The next group is: to assist in crime prevention (ii):-

- facilitating work in community	0
- work with families	1
- example/case discussion	3
4	

The last grouping, as before, covers cases where a recommendation was inappropriate (iv):-

- nature of offence	1
- unwillingness to co-operate	8
- mental instability	0
- no identified need	7

It also includes those cases where there was no report.

Comparing these groupings with the P.I.F. we arrive at the following:-

Group (i)	practical help	2
	discussion/decision making	3
	monitoring	5
	nominal supervision	3
13		

Group (ii)	practical help	1
	discussion/decision making	1
	monitoring	1
	nominal supervision	2
		5
Group (iii)	practical help	0
	discussion/decision making	0
	monitoring	0
	nominal supervision	2
		4
Group (iv)	practical help	2
	discussion/decision making	0
	monitoring	3
	nominal supervision	11
		16

The overwhelming aim within these groups is to monitor offenders situations and very little practical help or discussion is envisaged.

Vague recommendations generally reflect the Probation Officer's uncertainty about appropriate disposal for more serious persistantly uncooperative offenders. Here, the monitoring function of supervision is seen as predominant. In general, Probation Officers would benefit from defining objectives more precisely.

This analysis, admittedly, like the rest in this chapter, is of a subjective nature, based entirely on the researcher's own estimations and suggests that Probation Officers have not committed themselves to working out the implications of their recommendations and that in the end, reliance is placed on time as either the healer or the opportunity for maturity. It is possible that large untapped sources of energy remain to be utilised to accelerate this looked-for process.

CHAPTER FIVE - THE QUESTIONNAIRE: A POSTAL SURVEY OF RURAL OFFENDERS SITUATIONS.

The decision to prepare and use a postal survey was based on the need for direct responses from the offenders themselves, about whom there was already a wealth of information. The questionnaire was a separate but integral part of the research, designed to take forward in a secondary analysis some of the issues raised in the main survey. The analysis looked at residence, education and employment, finance and mobility. In addition it sought to elicit attitudinal responses with regard to travel choices and social horizons, personal status within the community and feelings about the Police, the Court decisions and Probation Officers.

The Schedule was sent out to all adults in the caseload of July 1985. 63 out of a possible 144 offenders returned their questionnaires. This was a satisfactory response (43%) and there was a particularly good return rate from those aged 17-24 years.

It had been decided originally to split that age group into two. Due to a typological error in the mailed form the age indexes were different to those used in the main survey. In the Questionnaire the age groups were 17-21 years and 22-24 years. The much fewer responses of older offenders were brought together to form one group: 25+ years.

The most important distinction was made, therefore on grounds of age. Two other distinctions affected the presentation of the data. The first was that between offenders born within the study area and others. This allowed the researcher to consider possible differences based on affinity with the area. The second distinction was that between those employed and those out of work, because each group might have different perspectives concerning some of the issues raised.

STABILITY OF RESIDENCE

It was assumed that all respondents would have received their posted schedules at their own addresses or, possibly, at a mail

drop. It was not thought likely that those with no fixed abode would respond. The main survey drew attention to the differences between offenders' homes in terms of condition of fabric, ownership and security of tenure. The questionnaire concentrated on aspects of stability including length of residence at present address, the number of remembered changes of address during a lifetime and whether members of family (Kin) were living locally. The distinction was made between those born within the area and others. All of the 63 respondents provided information.

Length of stay at present address. Those born within the area from the larger group totalling 38, comprising 32 males and 6 females. Half of the total (17 males and 2 females) had been settled for five years or more, 3 of the group, since birth. 2 others had been settled for fifteen years. This was an expected result as it was thought likely that those with neighbourhood ties would be more settled. Among those in the middle group (residence between one year and five) were 12 males and 1 female who had been settled for more than two years, and 3 who had been settled for three years.

TABLE 5.1. LENGTH OF STAY AT PRESENT ADDRESS BY BIRTHPLACE
BY SEX BY AGE n = 60

Born	Length of stay at present address	17.21	22.24	25+	Sub Total	TOTALS
Within area n=38	0-11 mths	6 (1)	1 (1)	1 (1)	8	(3)
	12-59 mths	5 (1)	1	1	7	(1)
	60+ mths	8	6 (1)	3 (1)	17	(2)
	Sub Totals	19 (2)	8 (2)	5 (2)	32 (6)	32 (6)
Outside area n=25	0-11 mths	2	2 (2)	1	5	(2)
	12-59 mths	6 (2)	2	1	9	(2)
	60+ mths	4 (2)	(1)		4	(3)
	Sub Totals	12 (4)	4 (3)	2	18 (7)	18 (7)
TOTALS					50 (13)	

This further supports the view that indigenous respondents were relatively settled. However, 11 offenders (8 males and 3 females) had been resident for the shortest period, up to one year and all but 3 (2 males and 1 female) had been resident for less than six months. 7 out of this group were aged 17-21 years, which suggests lack of stability at a crucial age for offenders with local roots.

While indigenous respondents with neighbourhood ties were well settled, the younger offenders were more inclined to move, possibly in search of work. This further emphasises the need for accessible sub-offices and effective liaison with local community leaders.

Those born outside the area totalled 25 comprising 18 males and 7 females. In this group, the pattern of residence is reversed. 7 offenders (4 males and 3 females) were very settled. In the middle group of 11 (9 males and 2 females) 6 (5 men and 1 female) had been settled over one year but less than two years. these 6 together with the 7 offenders (5 males and 2 females) with the shortest residence, form the majority.

Moves of house during remembered lifetime. Those born within the area are considered first. Of the 19 offenders who were very settled, 8 had moved house more than three times and 11 had moved less than three times, 3 of these of course, had not moved house at all. This group included 6 males aged 17-21 years. In the middle group of 8, 5 had moved house more than three times. Among the group of 11 with the shortest residence, 9 had moved house more than three times. a high proportion of these (6 out of 7 males) were aged 17-21 years.

For those born outside the area the results are unambiguous. One respondent did not answer. Of the 7 in the longest residence group, 6 (4 males and 2 females) had moved more than three times. All in the middle group of 10 (8 males and 2 females) had moved more than three times. In the group of 7 with shortest residence, all had moved more than three times.

Presence of family members (Kin) within ten miles. Because of serious doubts about the validity of some of the answers and the number of non responses it was difficult to analyse the results. For those born within the area only data concerning the presence of kin within one mile was accepted. 24 out of 38 respondents stated that they had kin. 5 out of the 6 females responded in this way. For those born outside the area 8 out of 25 respondents responded positively.

Although the results are uncertain, it seemed possible that most offenders were in reach of kin within the larger distance of ten miles. Allowing for misunderstandings about the question put, 46 out of 63 respondents indicated some kin presence. The number is evenly divided between those born within the area and the others, and is therefore possible that each group, in spite of degrees of instability, could call on some support.

The majority of offenders appear to move house with comparative frequency, but to have local kinship ties which could provide some support.

WORK

Education and preparation for work. The prospects for obtaining work within the study area were generally good. However, the main survey showed that offenders could not offer the skills and experience required by employers. The questionnaire asked respondents to state what their educational preparation had been and those results are summarised in Table 5.2.

TABLE 5.2 EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF RESPONDENTS SEX BY AGE n=62

Level	17-21	22-24	25+	TOTALS
No Qualification	15 (3)	7 (3)	7 (2)	29 (8)
CSE	11 (2)	2		13 (2)
GCE	5 (1)	2 (2)		7 (3)
TOTALS	31 (6)	11 (5)	7 (2)	49 (13)

Most respondents had no academic qualifications. There were however, a good number of qualified respondents, which perhaps reflects the appeal of a mailed survey for articulate offenders. However, note must be taken of the high number in view of the contrary findings in the main survey. At worst it is suggested that they may be fantasising their achievements. At best, they may be revealing hitherto unknown achievements.

Vocational training.

Respondents were asked to state whether they had any vocational training, for example, an apprenticeship or a government course. 15 responded. 8 (5 males and 3 females) had been to Technical College. 3 males had been in the Armed Services. 3 had miscellaneous training including on site building experience and a secretarial course. I had attended an agricultural college. There were no reference to apprenticeships or government training courses. Only 5 of the whole group had no formal educational qualifications.

The usefulness of vocational training as the bridge between school and work cannot easily be measured. It is possible that the opportunity for courses might help to restore a sense of purpose and value. However, it could be argued that such training was an optional extra, improving but not necessarily creating chances of employment for offenders with some qualifications already. Further training is probably needed for the more demanding jobs which many are unable or unwilling to pursue.

Education and Employment.

The value of education as a preparation for work appears to be diminished in the light of responses. Excluded from Table 5.3 are 4 respondents who were economically inactive. A distinction is made between employed and unemployed respondents.

TABLE 5.3 EDUCATION AND WORK STATUS. SEX BY AGE n=59

Level of Education	Work status	17-21	22-24	25+	TOTALS
None	Employed	7 (3)	4 (2)	4 (1)	15 (6)
	Unemployed	8	4 (1)	2 (1)	14 (2)
CSE	Employed	4 (2)	1		5 (2)
	Unemployed	6	1		7
O	Employed	1 (1)	(2)		1 (3)
	Unemployed	3	1		4
	TOTALS	29 (6)	11 (5)	6 (2)	46 (13)

Respondents with no formal educational qualifications were as likely to be employed as those with qualifications. 9 females were in work and the group included 2 who described themselves as housewives. Although it was difficult to measure their economic activity their inclusion here is an acknowledgement that they were occupied gainfully with related status.

In general respondents were not particularly successful in obtaining formal qualifications at school, but some of them appear to have benefitted from vocational training, provided that appropriate employment was available at the end of the course.

Security of Employment

Two further aspects of employment were considered, the time commitment of employed respondents and the duration of their present jobs. Both these aspects were related to the class of work undertaken, for example, unskilled, manual. Table 5.4 indicates whether the time commitment was full or part time.

A fifth of the employed respondents are part time workers. This group includes 5 out of the 11 females, a higher proportion than for the males. This may reflect the auxiliary role of work for females but it may also reflect the fact that the demand for labour is in the unskilled tasks.

TABLE 5.4 TIME COMMITMENT TO WORK BY CLASS OF WORK BY SEX BY AGE
n=31

Class of work	17-21		22-24		25+		TOTALS	
	FT	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT
Unskilled Man	3 (2)	1 (1)	3 (1)		1	1	7 (3)	2 (1)
Skilled Man	4		2				6	
Unskilled Service	2	(2)		(1)			3	(3)
Skilled Service		2 (1)		(1)	(1)	1 (1)		3 (3)
TOTALS	11 (3)	1 (3)	5 (2)	(2)	3 (1)	1	19 (6)	2 (5)

Length of time spent in present job. The next Table examines how long respondents have worked, an important aspect of stability.

TABLE 5.5 DURATION AND CLASS OF WORK BY SEX BY AGE n=31

Class of Work	17-21		22-24		25+		TOTALS	
	<12n	>12n	<12n	>12n	<12n	>12n	<12n	>12n
Unskilled Manual	3 (3)	1	3 (1)				2	6 (4) 3
Skilled Manual	3	1	2				5	1
Unskilled Service	2 (2)						1	2 (3) 1
Skilled Service	2 (1)			(1)	(1)	1	(1)	3 (1) (2)
TOTALS	10 (6)	2	5 (3)	(1)	1	3 (1)	16 (8)	5 (2)

The majority of males, 17 out of 21, have worked for less than 12 months in their present jobs and out of these, 9 have worked for less than six months. None of the females (save for the housewives) have worked for longer than 12 months. 4 of the 9 remaining have worked for less than six months. This seems to suggest instability in employment. It could reflect the casual nature of most work, but a reminder is given in the main survey that other personal factors lead to instability. Frequent changes of job could have led to boredom and dissatisfaction.

Attitudes to Work.

An attempt was made in the questionnaire to elicit feelings concerning work. Respondents were in fact invited to offer up as many responses as they wanted to, but it proved difficult to score the answers. Again not all respondents gave answers.

Two general statements could be made. Employed respondents seemed to reflect positive feelings about work, and this was as true for the 17-21 year olds as for the others. Unemployed respondents appeared to be bored and anxious and actively concerned for work, prepared to make constructive use of waiting time.

Unstable and short term employment would seem characteristic of most respondents. Positive attitudes to work could be reflected in the higher mobility of 17 to 24 year olds and indicates the importance of providing appropriate help in finding employment.

INCOME AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

All respondents were asked questions in the sensitive areas of income and financial management.

As well as looking at the amount of weekly income received by respondents, an attempt was also made to assess the amount of debts incurred. In addition, respondents were asked to indicate how they coped financially. Caution is needed to interpret the results in Table 5.6.

TABLE 5.6 INCOME BY SEX BY AGE n=59

Weekly amount	17-21	22-24	25+	TOTALS
Under £40	14 (2)	2	1 (1)	17 (3)
£40-49	3	2 (2)	1	6 (2)
£50-69	7 (4)	3 (1)	5	15 (5)
£70-89	2	3 (1)		5 (1)
£90 and over	1	2 (1)		3 (2)
TOTALS				46 (13)

The majority of respondents received less than £70 and most appear to subsist on much less. In particular most of those aged 17-21 years live on less than the average weekly wage for unskilled workers. Almost half of these receive less than the rate fixed for Youth Training Schemes (£40). Without any other obvious resources, they would need to be subsidised by others. The extent of their independence to others is shown in their commitments.

Debt. A total of 48 responses were graded according to the following mutually exclusive hierarchy of debts, criminal court debts, civil debts and other debts including loans. The bulk of debt was to the criminal courts (21 responses, 16 of which were aged 17-21 years. Civil debt was admitted in 17 responses. Here the balance swings more to the 22-24 year olds who register 9 responses. Other debt (10) are spread out more proportionately. These were 8 respondents, including 5 of the 17-21 year olds, who claimed to have more than one kind of debt.

This situation would be daunting to capable and self reliant people and it must very discouraging to those who already have doubts about their own adequacy and who face family difficulties. It appears to be common for offenders on low

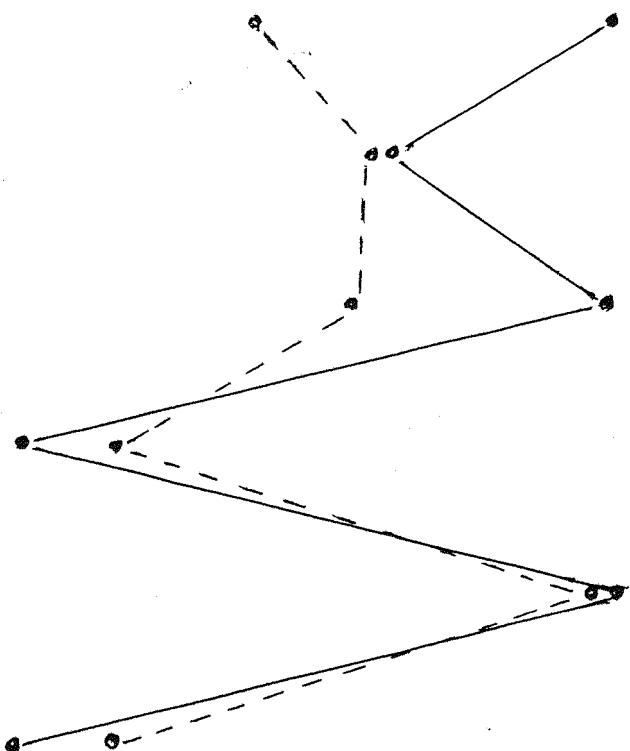
income to run up credit. It is also apparent that fines may be an unrealistic punishment for such offenders.

Coping financially. All respondents were asked to mark on a strength of response scale how strongly they felt about their situation. These results are presented in Table 5.7 which shows some differences between males and females.

TABLE 5.7 COPING FINANCIALLY MALES AND FEMALES

M (Males) F (Females)

Do you feel that you:-



- Manage to keep yourself with difficulty?
- Can afford a few luxuries?
- Have a struggle to make ends meet?
- Save a little?
- Never able to save much?
- Are short of essentials?
eg: heating, food, television?

These responses suggested that life was a struggle. The main difference between the sexes was that females appeared to be less sanguine about keeping closer to household budgets, thus appearing to be more realistic than the males.

A combination of low incomes and increasing debt, both criminal and civil, makes it difficult for respondents to feel positive about their financial situations and suggests that fines might be an inappropriate punishment leading to further problems in some cases.

TRAVEL LIMITS

Respondents were asked a series of questions about the distance of essential services from their locations. Vehicle availability was also investigated.

Travel to work. This question was directed at those who were in employment. The results are summarised in table 5.8

TABLE 5.8 HOW FAR RESPONDENTS TRAVELED TO WORK n=27

Distance	17-21	22-24	25 +	TOTALS
0-4 miles	3 (3)	3 (2)	2	8 (5)
over 4 miles	8 (3)	1	2	11 (3)
TOTALS	12 (6)	4 (2)	4	19 (8)

13 out of 27 respondents travelled up to 4 miles. Of these, 9 appeared to have work within their neighbourhoods and this group included all the females. 14 out of 27 travelled more than four miles, 9 of this group, 7 males and 2 females, went as far as ten miles. 5 respondents, including 1 female, travelled over ten miles to work. This dispersion of labour over distance had implications in a rural area with regard to starting times (early morning) means of transport (not many scheduled bus services) and personal expense. This last consideration was particularly important for young people on low wages.

The Nearest Hospital. All respondents were asked to state the distance.

TABLE 5.9 HOW FAR RESPONDENTS TRAVELED TO HOSPITAL n=59

Distance	17-21	22-24	25+	TOTALS
0 - 4	14 (6)	4 (2)	2 (1)	20 (9)
over 4 miles	16	6 (3)	5	27 (3)
TOTALS	30 (6)	10 (5)	7 (1)	47 (12)

29 respondents, included 13 males and 9 females, stated that their hospital was close by, within one mile. A further 9 (7 males and 2 females) said that it was within 4 miles. The large group, who had to travel further, totalled 30. 18 (17 males and 1 female) travelled up to ten miles and 12 (including 2 females) travelled further still.

These responses reflect the difference between those who live near the District Hospital and the rest, for there were no cottage hospitals in the study area. The hospitals themselves did not offer comprehensive services. for example, maternity cases in Purbeck could be received at Portland, while serious accidents in any part of the area could be directed to one of the larger hospitals just outside the area.

Main Shopping. The third question related to shopping.

TABLE 5.10 HOW FAR RESPONDENTS TRAVELED FOR MAIN SHOPPING n=61

Distance	17-21	22-24	25+	TOTALS
0 - 4 Mile	20 (5)	6 (4)	4 (1)	30 (10)
over 4 miles	12 (1)	4 (1)	3	19 (2)
TOTALS	31 (6)	11 (5)	7 (1)	49 (12)

40 out of 61 respondents did their main shopping within four miles and this group included ten of the twelve females. For these respondents, there might be the choice between supermarket and village store. Neither choice would normally allow for discount buying. Most of those who travel over four miles to shop were males. They might probably be workers able to drop in to shops enroute. In this context, main shopping may have meant different things to different respondents, covering the purchase of weekly provisions to buying cigarettes or cornish pasties.

Recreation. The last question in this series related to the Pub or other entertainment.

TABLE 5.11 HOW FAR RESPONDENTS TRAVELED TO LOCAL ENTERTAINMENT
n=56

Distance	17-21	22-24	25+	TOTALS
0 - 4 miles	17 (5)	12 (5)	7 (1)	36 (11)
over 4 miles	8 (1)			8 (1)
TOTALS	25 (6)	12 (5)	7 (1)	44 (12)

47 out of 56 respondents chose local entertainment. In this group 37, including 10 females, found it on the doorstep, as it were. the small group who travel further, 8 males and 1 female, included only one respondent who went more than ten miles. This suggests the limit of the next settlement from home as a deciding factor.

Vehicle availability. There are several constraints to movement in the study area, for example, the shortage of bus services. In addition, offenders were often at risk of losing their driving licences. It is interesting that few chose to answer a question relating to that. A check list enquiry with regard to vehicle ownership and use is summarised in the next Table. The distinction is drawn between employed and unemployed.

TABLE 5.12 VEHICLE AVAILABILITY SEX BY AGE BY WORK STATUS n=59

Transport	17	21	22	24	25+	71	TOTALS	
	E	U	E	U			E	U
Car	1	1	3 (1)	1	1	2	5 (1)	4
Motor Cycle	3 (1)	2	1	1		1	4 (1)	4
Pedal Cycle	2 (1)	3		(1)	1	1 (1)	3 (2)	4 (1)
Someone else's Vehicle	3 (1)	2		(1)	1 (1)		4 (2)	2 (1)
None	5 (3)	10	3 (2)	2	1	1	9	13 (5)
TOTAL	14 (6)	18	7 (4)	4 (1)	4 (1)	3 (1)	25 (6)	27 (7)

27 respondents have no personal transport or access to someone else's. The group is divided equally between the employed and unemployed. 8 respondents have access to somebody else's transport. This group includes 6 employed respondents some of whom may be obtaining lifts to work. There is an even distribution among those who own either bicycle, motorcycle or car and there is no great difference between the employed and the unemployed. Illegal ownership and use cannot be discounted but these results suggest only limited and perhaps journey specific use of road vehicles. Lack of transport must be a major cause of frustration for offenders, seriously restricting employment opportunities.

Although a majority of respondents travelled less than four miles for shopping and recreation, the limitations of lack of transport became more apparent when hospital treatment was necessary or when employment was sought. The frustrations caused by lack of transport could encourage further crime.

PSYCHOLOGICAL HORIZONS

The next series of questions was designed to find out what aspirations respondents might have, as against their existing limits. All respondents were invited to answer four questions, clearly related to the previous series.

Travel to Work. The results are summarised in the next Table.

TABLE 5.13 HOW FAR WOULD RESPONDENTS TRAVEL TO WORK SEX BY AGE

Distance	17-21	22-24	25+	TOTALS	n=60
0 - 4 miles	4 (3)	2 (3)		6 (6)	
Over 4 miles	26 (3)	9 (2)	7 (1)	42 (6)	
TOTALS	30 (6)	11 (5)	7 (1)	48 (12)	

12 respondents would not seek work other than locally. The much larger group comprises 48. 22 of these, including 17 males and 5 females would travel as far as ten miles. 11 others, 10 males and 1 female would travel up to thirty miles and 15 males would go any distance to work. The question was set in the context of current location and did not imply stays of absence. The results indicate a high level of motivation for seeking work.

Recreation. The respondents were asked to state the limits to which they would go in order to get major public entertainment.

TABLE 5.14 HOW FAR WOULD RESPONDENTS TRAVEL TO SEE A SHOW OR FILM SEX BY AGE

n=49

Distance	17-21	22-24	25+	TOTALS
0 - 4 miles	5 (2)	2 (1)	1 (1)	8 (4)
over 4 miles	18 (4)	6 (4)	5	29 (8)
TOTALS	23 (6)	8 (5)	6 (1)	37 (12)

The majority of respondents, 37 out of 49 were prepared to go beyond their locality. 19 including 16 males and 3 females would go up to ten miles. 187 including 13 males and 5 females would go up to thirty miles. Some would go further. A possible reason for this is that major entertainment centres lie within thirty miles of most offenders within the study area.

Helping a good cause. The next question was asked to see whether respondents could see themselves working for others.

TABLE 5.15 HOW FAR RESPONDENTS WOULD TRAVEL TO HELP IN A GOOD CAUSE BY SEX BY AGE

n=53

Distance	17-21	22-24	25+	TOTALS
0 - 4 miles	4 (1)	2 (1)		6 (2)
over 4 miles	25 (5)	6 (4)	4 (1)	35 (10)
TOTALS	29 (6)	8 (5)	4 (1)	41 (12)

45 out of 53 respondents and 6 females were prepared to travel. 21 including 15 males and 6 females were prepared to travel up to ten miles. 10 respondents including 6 males and 4 females would go as far as thirty miles and 14 males would go any distance. An element of excitement probably attached to the idea of travelling for this purpose. It is clear that respondents did not see helping as a uniquely local activity.

Moving Home. Finally, all respondents were asked how far they would go to obtain a new home, that is, move to an environment well away from their friends and family. The results are summarised in table 5.16 overleaf.

TABLE 5.16 HOW FAR RESPONDENTS WOULD GO TO MOVE TO A NEW HOME
SEX BY AGE

n=52

Distance	17-21	22-24	25+	TOTALS
0 - 4 miles	3	1 (1)	2	6 (1)
over 4 miles	21 (6)	9 (4)	4 (1)	34 (11)
TOTALS	24 (6)	10 (5)	6 (1)	40 (12)

The majority would go beyond the limits of the local neighbourhood and its environs. 22 respondents, including 18 males and 4 females would move up to ten miles. 10, including 3 males and 7 females would go as far as thirty miles and 13 males would go any distance. Females were willing to go to any distance. More were prepared to move up to thirty miles to live than was the case in the other questions in the series.

This section of the survey indicated a willingness by the majority to move beyond the local area in search of a new home or employment or in pursuit of recreation or worthwhile interests. This again indicates the frustration likely to be caused by inadequate transport provision. However note must be taken of the practical constraints of free movement.

STATUS AND SUPPORT IN THE COMMUNITY

Another important aspect of the respondents situation as offenders was their sense of belonging to their local community. Respondents were invited to score on a scale of six points whether they agreed or disagreed with five questions touching on status and power in the community. Table 5,17 summarises the results.

TABLE 5.17 COMMUNITY FEELINGS OF RESPONDENTS

— M (Males) — — F (Females)

Do you feel that you would like to:

- Have a wide circle of friends in your community?
- Have more power to make decisions in your community?
- Be better known in your community?
- Live in a better house?
- Be more respected in your community?

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly				Strongly	
Disagree				Agree	

Females appear to be less concerned about recognition by others in the community. Neither males or females want community power responsibilities. The main emphasis is on material improvement, not surprising in view of offenders financial positions.

Support in the community. A different series of questions sought answers about the way respondents would go for help if they had personal problems.

TABLE 5.18 SUPPORT FOR RESPONDENTS IN TROUBLE

M (Male) — — F (Female) When you have a problem do you feel that you want:-

- Someone with whom you can share?
- A contact to phone if necessary?
- A person close by to help?
- A sympathetic family?
- A kind neighbour who knows you?
- A professional social worker?

1	2	3	4
Strongly Disagree			Strongly Agree

These questions implied the need for contact with others but offered several choices. Males did not appear anxious for a kind neighbour and not anxious to confide outside of the family or close friendship, possibly out of pride. Females seemed anxious to gain as much support as possible from all sources except (as with males) professional social workers. Having a social worker may be seen as a recognition of family inadequacy in some quarters. It is not clear whether respondents had Probation Officers in mind. Females seem to be more willing to talk on the telephone.

This indicates the importance of family ties within the area as a source of support and a possible need for professional social workers to examine ways in which they could be seen as more approachable and less official.

ATTITUDES TO AUTHORITY

Questions were put to respondents inviting opinions about three important aspects of court procedures, namely, policy enquiry and prosecution, the magisterial decision and the intervention of the Probation Officer. The distinction was made between employed and unemployed in the responses.

The Police. It was anticipated that respondents would be honest but cautious in their replies.

TABLE 5.19 ATTITUDES TO THE POLICE SEX BY AGE BY WORK STATUS n=56

Attitude	17 - 21		22 - 24		25+		TOTALS	
	E	U	E	U	E	U	E	U
Very Useful	1	2		3 (1)			1	5 (1)
Helpful	1 (2)	3	1	2	2 (1)		2 (2)	7 (1)
No shown feelings	4 (3)	5	3 (1)	1	1		8 (4)	6
Unhelpful	2 (1)	2			1		3 (1)	2
Very unhelpful	4	5	1 (1)	(1)			6 (1)	5 (1)
TOTALS	12 (6)	17	5 (2)	6 (2)	3 2(1)	20 (8)	25 (3)	

The number claiming that the Police were helpful overall is encouraging. Those with no strong feelings possibly included respondents who were depressed, indifferent or bewildered by the process. No marked differences were noted between employed and

unemployed respondents. Among the youngest age group the last named category is however, well subscribed to - this would be a particularly characteristic response indicating rebellion and a tough attitude.

The Sentence of the Court. Given the uncertain nature of the relationship between offender and courts it was important to find out what they felt. Some had been dealt with swiftly, others had waited up to two months and there was no uniform approach to the court appearance. It was not known how many had pleaded Not Guilty.

TABLE 5.20 FAIRNESS OF RESULT SEX BY AGE BY WORK STATUS n=58

Attitude	17 - 21		22 - 24		25+		TOTALS	
	E	U	E	U	E	U	E	U
Very Fair	1 (4)	4	1	2 (1)	2 (1)	2	4 (5)	5 (1)
Fair	7 (1)	8	1 (1)	2	1	(1)	9 (2)	10 (1)
No strong feelings	1 (1)	2	2	1			3 (1)	3
Unfair	1	2			1		2	2
Very Unfair	2	1	1 (1)	1 (1)			3 (1)	2 (1)
TOTALS	12 (6)	17	5 (2)	6 (2)	4 (1)	2 (1)	21 (9)	25 (3)

These responses are generally encouraging, seeming to support the basic idea of justice. It should be possible to provide encouragement so that they might conform in future to rules which they recognise. In particular, there is no great difference between the employed and the unemployed.

The Probation Officer. Two approaches were made to respondents with regard to their feelings about Probation intervention. The first was a direct question set within the context of the court

appearance and the second was an open ended invitation to comment in general.

TABLE 5.21 ATTITUDE TO PROBATION AT TIME OF COURT APPEARANCE SEX BY AGE BY WORK STATUS

n=58

Attitudes	17	-	21	22	-	24	25+			TOTALS	
	E	U	E	U		E	U	E	U		
Very helpful	4 (3)	6		(2)	4		1 (1)	2	5 (6)	12	
Helpful	3 (3)	6	2		1 (1)	3		8 (3)	7 (1)		
No strong feeling	3		2	2		1 (1)		(1)	5 (1)	3 (1)	
Unhelpful	2		3	1				3		3	
Very Unhelpful											
TOTALS	12 (6)	17	5 (2)	6 (2)	4 (2)	2	21 (10)	25 (2)			

Not surprisingly perhaps, most respondents express positive or non-committal opinions, in particular, many of the helpful comments come from unemployed respondents.

In general the assistance of Probation Officers seem to be valued and appreciated to some extent by a majority of respondents. This seems to reinforce the need for their increased accessibility and local community involvement.

Finally, reference is made here to the comments offered up spontaneously by the respondents when invited to do so. The responses cover four topic areas and each will be dealt with in turn.

a) Criticism of Probation The most direct comment made by a young male was for us "to stop moralising and sending out questionnaires and to leave me alone". The same respondent later added a rider - "you could lend me £150".

This welcome confirmation of the researcher's belief in the right of reply was underlined in other comments, made directly if with more politeness.

The actual relationship between offender and Officer was of concern:-

"There should be more freedom to be treated as a friend" rather than, perhaps, a parent figure as hinted at in the comments:

"You would be more helpful if there was not so much to nag on"

and

"Could help a lot more if were not pushed"

The mechanics of meeting are described:

"All that seems to be when I see the Probation Officer is 'Hello, how are you' ".

This is an isolated comment but other responses help to flush out some of the meaning behind contact:

"I want the Probation Officer to be more understanding, to visit more often and to help me to find a job or a community to work with".

This need for help with specific problems is repeated:-

"You can help by getting me a job like they said they would".

A need made more poignant because of an implied offer. As one respondent protests:

"Nothing has been done".

One needs to emphasise the legitimacy of such requests even if some appear to be unrealistic:

"They could help with housing my girl friend and myself so that I could have a proper role in life."

Part of the misunderstanding may well be the difficulty offenders' have in appreciating perspective with regard to their situations:-

"They could look at the situation from your side more than they do at present"

and again:-

(The Probation Officer) "should be able to get on with teenagers better".

The search for support in a comprehending and sympathetic person is expressed in:-

"Help me to get back on my feet and help me to sort out my life".

The dilemma facing offenders is that they do not possess the wisdom or experience to be able to separate out the source of help from the projected image of the helper. A final quotation eloquently poses the problem:-

"If you have problems at home you should be helped especially if you do not get on with parents. I think all parents and their kids get on better if the youngsters leave home. I know I would get on much better with my mother if I lived away. It is problems like this that cause youngsters to try and reach out to someone

and say, look at me, won't anybody show me love. Somebody love me. I think that is what Probation Officers should be doing instead of asking what you spend your money on and try and budget your money."

The second topic is closely related; it allows some criticism but masks it in the politest language and it refers to the relationship between offender and Officer.

b) Deference An unconditional mark of approval is given in:

"She has been very helpful". and:

"They are doing O.K.".

The second comment sounds almost like a preemptive strike which forecloses on any dialogue. A more measured response was:

"I do not know if they can be more helpful. They have been very helpful already"

Some detail as to how this is done comes in the following:

"I have had a lot of help and advice. They could not have been more helpful". and:-

"I have no other comments to make. The Probation Officer helps me in any way that she can".

Little guidance flows from these comments as to how helpful the Probation Service really is but the following responses take us some of the way:-

"I think you do a very good job and I thank you for what you have done for me in the past. But now I am working and coping quite well." and:-

"In my case the problems I had are now over and the Probation Service has done its job already."

These may be anodyne statements made to impress or they may reflect sincere feelings for support given. It is difficult to read into any comments the strength of an offender's desire to be involved with another in his personal affairs because of the need to be independent:-

"All I want is to be left alone in the community." and:-

"The right to sort it out whatever it entails."

To conclude this section, a proof of caring is shown in the following:-

"They have been lovely to me. My marriage is over now. It was very bad. They helped me in that, now I am happy and starting again."

The third topic is the very practical one embracing:-

c) Accommodation, employment and transport The urgency of securing a home is expressed in:-

"I should not be here, I should only have stayed with relatives until the New Year."

The pain of unsatisfactory living space is voiced in:-

"I could do with a house instead of this one-bedroomed doghouse" and:-

"I need to be found a house or a flat, so that I can be 100% independent".

Other comments make suggestions about what ought to be done:-

"There should be hostels and more building for single people"

A specific request is put to the Probation Service:

"To help to get a hostel on the go. Have power to help the homeless a bit more."

The good news is that in this matter at least there has been local involvement of Probation Staff in housing association projects.

"Find me a job!" Another recognises -

"Trying to find some jobs is not easy but you are someone to trust"

Another practical suggestion is:-

"Financial help for the unemployed",

The sense of sharing in an overwhelming and burdensome problem is expressed in:-

"There must be somewhere for the unemployed to go during the day" and:-

"A place where unemployed boys could meet to discuss their problems with older people to help them find work".

Comments about transport cover two matters:-

"More buses!" and

"Closeness to employment is important".

The other matter refers back to relations with Probation Officers:-

"I cannot get to see him enough". and:-

"Being able to see the Probation Officer easier"

reflect practical difficulties with regard to distance but the final comment, although placed within a context of transport problems, clearly points to a more general issue:-

"I would like to be able to get to see my Probation

Officer on a more regular basis".

The last topic concerns the social needs of respondents.

d) Leisure The brief statement:

"At H.....C..... there is nothing to do"

expresses the anguish of living in a rural area. Not surprisingly, another respondent requests:-

"More things for young people to do".

This thought is expanded in another comment:

"Somewhere to go other than the pub",

again:-

"We need somewhere not the pub. Also we are a seaside resort - act like one not a retirement town".

The emphasis on the needs of young people is repeated in:-

"Could be more entertainment for young people. More free or cheap entertainment for 21s and teenagers."

Another respondent adds:-

"More discos."

These comments, almost exclusively from the younger respondents, reflect the general preoccupations of the young rural community as reported for example in a national survey of rural services for youth (Akehurst 1983) and in a local study in West Dorset (Kennedy 1984).

The value of the questionnaire may be judged simply on the basis that it afforded an unprecedented opportunity to hear the collective voice of rural offenders. In this sense, the client has spoken. The responses come from a focussed group who have expressed real needs of a practical sort in a forthright manner. Above all the respondents challenge both the right of the Probation officer to intervene and the style of that intervention.

The results may leave officers feeling less comfortable in the context of their clients situations (Shaw 1974 and Jordan 1975).

Respondents to the Questionnaire on the whole showed considerable faith in the ability of the Probation Officer to deal with their problems. Criticism stressed the need for friendly support, understanding and even love, rather than for exhortation or advice. Practical help and some evidence of effort was demanded with regard to the solving of housing, employment and financial problems as well as emotional conflicts. Considerable gratitude was expressed by several offenders for the help they had received in resolving their difficulties and becoming independent, though this was expressed in general terms. Specific help was urgently needed in finding accommodation, securing jobs, providing transport and using time constructively when unemployed. For some the Probation Officer was not sufficiently accessible. Many young respondents longed for a more exciting social life and entertainment not readily available in a rural area.

This research has contributed to an external view of the Agency's work in the following ways. Firstly, by profiling the personal situations of offenders, secondly, by examining their criminal sophistication and seriousness of offending: and thirdly, with reference to the perceived intervention focus, by providing some evidence as to how offender needs have been responded to. I have sought to show not only that a great deal of the work required should be attempted within local communities, but also that the Probation Officer must alter his role to achieve greater effectiveness.

The obvious target group, as has been proved, is the young single, adult male who exemplifies in an unambiguous way the shared problems facing all offenders, who bear a weight of disadvantage in a relatively benign environment. The main survey showed that offenders have specific problems with regard to housing and homelessness, poor employment opportunities and instability at work, illhealth and trauma and the quality of family relationships. Their own poor management is complemented by a surprising lack of organised care provided by professionals and others, which could leave offenders 'wandering loose' without proper management and at risk. The danger is that the community's hold on offenders is slackened and that attitudes towards them harden.

In the main, offenders have not committed serious crimes. The investigation into cost to victims and the gravity of offences separated out groups of offenders whose needs require different strategies. The results of the analysis of perceived intervention strategies suggest that Probation Officers have not always been aware of the consequences attendant upon recommendations and that often they are exposed as isolated figures. The problem therefore is not so much that of offender uniqueness or remoteness, but rather of the cultural isolation of Officers unable to make best use of their commitment and skills. As offender populations might change as the result of increased mobility and in migration, so there might be the need to face up to social control issues which will demand greater understanding by Officers of both offender

environments and support services.

The Questionnaire provided a direct vehicle for offenders' situations to be made known and the responses can help Officers to understand better their enabling roles. The energy stored in the routines of offenders can be exploited constructively as they themselves want, but only if Officers can work flexibly and harness the support which family and community can provide. A careful eye needs to be kept on how local resources are distributed. There must be a question mark over well intentioned service provision which, as the responses indicated, offers those with some educational qualifications the further benefit of vocational training at the expense of the unqualified. The importance of providing measured appropriate help is further illustrated in the way in which the quagmire of debt is ignored as more and more fines are imposed.

Respondents show a sense of community both in their commitment to family and in their choice of limited distance parameters for work and leisure and this seems to indicate further the value of making services physically accessible. There does seem to be some ambiguity over identity in the negative responses about Social Workers because there are indications that Probation Officers are seen to be different. This vision of the Probation Officer needs to be exploited and useful pointers about perceived needs may help to answer some of the unsolved problems about unsatisfactory service interventions.

The Probation Officer is thought by offenders to be in a static state, the 'other side of the tracks'. There is however a sense that Officers are power brokers, able to work for offenders in ways which go beyond existing briefs. Above all offenders want their Probation Officers to be approachable and friendly. This cannot mean that they are always available but there are implications here for new working practices which can now be examined.

The Probation Officer is not required to live in his working area. At first sight this seems to deal a blow against effective interventions. It has, however, no great significance if the

thrust of intervention is seen as originating from an external source. The Agency offers unconditional help (the obligatory principle) and the provision of adequate support services (the reality principle), in addition to a concern with the preservation of the civil rights of offenders (what might be called the justice principle). All this implies rehabilitative work. No matter how long the sentence, the offender is at some time to be restored to his community. Probation Officers bear the statutory obligation to engage with other helping agencies. Together these demands invoke new qualities; the openness of the transactions between the worker, Agency and offender is different in quality to the attitude normally associated with the traditional approach and the bureaucratic setting. Despite living outside the area, the work is localised because of the very definite aims of intervention. The new kind of authority demanded implies a hierarchy of involvement of all who have dealings with the offender. The re-presentation of role does not necessitate any major organisational change.

General duties social work, with specialist back-up, is already well established (Butrym 1976 p 75) and in rural areas a strong case has been made out for expanding the function of the worker to include social work and community work (Briscoe 1977 p 183). In rural areas one is faced with the logistics of small teams and the workings of certain practices to ensure that Probation officers can effectively manage their work load (Fielding 1984 p 134). An awareness of the proper interest of the worker in community will not lead overnight to radical organisational changes. Even at local level, a mix of specialist and generalist interest is possible, to be developed in an evolutionary way. The dilemma in which the Barclay Working Party found itself was the apparently opposing directions taken by increasing specialisation and greater involvement in community. Any local solution of that dilemma should concentrate on the potential of partnership, and in this connection the use of special knowledge and skills should be connected structurally with local teams. Care should be taken that local teams should not concede readily to an "output" mode of accountability in which direction and dynamic come from outside the patch (Currie and Parrott 1980). Relations with colleagues in their new situations centre on what

constitutes the local team and an analysis of role (Hey 1979 pp 29-31). The demands made on team members that they should recognise that acting as intermediaries between offenders and society requires an open-mindedness and flexibility of provision, are not realisable within the traditional structure. Team work offers a change for Officers - however widely separated they are from each other - to engage in a joint approach, which emphasises collectivity rather than individuality in terms of support and consultation (Dixon 1980). The pivotal role of the Senior Probation Officer is that of stimulator, allowing full expression to local developments, even to the extent of relinquishing part of the now fashionable administrative role, in order to lead by example. (Millard 1976). Whatever the distribution of work among colleagues, it is essential that those who carry out specialist tasks should be in touch with local area teams. The very nature of the work, its immediacy and its situational contexts, mean that special inputs need to be available. It is for this reason that a line of communication between local area office and central resource (if need be) must have the greatest priority.

What the Agency is required to do constitutes its institutional imperatives and these create tensions between fieldwork and headquarters, creating fertile ground for imaginative but conflictful ways of confronting problems. In this sense, there seems to be little difference between urban and rural settings. As the Service moves from direct and individual help and supervision to community based alternatives, so those imperatives need re-stating. What needs to be avoided is any polarisation between the parts of the Agency. Even in a tightly knit organisation, fragmentation in relation to function takes place and boundaries are erected between Officers performing different tasks. In a new community orientated Service, the Probation Officer is the servant of the client - the "under labourer", and the Officer's need is for an appropriate boundary setting allowing for the exercise of personal authority without misunderstanding (Matza 1974). A highly centralised organisation model has its limitations. A displacement of authority to areas does not necessarily involve a ship manned by a captainless crew. It does, however, emphasise the primary social care function of the Agency and the need for more autonomy which is based on

certain important considerations, namely accountability, accessibility and availability (Bennett and Laxton 1987).

Another important issue concerns accountability and the necessity of taking punitive action in cases of further breakdown. This is relatively unexplored territory; certainly, there is as yet no local consensus about what constitutes effective practice as far as Liaison Committees are concerned. All that can be said is that the Dorset Probation Service has already pioneered supervision via volunteers but that scheme required proper accountability between volunteer and Probation Officer. When aims of intervention and procedures for correct reporting of events are laid down, it seems possible to ensure that any work performed in the community on behalf of a Probation Officer will be properly controlled and evaluated. There is no question of the Probation Officer foregoing the duty to take effective remedial action.

An issue connected with the above is that of delegation. Social care in the community is for the most part in the hands of other than professional workers (Hart 1986 pp 72-83). Delegation of work is not care on the cheap, neither is it non-accountable, particularly because of the need for clients' rights to be protected (Barr 1971 pp 144-152). The range of duties that volunteers undertake has been described in the literature (Davis 1977 pp 39-46). Theirs are chosen interventions, which are fully in accord with the notion of social maintenance. Their success or failure can be determined by the suitability of tasks available, and the supervision extended towards them. They do not provide an unlimited resource and have the right to opt out. Volunteers represent an important extension of the formal intervention strategies of Probation Officers. In particular, they could be used more freely in the development of open-ended social networks.

Attempts have been made to localise the service of the Probation Departments to involve offenders and community members as partners and patrons. These moves to a more proactive stance highlight the practicality of combining social work and community work strategies, integrating the worker into community without

denying him his especial role. That role, however, can be multifarious embracing direct action, negotiation and specialist advice (Lacey 1983). Outposted workers are not likely to be more concerned with radical, political gestures. As gatekeepers to limited resources they are concerned more with social maintenance (Davis 1975) and this accords well with the belief that the Probation Officer is primarily a reactive rather than a proactive agent.

Some crucial decisions must be shared with Headquarters and these include cases at risk. Most of the situations allow for reasonable discussion and exchange of ideas within the Agency. However, as local people develop their interest in rehabilitation their enthusiasm will generate ideas to Headquarters which might produce reasonable discomfort at point of negotiation. A solution would be the strengthening of local community groups, in particular, Probation Liaison Committees, as a way of ensuring full accountability whilst allowing for local enterprise.

Probation Officers, like Social Services Officers, are agents of last resort, apparently sharing the unpredictability of interventionist work without the procedural guidelines of other universal providers. One of the difficulties in rural work is the fact that the personal social service agencies do not operate similar organisational models. There is sometimes a lack of appreciation of the organisational parameters in which other workers operate, for example, the extent to which information can be freely exchanged.

Such matters as these need to be addressed in the interests of ethical good practice (Fishwick 1988 pp 144-145). Outposted workers at some distance from their Headquarters sometimes see that they have more in common with other workers than is the case. This natural tendency has to be taken into account. Lastly, it is possible for each Agency to operate its own information gathering techniques, the methodology of which is appropriate but enables different conclusions to be read from the same data. This results in perceptual aberrations on what might be regarded as a common task involving agencies and consumer (Williams et al 1988 pp 164 f).

Relations with clients are crucially important. In rural areas, the under-privileged are uniquely marked. Their poverty is contrasted with a relative affluence of an expanding population. The emphasis on traditional ways of establishing need are no longer appropriate (Edwards 1975). However limited we may be by statute, Probation Officers in country areas must always be on the look-out for new manifestations of need. In this sense, clients are not the best predictors of need (Rose et al 1978 pp 21-22). The client expectation that something must be done once a problem is identified must be taken seriously by agency workers, where directness of service and approach outweighs the disadvantages to both client and worker of being outsiders. What clients appreciate most is the fact that their problems can be faced honestly with the prospect of some resolution, and for that they are prepared to give up some of their independence (Glastonbury 1979 p 79).

It is clear that the Probation Officer's traditional knowledge does not add up to a first order verifiable information base about neighbourhood, culture and stimuli to action.

Acquiring data is a special operation as locations within even small areas vary. Nevertheless, matrices of effects can be created based on all the variables giving rise to the possibility of delinquent labelling. These include the opinions of health workers, teachers, youth club leaders, careers officers, social workers, police and other professionals working in the voluntary organisations; patterns of socio/economic change in small areas, for example youth culture; media coverage of community issues, and lastly, self reports of offenders. The emphasis throughout is on how others are likely to perceive the same event (West and Farrington 1973).

This preliminary work is not preventive. It has no dynamic force; it merely prepares the ground necessary for an effective, reactive intervention, reflecting the post plea re-socialising purpose of Probation work.

The essential first step is to identify the earliest community stigmatisation. This single event frame has, in a large number of cases, led to Court appearance. In other cases, no work has

been done on developing the moral career of offenders from that first event. The traumatic events surrounding first delinquent labelling need to be fully and accurately assessed.

The next step should be the identification of those key agents who interviewed at onset, for example health visitors and youth workers, and the assessment of the value of the delinquent label in their eyes (West 1982 p 98). As most offenders in rural areas act out their criminal careers locally, such as investigation is not an impossible task.

This should be followed by the identification of current interveners, for example police, school, clinic, neighbours, in order to show how extensive is the offenders circle of social disapproval. Then all relevant information about the current offences should be obtained and an assessment of the offender's own interpretation of the events made. Finally, the individuality of the offender should be stressed because this allows the possibility of help at different levels and for the correct determination of the causation of his present delinquency, cultural or intra-psychic.

Probation Officers do not have control over the labelling process not, for that matter, the disposals. Offenders come to attention direct from the community or from institutions. What is important is not their motivation for change, which should not be seen as a necessary pre-requisite for intervention (Fisher 1978 p 144), but a frank appraisal of the risk they carry to themselves and others without some kind of support. Proper assessment is, therefore, necessary. Two important considerations need to be borne in mind. The first is that in rural areas there is little sub-group crime, and secondly that the distance between offenders is often very great.

There is a need for a formal assessment procedure, to assist in the aim of re-integration rather than further labelling, to determine the feasibility of management of offenders within the community, and to allocate resources in a realistic way. There are three essential components within the process. The first is the spatial component; there is no necessity for a self-contained

and geographically located assessment centre which may exaggerate the importance of "institutional" solutions. It is important to separate off the special intentions of Probation intervention from the means whereby those intentions can be realised. Adopting a relatively unbounded spatial view of the process allows not only for planned contacts with offenders and others to be made sensibly with regard to offenders' local situations, but also for the development of a professional network. Examples here include sharing interview space with other workers.

The use of central resources needs to be reviewed. The crucial first step is the proper assessment of need to which reference has been made earlier. A clear distinction must be made between local resources of any kind relevant to the offender's needs and those which must be provided from outside. The highly selective but unconditional provision of material resource presents logistic problems which should not be shirked. As a result of local investigation, many untapped resources can be found without recourse to central provision. Simple matters like discovering alternative venues; the presence in the neighbourhood of a skilled person, and even the checking of bus timetables, can facilitate the meeting of need. In addition, the Agency should consider buying in to other services' resources. In this way, the worker ensures that the stigmatisation of the offender is limited.

Second, the temporal component. It is, of course, necessary to pick up offenders as soon as possible, but the assessment process goes beyond the date of hearing. It should provide the time for a careful scrutiny of the offenders' situation and opportunities, and for linking the SIR with the first phase of supervision to cover what may be called the "crisis" period.

Third, the ideational component. The assessment process should stretch the imagination of both worker and offender, and not be seen just as an opportunity to test for the suitability of established programmes. Assessment provides the opportunity to test the tolerance levels of the offender's local community, and it is therefore possible to grade his offence along a continuum which in most cases stops short of exclusion from his community.

Whether or not the offender needs short term or long term work, the Probation Officer's role is that of mentor, able to direct support where needed and in the right amount, bearing in mind the cost/need equation. All work is related primarily to the aim of management within the community. Special importance must therefore be given to risk to the social order, illustrated best in the tensions created by "dangerous" offenders, and by "persistent" offenders.

Dangerousness, that is "threat to life" is especially important. Public over-reaction to violent incidents often generates uncertainties in workers' minds with regard to their agency accountability in which the emphasis is often on procedural correctness (Dale 1986 p 41).

Evidence suggests that each Agency involved has its own practice guidelines and that workers energies are spent in ensuring that procedures are kept. This has the effect of reducing the opportunities for sharing with others the concerns arising from cases. Partly, too, public reaction is based on stereotyping; again the research suggests "dangerous" offenders are not beyond the help that careful and considerate support can offer in community. Persistent offenders are usually identified by chronic but not premeditated delinquent acts which have high irritation value. Here, the reality of exclusion from community is perhaps greater because of the apparent senselessness of the action. Many persistent offenders have been exposed to the attentions of helping agents over long periods of time; again, part of the workers' response is based on that knowledge.

There is a need to arrange withdrawal and return to the community for that small number of offenders who require exclusion. There is, however, an already existing scale of exclusion which needs to be re-formulated. Day Centres, Hostels provided by the Probation Service, and Prisons have specific purposes and should be used to provide asylum or accelerated learning opportunities in order quickly to restore offenders to community. They should not be used for providing resources which are already available such as coffee clubs, drop-in centres, activities which take place in village halls, all of which can be used to alleviate

loneliness and provide opportunities for social contact.

To summarise, the Probation Officer must collect data of a different kind in order to inform him sufficiently for the new task of enabler. The importance of knowing when the first labelling took place is stressed, as is the current assessment process. Exclusion from community is a real risk to offenders in certain groups, if the community cannot learn to tolerate and manage their behaviour.

CHAPTER SEVEN - SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. The following statements summarise the main findings of the research.

1. Rural Probation Officers have consistent workload levels.
2. The majority of offenders live in small towns or larger villages and not in small geographically remote settlements.
3. Rural offenders suffer considerably from handicaps and chronic problems and are often unemployed. In short, they are difficult to distinguish from offenders in urban areas.
4. There are no specifically rural crimes.
5. On a scale of social disapproval, rural offenders occupy the middle ground. The bulk of crime is of low seriousness. They are the target group for Probation intervention.
6. Differences between rural and urban offenders lie more in different types of community. Rural offenders do run the grave risk of exclusion from community but they are vulnerable because of their high profile and the low level of public understanding and sympathy for their situations.
7. Insufficient attention has been given by Probation Officers to the nature of the communities in which offenders live.
8. Intervention strategies appear to ignore the possibility that other agencies or individuals can assist helpfully with the management of cases. In some instances, supervision has amounted to no more than oversight without much work being done towards change.

B. Recommendations with regard to the Probation task in rural areas concentrate largely on styles of intervention, rather than the logistics of service delivery.

- 1.i No major organisational change is required. The conversion to patch based specialisms, dictated by large area size and by small offender populations, seems to be entirely appropriate.
- ii Flexible use of staff resources is possible if Officers understand that their primary task assignments, e.g. court team work, are to be supplemented by others, e.g. occasional supervision. It seems important that this notion of a hierarchy of task should be accepted, rather than the notion of one task only.
- iii It is important that rural officers should discuss with urban officers the common ground of their work with similar offenders. Such dialogue would also raise sensitivity about unusually difficult situations.

- 2.i A major task for empowered local teams is the gathering of information about community, to inform and persuade.
- ii The possibility of managing a collective caseload should be considered.
- iii The role of enabler should be encouraged.
- iv It is urgently necessary for community resources to be discovered and used. Probation Officers will need to engage with other professionals concerning special problems, with community leaders with regard to local issues and with those who can manage formal or informal networks of care.

- 3.i Decentralisation in decision making is seen as the best way of ensuring standards and encouraging local community participation. The reversal to area based ACPOs is welcomed.
- ii The geographical location of offenders in larger settlements has implications for service provision. It is recommended that agency presence should be maintained at strategic places for two reasons. Firstly, because of the limiting

horizons of offenders, who for good social and economic reasons should not be expected to travel to one central place. Secondly, to meet the legitimate expectations of local community leaders, e.g. councillors, magistrates, police and other agency workers that the Probation Service is accessible.

- iii The move towards multi-use of premises rented by the Service is to be encouraged as is the possibility of sharing other space with existing tenants, e.g. area health clinics, Social Services Departments offices, church halls and activity centres.
- iv Sub offices should not be seen to replicate the administrative operations of a central office, but should be seen as sites for negotiation and action on behalf of offenders. They do not need to be staffed full time and need not be used exclusively as reception points for clients.

4.i Resources should be confidently and ambitiously made available for those few clients identified as at risk of exclusion from community. However, especial care needs to be exercised with regard to the selection and monitoring of offenders in hostels and at day centres. Withdrawal from community should be seen as the last resort.

- ii A thorough assessment of the need to exclude should be made. In general, the need for asylum will lead to residential placement. The need for social and life skills should receive expert help not available locally. Exclusion (living away or attending special central facilities) should not be seen as a punitive gesture.

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This completed a movement towards freeing the Probation Officer to make explicit recommendations, a movement begun a decade ago (1963) and traced through HOC 25/71 and 59/71. The latter stated that a report should normally be based on enquiries into the character, personality, social and domestic background of the accused, his record at any educational training or residential establishment (excluding Prison Department establishments). His employment prospects and where appropriate his attitude and habits as known to his most recent employer.

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CPO (Dorset) Internal Report on Inspection of Work 1984, page 2, predicted this outcome which was further expanded in the "Declaration of Intent" of the Dorset Probation Service. This expressed three values; regulation, reparation and reconciliation, all of which had to be borne in mind when supervising offenders in the community (Lacey M R).

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CHANGE IN THE PROBATION SERVICE - A HISTORICAL NOTE

The origin of this study lay in the process of change in the Probation Service within the period 1965-1985. These years coincidentally mark my length of service in Dorset. Enforced preoccupation with change within a service traditionally rooted in casework and individuality led to redefinitions of purpose and practice. These meant that officers had to adapt sometimes reluctantly to a new working environment. It is necessary to look at the broad features of change to understand the revised aims of the Service and some of the issues which directly affected the work. The argument in this paper and the next will be that as a result of serious misunderstanding of the process of change, opportunities have been lost to provide an effective local service to clients.

Change can be summarised under four main heads; changes in the law; changes induced by political reality; changes in the methods of handling clients and change in the size of the Service.

Firstly, change in the law. The Probation Service is a statutory organisation deriving its authority from law. The ACTO report renamed the Service the Probation and Aftercare Service and recommended the extension of links with the Prison Service with the conscious aim of "rehabilitating each inmate", creating the possibility for more community involvement with clients through accredited volunteers and the setting up of a probation central advisory council (The Organisation of After Care. The report of the Advisory Council, HMSO 1983). The effect was to direct the attention of the Service even more towards those sentenced to institutional punishment and their subsequent rehabilitation. Probation Officers were sent into prisons in 1965 to work on secondment. The nature of caseloads was affected because more attention was focused on adult offenders - particularly those with longer criminal records, in contrast to young, lightly convicted offenders.

The report of the Parliamentary Expenditure Committee on the Probation Service made a particular recommendation concerning the setting up of hostels, drawing attention to the unjustifiable waste of prison resources on other than seriously anti-social offenders. (The Expenditure Committee Report, HMSO 1971)

The provisions of the 1967 Criminal Justice Act laid down clear guidelines about increased involvement of the Probation Service with parolees. The Powers of the Criminal Courts Act 1973 confirmed the establishment of experimental projects giving additional tasks and responsibilities to Probation Officers, including Community Service, Day Training Centres, bail hostels, probation hostels and homes for older offenders, overnight stay facilities for families of prisoners and suspended sentences with supervision (See in particular chapter 62 sections 47-50). In short, a transfer of interest and resources took place to other than traditional probationers. In addition, the Younger report further emphasised the intractable nature of some work with young adult offenders and the need for specialist handling and the use of resources within a focused area. (The Advisory Committee Report on the Treatment of Young Offenders, HMSO 1974)

Secondly there were changes concerned with political reality. Probation Officers, as well as being seen to provide an effective service to the domestic and divorce court, were also responsible for many other statutory and discretionary duties (Jarvis 1984). The increased importance and range of criminal work further enhanced their role. This situation gave rise to confident expectations about the Service's purpose and potency, expressed clearly in the views of the Chief Probation Officers' conference. There was a feeling that change could be managed to the advantage of the Service. There was, for example, much debate as to whether the Service should identify only with a single primary task in contrast to the Social Services 'umbrella' provision of personal social service, on the grounds that a developing small service needed any work to which it could lay claim in order to establish itself in competition with other services who might otherwise poach that work (Jarvis 1975 pp 1-2). However, this expansionist confidence had still to be set within a context of specialism and increasing financial constraint (Head 1975 p 49).

Money was available but could only be given to agencies which proved their worth. Proper management of available resources became necessary not only as a strategic implementation of clear objectives but also as a proof of efficiency. To think otherwise was to invite the possibility of attempting to be a generalist agency without adequate provision. The future prosperity of the Service was seen to depend solely on the application of a rational plan, based on the promise that the Service was ready, willing and best equipped to assist in the social control of offenders. That recognition included the acceptance of probation itself as a valuable resource. (The Probation and After Caer Service in England & Wales, HMSO 1973 pp27-28).

Thirdly we come to changes in the methods used for handling clients. The emphasis when selecting clients for Probation was now on actuarial risk. The basis for the officer's work was the retention of intuitive and acquired skills to "advise, assist and befriend", so that individual offenders could overcome their problems. The new emphasis on links with the community led to an expectation that the role as facilitator would bring the Probation Officer into contact with other helping services, and that the Service could work intelligently and co-operatively with others in pursuit of clear aims related to non custodial alternatives. (The Sentence of The Court, 3rd edition, HMSO 1978 pp17).

Fourthly the organisation of the Service changed to meet the increasing demands of management. There was a uniform increase across the country in staffing, including trained and untrained staff and a concentration of resources in specialist areas like Divorce Court work, hostels, day centres and prisons. The increase was justified by statistics which indicated a rise in offending and a need to direct more offenders from custody. (Worthington 1979 pp 1-3)

The period 1965-85 was an age of expansion during which time the Probation Service was seen as an important part of the penal system. The close connection between the realities of political life, the governmental demand for effective use of limited resources and the scope for disagreement about priorities,

produced tension illustrated in the debate about valid interventions. (Lloyd 1977 pp 2 ff) All styles of worker from traditional befrienders, to radical politically motivated activist, have been involved and methods of intervention have proliferated. As the general public had become alarmed by the rise in crime, the Service had come under increasing pressures to explain its' practice. (Shaw 1979 pp100-101) It had also been criticised by its employers for what they saw as its sometimes perverse opinions, e.g., as observed tendency to assume quasi judicial powers by attempting to tell magistrates what to do. (Harris 1980).

The concern over social control has actually led to doubts engendered by a decline in probation numbers (Haxby 1978) and misapplication of traditional techniques to some social work problems have led to a changed view of the purpose and impact of probation. (Hicks 1976 pp 6-7) The value of intervention is intrinsic to the situational context of the offender. (Jordan 1976 pp 167-169) Each situation has to be assessed on its merits and a decision has to be made as to the most appropriate method open to the Probation Officer. This notion can move the work of the Probation Officer away to the fringe of personal involvement if the offender's situation requires no more than a nudge in the right direction or the summoning up of community resources. It has come as quite a shock to many Probation Officers to feel that they are not at the centre of things. Nevertheless what the Probation Officers do can always be described as social work intervention, although they may be seen only as facilitators or even mentors. (Lacey 1983 p 123) The outright preference for non treatment models or control models of intervention diminishes the importance of more traditional intervention models, which perhaps lack specific statements of intent. (McWilliams 1980 p 2)

The doubts and anxieties within the Service extended in two other directions; overall strategy and links with the community. Legislation for non-custodial alternatives has been introduced by both major political parties and there has been large funding of the Probation Service. However this has been added to a much lower base line investment than in the other comparable cases of prison or police. (Haxby 1978) Because of this, probation has

been continuously at a disadvantage, lacking the major funding required if a complete strategy change was to be effective. Again, Community Service as a high profile alternative to imprisonment has been supported generously at a time when other areas of probation were being neglected. (NAPO 1979 p 2) Because of its public appeal it was funded at the expense of other parts of the service. The possibility of areas of work competing for funds suggests an overall lack of strategy; all the more remarkable when seen in the context of the Home Office Statement Of National Objectives for the Probation Service, which placed probation and community service together as major facilities. The argument that the centrality of probation is crucial to the development of a strategy for penal reform, has still not commanded the confidence of government and public. The Home Office policy paper seems to take a pragmatic view of probation as a further method of control.

The Probation Officer has been encouraged to develop links with the community. He belongs to a small service and the proliferation of community based schemes now in operation by the Service again raise questions about role and function, issues which the service was being forced to consider in the light of the Home Office Statement of Objectives. The effectiveness of the Probation Officer in the community depends very largely on the establishment of priorities based on local knowledge and the particular characteristics of local working areas.

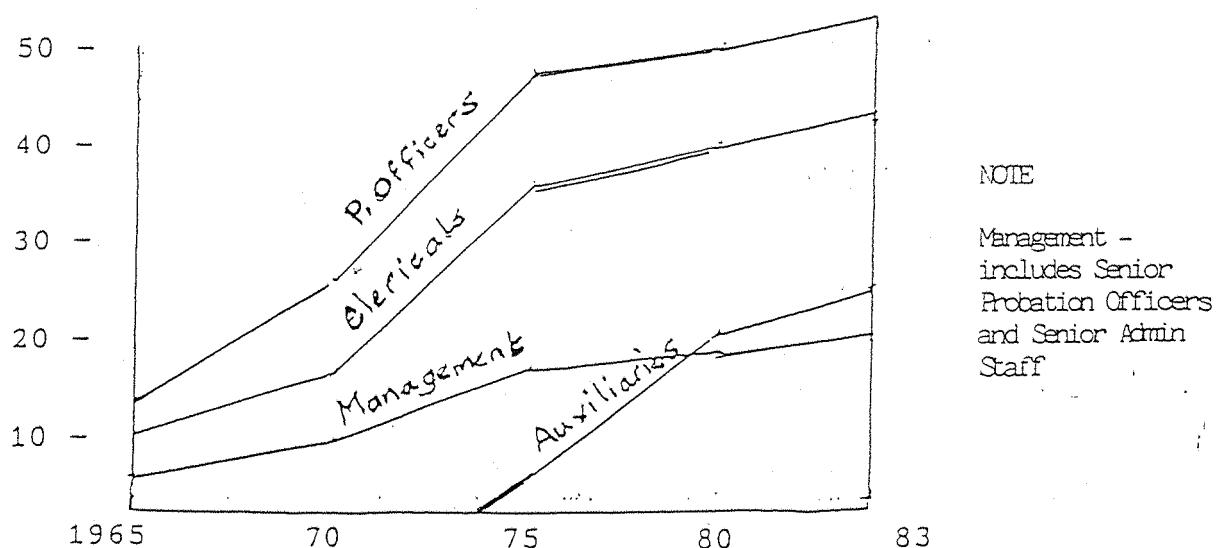
It is necessary at the outset to grasp how the process of change affected the Probation Service in two major areas, the physical expansion in size of agencies and the individual responses of the Officers to the questioning of some aspects of their occupational culture. Problems to do with expansion are related to an ever enlarging number of tasks and the need to provide from limited budgets. This forced local services to compete for resources. The nature of the problem is best illustrated in the distribution of developing services in terms of overall size and by the proliferation of new projects forcing prioritisation of area resources. There are 56 Probation areas, ranging in size from small shires with annual budgets of £1 million or under to large Metropolitan areas with annual budgets of £3 million.

The responses of officers were valued and were determined by their training and experience base. The particular areas concerned were the debates about autonomy and the future of the Service. (Tibbits 1979) Although both debates seemed to reflect healthy exchange of opinions there was a great deal of introspection. Both problem areas demanded an overall strategy. This was lacking and it is interesting to note that it was the Government which had to take the initiative in attempting to formulate the strategies and set aims for the future.

Dorset's response to this national initiative was to stress the value and effectiveness of the Probation Service at a time when valid alternatives to imprisonment were desired. (Low 1976) This response was handicapped in two ways. Firstly the organisational model used during the period under review was that of the extended family. (Low 1974) The aims of the organisation were implicit and not spelled out in written form and much effort was put into making the process work through expressive relationships. Work was not monitored in terms of effectiveness to clients. Secondly there was resistance within the agency to the demands of the external world. This is discussed further on in the appendix.

Between 1965-83 the local service grew dramatically in size (fig 1), but for the reasons already stated the increase in personnel did not automatically ensure a more effective service.

Fig. 1. GROWTH OF PROBATION STAFFING 1965 - 1983



The increase was not accompanied by large turnover in staff. Age and experience continued to be important factors in maintaining stability. The typical officer was a male with several years service following another job who had invested in family security in a pleasant working environment. (Data derived from Annual Report of Chief Officer for 1975, and from an informal survey by the researcher in 1978).

The reorganisation of local authority boundaries in 1974 brought a sudden increase in numbers as the two adjacent areas, Dorset and Bournemouth-Christchurch, amalgamated. The contrasts between the two parts of the new administrative county in terms of area density and numbers of staff are illustrated in the fact that 31 Probation Officers were employed in the Poole, Bournemouth, Christchurch conurbation where approximately 80% of recorded crime took place, whereas 20 Officers were employed in the rest of the county. This imbalance effectively shifted the centre of gravity of the Service from West to East. Among the effects was the isolation of Weymouth and Portland.

The consolidation of work within the four existing penal institutions in the West of the county increased the importance of work sites which had little direct connection with local probation offices and workloads.

The development of project work, including Community Service, two day centres, a probation hostel, an overnight stay centre, court ancillary support and employment search scheme led to the employment of full-time non-professional staff who worked directly with clients and for whom new line management models were developed.

The overall supervision pattern was sub-area based. To supervise growing numbers of staff the senior management team in 1983 consisted of 1 CPO, 2 ACPOs and an Administration Officer. Each Assistant Chief Officer was directly accountable to the Chief Officer for Field work and Support services. In addition the specialist services of Prison welfare, Domestic court work and Training were shared out between them.

The volume of work increased steadily over the period but not in the expected area, criminal work. The increase occurred in the areas of domestic conciliation and divorce, in the production of social enquiry reports and in aftercare. (Chief Probation Officer's annual reports 1971-82.

The local Service lacked the resources to analyse these changes and in essence could not work out the significance of what was happening. Nevertheless efforts being made to implement new ideas, for example the reports of ongoing work presented in the Chief Officer's annual report for 1976.

Expansion exacerbated some existing problems. Workloads were stable overall but new ways of using existing resources were found in particular situations, for example pockets of offending behaviour and client groups. Important issues included staff deployment and movement between home, office and institutions, and the application of specialisation in projects in some office situations. There was a variety of target groups, criminal and non-criminal. Other problems relating to the workload were difficult to measure. There were perceived differences between urban and rural practice, reflected in two matters, territorial justice (the imbalance of choice between different courts) and workload (the difficulties in applying standard but arbitrarily chosen weightings).

Other concerns reflected in professional discussions were the logistics of adequate court and supervisory cover; the lack of particular skills and the need for relevant training; relations with clerks to the court and the commissioning of new buildings away from client reach. There appeared to be little effective liaison with the police and social services in the vital area of juvenile offending and contacts with the community seemed to depend on personal interest only.

Statements about morale and the need for clear work objectives appeared to need clarification as the local service coped with new ideas and opportunities on demand. The need to justify all that was done was based on a too ready acceptance that all staff had the experience and knowledge to perform discrete tasks

competently but that expectation put great moral and physical pressure on individuals. The work was not based on a clearly worked out strategy to which people could relate their efforts.

A staff conference, First Things First, held in 1977 sought to draw together thoughts about priorities. The Service was undergoing a transition from being a small collection of individualistic people, each with a high degree of personal responsibility, into an organisation, which entailed changes in the areas of accountability, standardisation of procedures, the move to specialisation and better communication networks within the organisation. Despite the assertion that the transition was welcomed, although there were signs of strain as the result of differences of opinion, the organisational model remained fundamentally untouched. There was in fact, an obvious need for the Service to move to a new model which could encourage and tolerate argument explicitly. The existing "family" model of organisation assumed sharing roles between intimates which placed a disproportionate burden of responsibility on each to understand and derive implicit meanings from each others behaviour. This incestuous model, instead of providing mutual support, in fact generated anxious discussion over tasks which the Service was asked to perform against its will, leaving it to cope for example, with the recidivist adult offender at the expense of young people and matrimonial clients. What we were witnessing was the way external change impacted on a local service which actually had not been sensitised to the outside world. The way that it coped was to internalise all debate and to manage all activity either by hiving off work into specialist areas or by allowing highly personalised action by officers. This fundamental response was made in error but it seemed to reflect the need to cope with the increasing demands being made on the Service.

Proposals were desperately needed to make the Service more assertive and purposeful in the areas of public relations and awareness of other community resources. In 1978 the then Chief Officer wrote a circular to all staff which laid down the guidelines for an immediate re-examination of the agency's work. Grief at the loss of tradition was acknowledged as was the need

to make professional response to the demand for a client centred Service. Two groups of officers studied the implications and applications of proposals designed to improve the morale, efficiency and perceived aims of the local service. (Working Party on Probation practice, Dorset Probation Service 1978.) The identification and proper assessment of client need involved the reappraisal of methods of working and the individual powers and responsibilities of officers. Both the fears and the enthusiasms of officers were enhanced. The report Probation Prospects (Dorset Probation Service 1979) offered guidelines for future activity and the next steps forward were time related with the long term plans being the creation of a range of facilities for clients based on measured need and on relevance to client, court and community. Particular reference is made here to the list of recommendations on page 22 of that report.

Probation Prospects was a genuine attempt to translate the feelings of staff and redirect them constructively and imaginatively. However, it suffered from not having a clear overall objective - this reflected the confusion between strategy and action which it was supposed to clear away. In addition it did not place sufficient weight on the collection and analysis of numerical data. Again, the working party relied greatly on ideas brought in from outside. The result was proposals which were not context specific or tailor made to local requirements. Another problem was that the final report was oriented towards urban solutions which meant that insufficient attention was given to rural areas. Finally, in spite of the pressing need for action, there was a leisurely timebase for change with particular emphasis in the short term on achieving administrative change. It is significant that the earliest criticism was that the proposals had been forced on staff. The problem of making working parties "representative" was not a new one; on three previous occasions selected staff had worked on specific tasks, namely the identification of urgent professional issues and the preparation of staff conferences. In none of these activities was there a strong sense of democratic participation acknowledged by the entire staff group.

A staff conference was called immediately to discuss some of the relevant issues, with the aid of a management consultant and colleagues from another urban area, in order to maintain interest and take things further. It was evident then in the reactions of colleagues, that any mechanism to demonstrate from outside the possibilities of change, exposed the Service and revived deep anxieties. Nevertheless attempts were made to carry out the process. In the Autumn of 1979 Mr B Palmer of the Grubb Institute of Management Studies was called in to help senior staff clarify communication issues. Bearing in mind the fact that the meetings excluded field officers, they led to useful comment on the process and management of change; firstly with regard to objectives, then concerning effective confrontation techniques. A possible explanation of why things were as they were was offered up.

The most critical point was that the existing organisational model was again perceived as inadequate to meet the identified need for the exchange of explicit messages and the handling of conflict.

Coincidental to the production of Probation Prospects, the Home Office regional inspectorate undertook a review of rural probation practice in the Service. (see introduction) This study was the fulfilment of earlier thinking about efficient ways of working. A limited aim was set and the project confined to those taking part. The material studied fell into two main categories, Social Enquiry Reports and the issues arising out of their preparation and result, and methods of service delivery, - issues relating to intervention strategies, distance, frequency of contact and co-operation with other agencies. The study provided quantitative evidence about rural work and set down guidelines for the rural Probation Officer. It did not however have a clear objective, recognising at the outset the different expectations and experiences of the region's country areas.

The Home Office Study sought consensus; it concentrated on managing the most accessible variables, for example, the use of officers' time and skills in writing reports, without any attempt to obtain the clients' point of view or analyse the local

conditions which made the differences between areas and contributed to the clients' problems. It presented the Probation Officer as an outworker with a crucial role in maintaining present standards of service without full support or comfortable organisational and personal relationships between officer and agency.

With hindsight it is remarkable that this study concentrated on how people felt about their situation and how they executed routine tasks without relating their activity to a central overriding policy of intervention. The successful carrying out of new duties engaging the officers's skills and motivation, produced links between the two which should have been examined within the context of values and aims, with officers claiming that traditional methods were the most appropriate way of handling (rural) clients. The newer approach demanded the performance of more complex tasks. Pressures on officers included Home Office strategic commands, agency expectations and professional debate about practice and policy. Officers had expressed anxiety about carrying more than they felt they could and not being able to meet expectations. Resistance is difficult to articulate but there is little doubt that concepts like isolation, distance and non communication were causes of concern.

In order to explore at a local level some of the implications of the above discussion, a different approach to managing work in the rural west was initiated in 1983. This venture had the support of the new Chief Probation Officer who recognised that distinctive features of rural and urban work must be understood if a balanced service to clients was to be offered. The rural experiment had its origins in the concern of Western Area Senior Probation Officers' Meetings about communication issues.

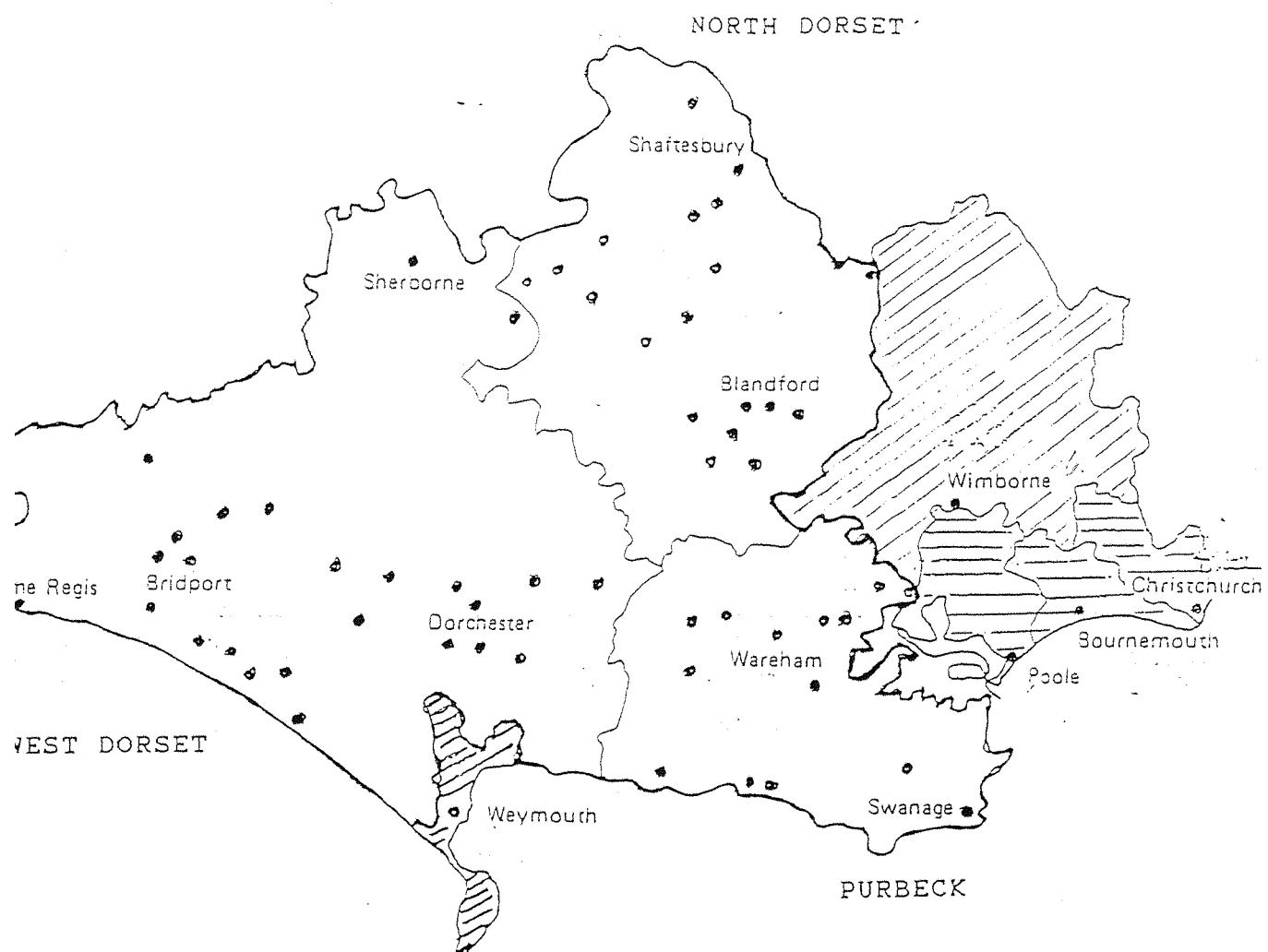
It was thought that groups larger than the small geographically bound offices might be created for more effective work. The aim was to look at the problems and opportunities in rural work and to show how modifications in current practice might be possible in a no-growth economy and that co-operative and flexible approaches might be to hold regular area meetings of all staff

excluding clerical assistants at monthly intervals, chaired alternatively by rural seniors. Existing administrative and supervisory arrangements remained in force.

The meetings were held at Dorchester and infrequently at other venues within the rural area. Three practical work issues were identified: Divorce Court Welfare, assessment needs of offenders and reparation. Group attendance was good and various issues arose naturally out of discussion and feedback. The approach was limited because it concentrated on only three areas of work and because it was an Officer centred initiative. No attempt was made to suggest major changes to the way the Service was run. However, it emphasised joint ownership of work and established networking as a major and unique method of handling dispersed caseloads. It helped to raise the profile of the Purbeck area and to establish proper boundaries with the adjacent area of Weymouth and Portland and it helped to raise mutual issues common to separate Officers.

All this experience was taken into consideration at the time of the agency review, begun in 1983. A comprehensive survey of the agency's work which included sampling of some work was undertaken by the CPO in all field establishments. That inspection concentrated on supervision and evaluation and the setting of standards, all of which was predicated on a realistic overall strategy for the Service. The possibility of further organisational change along existing lines increased the problems of the rural area because it was apparent that centralisation of resources and specialisation and redeployment could not be universally applied. Working with other agencies for example, is a crucial and necessary aim in the rural area and the role of the Probation Officer needs very careful study. As there appeared to be no great differences between urban and rural offenders in terms of criminal association and that deprivation might be common to both situations, the needs of the rural offender had to be treated fairly and a reappraisal needed to be made of the way the local Probation Service might organise itself to service offenders in all parts of the county.

OFFENDER LOCATIONS IN THE STUDY AREA 1984-5



KEY

STUDY AREA

THE SAMPLE:

TYPES OF SUPERVISION AND REFERRING COURTS 1984-5. n = 284

TYPE OF SUPERVISION	MAGISTRATES	CROWN	TOTALS
Probation	147 (51)	6 (2)	(53)
Children & Y.P. Act	26 (1)		(1)
Detention Centre	9	2	
Borstal		4	
Prison	9	12 (1)	(1)
Money Payment	11 (3)		(3)
TOTALS	202 (55)	24 (3)	226 (58)

APPENDIX 4

CENSUS OF POPULATION IN THE STUDY AREA 1981

		15-19 years	20-24 years	25-29 years	30-34 years	35-64 years
West	Male	2960	2299	2068	2413	12956
Dorset	Female	2740	2042	2025	2426	14129
North	Male	1666	1462	1422	1761	7268
Dorset	Female	1636	1340	1404	1706	7755
Purbeck	Male	1922	1410	1266	1474	6467
	Female	1424	1177	1197	1481	6694

Source - OPCS 1981

APPENDIX 5

SENTENCING IN THREE AREAS OF DORSET
 (MAGISTRATES COURTS) 1983-85

		1983		1984		1985	
		17-20	21-24	17-20	21-24	17-20	21-24
POOLE	P.O.	23	33	15	27	41	32
	CSO	21	17	19	14	23	18
	DC	14	-	26	-	15	-
	Custody	15	83	21	64	11	31
	Other	95	-	92	-	117	-
WEYMOUTH	P.O.	11	15	15	10	18	14
	CSO	17	25	15	23	13	19
	DC	7	-	15	-	2	-
	Custody	17	70	15	60	18	43
	Other	92	169	99	148	87	159
RURAL	P.O.	44	42	42	35	48	48
	CSO	56	46	40	43	38	38
	DC	14	-	16	-	18	-
	Custody	23	77	12	59	15	70
	Other	122	247	123	250	179	276

VOLUME OF COURT WORK IN LOCAL MAGISTRATES COURTS
BY OFFENCE CATEGORY 1984

Category	Area		
	W.Dorset	N.Dorset	Purbeck
Theft	17.8	10.1	18.9
Fraud	2.7	4.9	4.4
Violence	3.7	3.5	4.0
Sex	0.7	0.6	1.5
Miscellaneous	54.0	43.2	50.8
Non Payment	20.8	37.4	20.6

APPENDIX 7

Sample of North Dorset Probation Area Work - Winter 1982

Purpose

To inform SPO about current preparation and use of records.

To prepare for discussions and activity by area SPOS - proposed for next year.

Background is continuing uncertainties and ambiguities about case records. Purpose not intended as inspectorial.

Method

20% of each individual case load will be skim read for completeness and usefulness. Pro-forma to be used for storing information with a view to easy comparison and analysis.

Pro-forma

Number of officers	3
Total caseload at time of search	

Was case record complete?	1		2		3	
	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
PBN white						
PBN blue						
Part B						
pre. cons.						
Part C						
SIR						

Was following info. present?		Officer 1	Officer 2	Officer 3			
		Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
PBN white	address						
	family						
	education						
	work						
	health						
	leisure						
	personal history						

Were there periodic reviews		1	2	3			
		Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
Part B	Significant events						
	Attitude to supervision						
	Plan of action						

Was Part C up to date?		1	2	3			
		Y	N	Y	N	Y	N

Were SIRS written by Supervisor		1	2	3			
		Y	N	Y	N	Y	N

Was following info. included?	1 Y	1 N	2 Y	2 N	3 Y	3 N
Offence						
Offending pattern						
Present Circumstances						
Economic situation						
Interests						
Relationships						
Personal history						

APPENDIX 8

"SAMPLE OF 284"

CODING KEY

cases = 284

variables = 24 (one spare)

Variable no.	Values	Value range
1	case number	01 - 285
2	marital status	1 single 2 married 3 separated 4 cohabiting 5 widowed
3	sex	1 male 2 female
4	age	1) 14-16 2) 17-24 3) 25-34 4) 35-44 5) 45-54 6) 55-64 7) over 65
5	birthplace	1 out of country 2 out of county 3 out of "working district" 4 within "working district" 9 not known
6	birth settlement size	1 city 2 town 3 village 4 small settlement
7	domicile	1 out of country 2 out of county 3 out of "working district" 4 within "working district" 5 NFA 6 institution 9 not known
8	settlement size of (7)	1 city 2 town 3 village 4 small settlement 5 NFA 6 institution 9 not known
9	work	1 unskilled manual 2 skilled manual 3 unskilled service 4 skilled service 5 technician 6 professional 7 full time housewife 8 other 9 not applicable
10	work status	1 employed 2 self employed 3 unemployed 4 part-time 5 Government training 6 housewife 7 9 not applicable.
11	education	1 no secondary education 2 secondary education without qualification 3 secondary educ. with qualif. 4 further training 5 trade/vocational training 6 SE + qualif + trade training 7 other
12	health problems	1 physical a) 2 mental b) 3 emotional c) 4 abc 5 ah 6 ac 7 bc 9 not known

13	Debts	1 county court 2 funds 3 loans 4 abc 5 ab 6 ac 7 bc 9 NK
14	Domestic problems	1 parental separation 2 family trauma 3 delinquent relatives 4 abc 5 ab 6 ac 7 bc 9 NK Known
	Primary Family	
15	Deviance	1 Drugs 2 Sex 3 lifestyle problems 4 alcohol 5 combination 1 6 combination 2 7 gambling 9 NK
16	Crime	standard list 1 - 96
17	Previous convictions	1 none 2 1 - 3 3 4 - 5 4 6 +
18	Location of crime	1 out of country 2 out of county 3 out of working district 4 within working district 5 on doorstep 9 NK
19	Key Informant	1 other agency 2 community worker 3 neighbour 4 family 5 combination 2 6 " 3 7 " 4 9 NK
20	previous supervision	1 0 2 1 - 3 3 4 - 5 4 6 +
21	Joint offence	1 joint 2 alone
22	Family size	1 only child 2 1 sibling 3 2 - 3 siblings 4 4 - 5 siblings 5 6+ siblings 9 NK

Onset age	1 14-16
	2 17 - 24
	3 25 - 34
	4 35 - 44
	5 45 - 54
	6 55 - 64
	7 65 +

24 (spare)

Perceived Intervention Focus

- 1 Practical problems
- 2 Environmental change
- 3 Counselling
- 4 Combination of above (all)
- 5 Combination of 1 and 2
- 6 Combination of 1 and 3
- 7 Combination of 2 and 3
- 8 None
- 9 Not known

Criteria for coding variables.

5	Birthplace	This represents the district of infancy.
7.	Domicile	The usually resident district.
6 and 8	Settlement size	1 city usually defined 2 town minimum population 2500 3 village minimum pop 500 4 small settlement - under 500
10	work status	5 and 7 housewife
11	education	4 further education
12	health problems	1 illness, injury, psychotic symptoms, mental subnormality. 3 psychoneurotic symptoms.
14	Domestic problems	1 parental separation/divorce 2 illness, injury, handicap of family member 3 parent or sibling in trouble with the law.
15	Deviance	1 using or supplying drugs 2 illicit sexual activity 3 dissonant subcultural public behaviour 4 self abusing 7 includes gaming machine addition.
16	Crime	standard list published Nov 78
18	location of crime	5 on doorstep - within immediate neighbourhood
24	Perceived intervention focus	1 need for help with practical problem 2 need for environmental change 3 need for counselling re relationship 4 abc 7 bc 5 ab 8 not clear 6 ac 9 none stated.

APPENDIX 9

SOCIAL PROBLEM SCALE

1. EIGHT VARIABLES representing vulnerable areas of offenders lives are grouped together.

Each of the three sub areas is dealt with separately. Offenders identified as living in remoter settlements are dealt with separately.

Males and females are dealt with separately.

1. VARIABLES USED Employment, Education, Health Problems, Financial Problems, Domestic Problems, Deviance, Key Informants, Previous Supervision.

The values were averaged and plotted on a scale 1 through 4.

3. CODING Schedule

VARIABLE(S)	VALUES		VARIABLE(S)	VALUES	
Employment	Employed 1 Unemployed 2		Domestic problems	None 1 One of:- Separation Family trauma delinquency 2	
Education	CSE/O Level 1 No Quals			a combin ⁱⁿ of 2 3 a combin ⁱⁿ of 3 4	
Health Problems	None identif ^d 1 One of:- Physical mental emotional 2 A combin ⁱⁿ (2) 3 a combin ⁱⁿ (3) 4		Deviance	None 1 Drugs illicit sex alcohol gambling odd life style 2	
Financial Problems	None identif ^d 1 One of:- County Court Fines Loans 2 A combin ⁱⁿ (2) 3 A combin ⁱⁿ (3) 4			A combin ⁱⁿ of 2 3 A combin ⁱⁿ of 3 4	
			Key informants	None 1 One of:- other agency community wr neighbour family 2	
				a combin ⁱⁿ of 2 3 a combin ⁱⁿ of 3 4	
			Previous superv ^d	None 1 1-3 2 4-5 3 6+ 4	

Criminal Profile

This profile is designed to give a fuller picture of criminal behaviour than does the Delinquency and Victim involvement profile. There are FIVE components.

ONSET AGE - Date of known first offence.

PREVIOUS CONVICTIONS - All known offences on different dates.

CHRONICITY - Relation between number of offences and length of offending period.

i Let x be number of previous convictions

Let y be time elapsed since onset age

ii Apply the following ratings:

x offences in 1 year	=	5
x offences in 3 years	=	4
x offences in 5 years	=	3
x offences in 10 years	=	2
x offences in 10 years	=	1

iii Screen previous convictions for custodial sentences including Suspended Sentences.

iv Weight each Custodial Sentence (2) as follows:

let z = 3

v Sum the score

vi Work out the distribution of all scores (n = 284)

vii Apply rating point 5 through 1

RECURRENCE - Identification of most common offence.

i Number of previous offences

ii Separation into offender categories (standard list)

iii Selection of highest offence category number

iv Score. Eg.

		SCALE USED
(i)	6	
(ii)	Burglary x 4	1 = 1
	Indecency x 1	2 = 2
	RTA x 1	
(iii)	Burglary x 4	3 = 3
(iv)	(Use scale) 4 = 4	4 = 4
		4 = 5

SEVERITY - The sum of all disposals weighted for seriousness -

- (i) Number of previous disposals
- (ii) Weight of each disposal
- (iii) Sum weighted scores
- (iv) Applying formula for overall score. E.g.

$$\begin{aligned} (i) &= 5 \\ (ii) &= (O.C.D. - 1) \times 1 = 1 \\ &\quad (\text{FINE} - 2) \times 2 = 4 \\ &\quad (\text{P.O./SO} - 3) \times 1 = 3 \\ &\quad (\text{CSO} - 4) \times 1 = 4 \\ &\quad (\text{CUSTODY} - 5) \times 1 = 5 \end{aligned}$$

$$(iii) 1 + 4 + 3 + 4 + 5 = 17$$

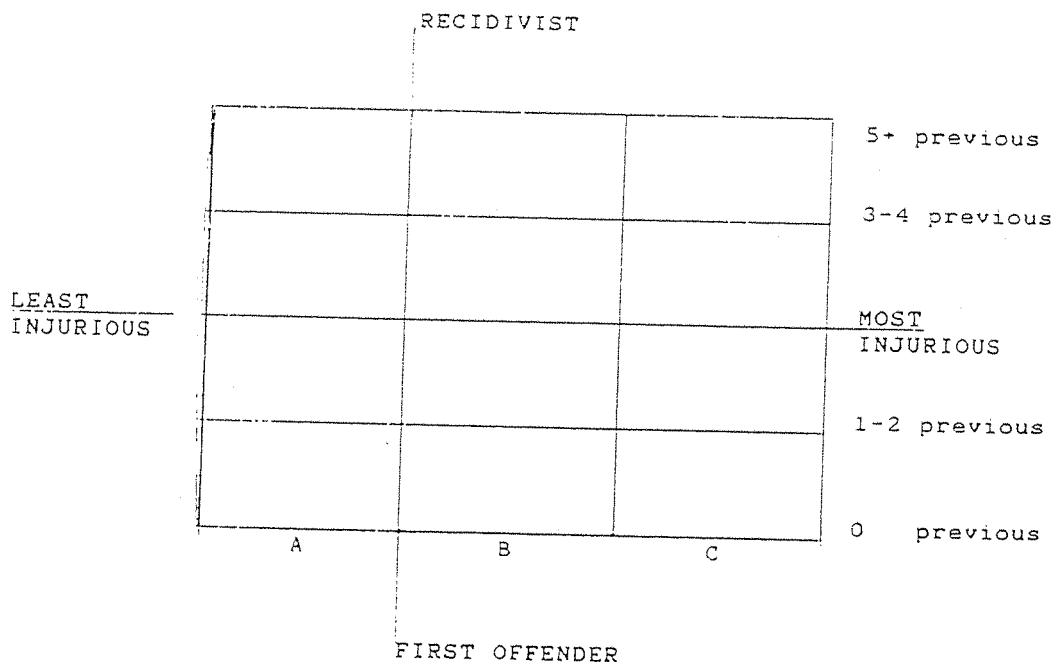
$$(iv) \frac{\text{Weighted Score}}{\text{No Previous}} \times 100$$

(v) Scale 5 through 1

Delinquency and Victim Involvement

This profile is based on the Wadsworth social approval of crime scale.

1. Wadsworth proposed three categories of crime which involve persons as victims.
 - A Crimes which involve no personal injury or primary victim, e.g. taking a motor vehicle.
 - B Crimes involving breaking in but which no personal injury to the victim is involved, e.g. theft of motor vehicle.
 - C All kinds of injuries and assaults on others.
2. This profile plots offences according to the above and offenders according to their number of known previous offences. The axes are labelled LEAST INJURIOUS - MOST INJURIOUS and FIRST OFFENDER - RECIDIVIST.



APPENDIX 12

Use of key informants - General guidelines for study of rural area by newly stationed Senior Probation Officer.

Definition

A key informant is someone who may voluntarily offer up helpful comment about the area. A key informant is held to be someone with a key role (position) in the local community, e.g. teacher, policeman, but that role may be either formal or informal, e.g. assistant youth club leader, neighbour.

Catchment Area

The community - extending several miles if contacts with School or employers is to be considered. Usually within the Local Authority administrative area.

Soontaneity

The right way needs to be found to encourage the transmission of information, preserving a full flow but obviously keeping to some kind of order.

Interest areas for Manager

<u>Service Interests</u>	Clerks to Court Police Magistrates Social Services Voluntary Associates
--------------------------	---

<u>Community Interests</u>	Youth Service Education Welfare Service Crime Prevention Panels Teachers Ministers of Religion
----------------------------	--

<u>Offender Interests</u>	Offenders Hostel Residents
---------------------------	-------------------------------

COUNTY OF DORSET
PROBATION AND AFTER-CARE SERVICE

Telephone:
Blandford 52567

Probation Office,
Salisbury Road,
BLANDFORD,
Dorset.

1985

Dear

I am gathering information for a project about offenders in the rural areas of Dorset and their needs. I know that you are in touch with one of my colleagues and s/he is aware that I am writing to you.

The purpose of this letter is to obtain your help. I would like you to read the questions on the enclosed sheet and then write your answers in the spaces provided.

You have the right to refuse - but I hope very much that you will respond, because your answers will help me a great deal, and may throw some light on the problems which you and other people face, living in rural areas.

I can see you if there are any queries but you may be able to complete the task quite easily on your own. Simply follow the instructions. A stamped addressed envelope is included for your reply.

Thank you for your help.

Yours sincerely,

DAVID HULMES
Senior Probation Officer.

1984-1985

Questionnaire published by David Holmes

March 1985

The following questions are about you and your situation. Please follow the instructions when giving the answers. There are four pages to complete.

QUESTIONS ABOUT YOURSELF (Please do not put your name.)

- * Where was your birthplace?(town or village)
- * How many brothers do you have?(include step & half).....
- * How many sisters do you have? " " "
- * How long have you lived at your present address?years.....months
- * How often have you moved areas during your life?(Please give a rough figure if you are not sure).....times
- * How many relatives live
 - within one mile of your home
 - between 1 and 3 miles of your home
 - between 4 and 10 miles of your home.....
- * What kind of school did you last attend? Please underline
Private/secondary modern/
grammar/comprehensive/
tertiary college/special
school/other/none
- * Have you had any more schooling or Further Education? Please underline
technical college/
apprenticeship/agricultural college/armed services/
college of education/polytechnic/university/other
none.
- * Do you have any of the following C.S.E.s/'O' levels/'A'levels/
diplomas/trade certificates/
City & Guilds.
- * Have you got a job at the moment? Yes/No
.....
- * If so please describe your job and include any Government Training Schemes
.....
- * Please underline whether your job is
full-time/part-time/
spare-time
.....years.....months
- * How long have you had this job?
If you have not got a job at present,
please underline what you are doing.
unemployed/on sick/retired/
housewife/student/other/
up to 2 months/3 - 5 months/
6 - 11 months/12 months and
over/
- * If unemployed, how long have you been so?
please underline
- * Your marital status - please underline
any of these -
married/divorced/separated/
widowed/single/co-habiting
with man/woman
- * How would you describe your health?
Please underline.
very fit/fit/average/
unfit/very unfit
.....
- * If you answered "unfit" or "very unfit"
please indicate the nature of the problem.
.....

- * Please underline what kind of accommodation you have.
- * Who owns your home? Please underline
- * How many people are you responsible for looking after financially - on a voluntary basis or a court order
- * What is your weekly take-home income at present? Please underline
- * Do you have any of the following outgoings? Please underline
- * Please tick any of the activities listed that you take part in yourself. Then rate on a scale of 1 to 6. (The ones you enjoy most will be 6).

76	Playing sports	1	2	3	4	5	6
77	Watching sports	1	2	3	4	5	6
78	Dancing	1	2	3	4	5	6
79	Playing an instrument	1	2	3	4	5	6
80	Listening to music	1	2	3	4	5	6
81	Going drinking	1	2	3	4	5	6
82	Going to see a film	1	2	3	4	5	6
83	Talking to people	1	2	3	4	5	6
84	Watching television	1	2	3	4	5	6
85	Gardening	1	2	3	4	5	6
86	Fishing	1	2	3	4	5	6
87	Pool	1	2	3	4	5	6
88	Darts	1	2	3	4	5	6
89	Reading	1	2	3	4	5	6
90	Do-it-yourself	1	2	3	4	5	6
91	Cooking	1	2	3	4	5	6
92	Going to local meetings	1	2	3	4	5	6
93	Helping others out	1	2	3	4	5	6
94	Other (please state)	1	2	3	4	5	6

Please tick as many of the following words as you feel apply to you some of the time.

45	Good-humoured	12	Interesting	136	Honest
46	Unfriendly	13	Selfish	137	Aggressive
47	Loyal	14	Good at making decisions	138	Caring
48	Boring	15	Greedy	139	Disloyal
49	Reliable	16	Attractive	140	Cool-headed
50	Nasty	17	Unsuccessful at anything	141	Unstable
51	Kind	18	Warm	142	Fond of people
52	Dishonest	19	Not worth knowing	143	Depressed
53	Good-tempered	20	Open-minded	144	Pleasant
54	Unattractive	21	Lonely	145	Unpopular
55	Happy	22	Hard-working	146	Worth knowing
56	Cold	23	Uncaring	147	Inferior
57	Helpful	24	Easy to get on with	148	Jealous
58	Narrow-minded	25	Hot-headed	149	Do things my own way
59	Successful at some things	26	Unhappy	150	Difficult to get on with
60	Shifty	27	Popular	151	Worthwhile
61	Able to cope	28	Confused	152	Rely on others
62	Unpleasant	29	Friendly	153	Easy-going
63	Superior	30	Unreliable	154	Up-tight
64	Lazy	31	Organised	155	Straight with people
		32	A loser	156	A winner.

Please turn to the next section.

Please look at this list of needs and tick the six most important to you.

1. The need to be accepted as a member of the community.
2. The need to express my feelings.
3. The need to enjoy myself.
4. The need for financial security.
5. The need for some worthwhile activity.
6. The need for advice with problems.
7. The need for practical help.
8. The need to be cared for.
9. The need for transport in order to get around easily.

Now put these 6 numbers in order of importance.

In the next question please circle the number that is closest to your own feelings.

Do you feel you would like to:	strongly disagree						strongly agree					
	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
a) Have a wider circle of friends in your community?												
b) Have more power to make decisions in your community?												
c) Be better known in your community?												
d) Live in a better house?												
e) Be more respected in your community?												

Do the same with these questions:-

Do you feel that you

a) Manage to keep yourself with difficulty?	1	2	3	4	5	6
b) Can afford a few luxuries?	1	2	3	4	5	6
c) Have a struggle to make ends meet?	1	2	3	4	5	6
d) Save a little?	1	2	3	4	5	6
e) Never be able to save much	1	2	3	4	5	6
f) Are short of essentials - for example heating, food or television?	1	2	3	4	5	6

Do the same with these questions:-

When you have a problem do you feel that you want -

a) Someone with whom you can share your personal problems?	1	2	3	4	5	6
b) A contact that you can telephone if necessary?	1	2	3	4	5	6
c) A person close by to offer help?	1	2	3	4	5	6
d) A sympathetic family?	1	2	3	4	5	6
e) A kind neighbour who knows a lot about you?	1	2	3	4	5	6
f) A professional social worker to help you?	1	2	3	4	5	6
g) Other - please state	1	2	3	4	5	6

If you are employed, please tick any boxes

that apply

- a) Are you very busy most of the time
- b) Quite busy
- c) Under employed
- d) Bored and frustrated
- e) Gaining job satisfaction
- f) Working only because you have to.

If you are unemployed, please go to the next question

* Are you disinterested in finding out any boxes that apply:

- (a) Are you able to fill in your time usefully?
- (b) Are you occasionally bored?
- (c) Are you generally bored and fed up?
- (d) Are you very anxious to find work?
- (e) Are you discouraged about finding work?
- (f) Are you not bothered about finding work?

* How many miles do you go for

work (if you have a job) miles

hospital? miles

main shopping? miles

entertainment? miles

pub? miles

* How far would you be prepared to travel to

go to work? miles

see a show or film? miles

help in a good cause? miles

move to a new home? miles

* Please underline if you have car/motorbike/pedal cycle/
the use of someone else's vehicle/none

* Are you disqualified from driving at this moment? Yes/No
Please underline.

* Are any needs not already mentioned that you think should be met in your community?
Please write them down.

QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR OFFENCE

* What was the offence?

* Where did it happen? (Name the town etc)

* Was anybody else involved with you? (please underline) Yes/No

* When were you finally dealt with at Court? Please underline. The same day: within one week:
Between 1 week and 4 weeks:
After 4 weeks.

* What was the attitude of the police towards you? Please underline: Very helpful/Helpful/no strong feelings
/Unhelpful/Very unhelpful.

* Were you seen by a probation officer before you were sentenced? (Please underline) Yes/No

* What was your feeling about the result. Please underline. Very Fair/Fair/No strong feelings/
Unfair/Very unfair.

* Has the Probation Service been helpful to you? Please underline. Very helpful/Helpful/No strong feelings
/Unhelpful/Very unhelpful.

* In what ways could the Probation Service be of more help? Please write
your comments here.

* Finally, please underline your sex: Male/Female: and age: 17-21/22-24/25-34/35+

You have now completed the task. Thank you for your patience and help.
Please look the sheets over to make sure that all the questions have
been answered and then post your replies to me inside the post-paid
envelope, or hand it to your supervising officer, as soon as possible.

APPENDIX 15

<u>Column number</u>	<u>Variables</u>	<u>Values</u>	<u>Take up (in columns)</u>	
	Birthplace	1 out of country 2 out of county 3 out of "town" 4 within "town"	2	1
		99 NK		
	brothers	1 n 99 NK	2	2
	sisters	1 n 99 NK	2	3
	present domicile	1 less than 6 months 2 6 - 11 " 3 12-23 " 4 24-59 " 5 60-119 2 6 120 and over	2	4
		99 NK		
	changes of domicile	1 n 2 99 NK	2	5
	Proximity of kin	1 up to 1 mile 2 2 - 3 " 3 4 - 10 " 99 NK	3	5
	last school attended	1 private 2 sec. mod. 3 grammar 4 comprehensive 5 tertiary 6 special 8 other 9 none 98 NA 99 NK	2	7
	further schooling	1 technical college 2 apprenticeship 3 agricultural college 4 armed services 5 college of education 6 polytechnic 7 university 8 other 9 none	2	8

<u>COLUMN NO.</u>	<u>Variation</u>	<u>VALUES</u>	<u>Take up in columns</u>
Certificates	1	CSE	7 8
	2	O	
	3	A	
	4	Diplomas	
	5	Trade certificates	
	6	C & G	
	9	DK	
Employment	1	yes	1 10
	2	no	
Description of job		open ended	2 11
	1	unskilled manual	
	2	skilled manual	
	3	unskilled service	
	4	skilled service	
	5	Technician	
	6	Clerical	
	7	Professional	
	8	None	
	98		
Commitment to job	1	FT	12
	2	PT	
	3	ST	
length of job	1	less than 6 months	2 13
	2	6 - 11 "	
	3	12-23 "	
	4	24-59 "	
	5	60-119 2	
	6	120 over	
	99	NK	
Unwork status	1	unemployed	2 14
	2	on sick	
	3	retired	
	4	housewife	
	5	student	
	8	other	
length of unemployment	1	up to 2 months	2 15
	2	3 - 5 "	
	3	6 - 11 "	
	4	12 months +	
marital status	1	married	6 16
	2	divorced	
	3	separated	
	4	widowed	
	5	single	
	6	cohabiting	

Health status

- 1 fit
- 2 average
- 3 unfit
- 4 very unfit.

Health problems	open ended	2	18	17
accommodation	detached semi-detached house bungalow cottage furnished unfurnished other		2	19
ownership	1 self 2 relative 3 friend 4 private 5 council 8 other		1	20
Dependents	1 living with 2 living away		4	21
Take home	1 under 39 2 40 - 49 3 50 - 69 4 70 - 89 5 90 - 109 6 110 + over		1	22
financial commitments	1 mortgage 2 rates 3 rent 4 hire purchase 5 maintenance 6 fines 8 others		3	23
activities through	rate 1 - 6		19	24

through adjectives -

1 or 0

1 or 0

62 25

exercising
enjoyment
financial security
worthwhile activity
advice with problems
practical help
caring
transport

b) rank order

1 - 6 0 9

Feelings about community	circle of friends power profile prestige respect	rate 1 - 6	5	27
coping financially	managing affording struggling saving not saving essentials	rate 1 - 6	5	28
	sharing contact close by family neighbour social worker other	rate 1 - 6	7	29
employment attitudes	busy quite busy under employed bored satisfied working because	tick	6	30

Unwork attitude

structuring time
boredom
generally bored
anxious
discouraged
not bothered.

Travel	work hospital main shopping entertainment pub	miles	10 32
Psychological distance	work show help move home		9 33
Vehicle availability	car motorbike pedal cycle someone else none		34
Driver status	Disqualified not disqualified	Yes 1 No 2	35
Community needs	Open ended		2 36
Offence	what where joint disposal	Standard list 1 - 1000 Geographical placing 1 - 5 Yes/No 1 same day 2 within 1 week 3 to 4 weeks 4 after 4 weeks.	3 37
Police attitude	rate 1 - 5		1 38
Seen by Po.	Yes/No		1 39
Fairness of the result	rate 1 - 5		1 40
Attitude to Prob. Serv.	rate 1 - 5		1 41
Ways for Prob. Service to help	open ended		2 42
sex	m = 1: f = 2		1 43
age	21 = 1: 34 = 2: 35 = 3:		1 44

PROBATION AND AFTER-CARE SERVICE

Telephone:
Blandford 52567

DH/AB

Probation Office,
Salisbury Road,
BLANDFORD,
Dorset.

1085

Dear

This is a reminder to you concerning the questionnaire I posted to you during the first week of [redacted]. A second copy of the questionnaire is enclosed with this reminder in the hope that you can find the time to sit down and complete it.

Your response is important to me. As you know, I hope to use the results from the questionnaire to throw light on the situation of offenders living in rural areas.

If you have any questions about filling in the form, please telephone me on Blandford 52567 and I will be happy to talk to you about it.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]
DAVID HULMES
Senior Probation Officer.

Encl: