COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

A WORKING PARTY REPORT

INNER LONDON PROBATION AND AFTER CARE SERVICE

NOV 1976
# THE INNER LONDON PROBATION & AFTER-CARE SERVICE

## WORKING PARTY ON COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

### INTRODUCTION

**PART I**

- Chapter 1. The service in the Community.  
  page 2
- Chapter 2. Working Definitions.  
  page 7

**PART II**

- Chapter 3. Where are we now? Survey of present commitments.  
  page 10
- Chapter 4. Agency and Inter-Agency Co-Operation.  
  page 12
- Chapter 5. Provision of Services for Special Needs.  
  page 13
  page 17
- Chapter 7. The Rest of the Country.  
  page 21
- Chapter 8. Summary.  
  page 23

**PART III**

- Chapter 9. Implications for the Organisational Setting.  
  page 25
- Chapter 10. Implications for Resources.  
  page 28

**PART IV**

- Chapter 11. Recommendations.  
  page 30

### APPENDICES

- (a) The Haggerston Project.  
  page 32
- (b) Some Community Projects in Other Areas.  
  page 35
- (c) A Community Work Job in the Inner London Probation & After-Care Service.  
  page 37
- (d) Bibliography.  
  page 40
INTRODUCTION.

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

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

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

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

D. Armstrong  
J. Barker  
M.J. Barry  
B. Crofton  
G. Dougherty  
G. Evans  
C. Fergusson  
R.E. Gray  
D. Hancock

W. Henderson  
B. Howard  
J. McCarthy  
P. McMahon  
D. Powell  
E. Pritchard  
R. Ward  
J. Wilson

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

R.E. GRAY
Chairman

November 1976.
PART I

Chapter 1

The Service in the Community

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

(Social Work in the Environment H.M.S.O. Report No. 21, 1974)

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

Theoretical Aspects

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

2. Fuller recognition of environmental factors in social disfunction.

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

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

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

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

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

In short, a complete assessment of the individual and his social situation.
This was in no way a new idea. The importance of the social environment has been clearly seen and expounded upon by many mainstream social work writers:

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

(Richmond, 1917)

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

(Goldberg 1961)

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

(Hollis 1964)

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

(Monger 1964)

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

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

Statutory Aspects

(a) Duties. The relevance of the social environment to casework is lost if there is no practical basis for working within this total context. Here we find that the whole emphasis of the agency is directed at servicing the individual; social workers become so involved in the problems of their clients' daily crises, and in particular their court appearances, that they can rarely make more than a piecemeal attempt to seriously consider dealing with aspects of the social environment. This pressure is a reflection of the general direction of policy; it is borne out by a host of rules and statutory duties with which we have to comply. And even now we may be urged to get back to 'bread-and-butter casework' before we have seriously got away from it. At the same time, uncertainties about a client's self-determination, authority and directiveness within the social work relationship have led to the view that any initiative in respect of his wider affairs should be left to the client himself to pursue after undergoing the strengthening process of casework.
We are left with the question of how far this individual emphasis is intended to preclude a two-way contact with the community and whether our hesitation to be involved in local affairs which may shape the clients' social environment is wholly justified. There are some indications that it is not.

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

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

and

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

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

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

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

(b) Aspirations.

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

this is the kind of thing frequently appearing in advertisements for probation officers. With our accepted responsibility for the treatment of delinquents in the community, how realistic is our base in the community? Within the new areas of responsibility of the 1973 C.J.A. there is an overwhelming case for a realistic 'reciprocal relationship' with the community if these schemes are to work. The Service has to offer something to the community if
it is to benefit. The enthusiastic response from voluntary agencies to the introduction of the Community Service Scheme with its offer of manpower is a good example of this reciprocal relationship. On the question of residential provision, the Inner London Working Party said:

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

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

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

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

SUMMARY

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

Note 1

The Departmental Committee on the Conditions of Service of Probation Officers reported in 1922 and the C.J. Act in 1925 as amended by the C.J. (Amendment) Act 1926, put into force the main recommendation. The C.J. Act 1948, now incorporated in the P.C.C.A. 1973, provides the legal framework for release on probation.
Chapter 2

Working Definitions

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

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

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

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

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

As far as 'community work' is concerned, the Working Party accepted the traditional definition as described by Murray Ross:
"It is a process by which a community identifies its needs or objectives, orders (or ranks) these needs or objectives, develops the confidence and will to work at these needs or objectives, finds the resources (internal and/or external) to deal with these needs or objectives, takes action in respect of them and in so doing extends and develops co-operative and collaborative attitudes and practices in the community."

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

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

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

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

The Gulbenkian work identifies three levels of community involvement:

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

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

The Working Party was beset by problems of definition especially in the early stages of its work. It was only after a great deal of thought and work that we were able to make and agree upon our own definition of community involvement within the Service. The following definition is the one that was adopted for the purpose of this report:
"any project run by the Service for or with its clients which attempts to make use of existing community resources, helps the client to meet the community or the community to meet the client, is community involvement."
PART II

Chapter 3

Where Are We Now - Survey of Present Commitments

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1. Agency and Inter-Agency Co-operation.


- 10 -
We arrived at these categories with a little help from community work theory, but mainly on the basis of convenience, and they are not intended as exclusive or all-inclusive categories. What emerges from a consideration of these categories and the different ways or working involved is that the justification of such different projects relies on basically similar fairly straightforward assumptions. Part II therefore concludes with an examination of the wider issues involved and provides a set of questions which are intended as the framework for criteria in assessing the relevance of any particular form of community involvement.
Chapter 4

Agency and Inter-Agency Co-Operation

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

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

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

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

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

Within the knowledge of Working Party members it seemed unlikely that the majority of the work listed in evidence of this chapter fell appropriately within the area of community involvement of this kind. This is not to dispute its validity but to point again to the need to continually re-assess the work that we do in terms of its value to our clients. It would be the contention of some members of the Working Party that such work would have more value were it seen in the broader context described by the Gulbenkian Report with the clear aim of attempting to 'bring services (including our own) and the meeting of need in closer relation with each other.' This involves considering more closely than we do needs and resources not only in relation to our clients, but also to the communities in which they live and in which we function as part of a resource network.
Chapter 5

Provision of Services for Special Needs

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

   (a) Projects initiated or being run by the Service itself for its own clients.
       These are nearly all accommodation projects, begun on the initiative of one officer or a small group in response to a particular local need. Voluntary Associates appear to be involved in a number and are frequently the only representatives of the community on such schemes.
   (b) Projects initiated or being run by other groups either in partnership with, or in co-operation or liaison with the Probation Service.
       Again these are mostly accommodation projects and many cater for groups which include non-clients.

   An all-embracing heading which we divide as follows:
   (a) Voluntary Associate Groups.
       The relevant point here is that most regions included their V.A. groups as examples of community involvement. We felt it important to state that while recognising the important investment the Service has in V.A.'s we have made no attempt to look at them specifically in this report. We were more concerned with the use of volunteers generally in roles other than the accepted and well defined area of accredited V.A.'s.
   (b) Projects initiated and run by the Service alone.
       As with 1 (a), these were nearly all attempts to provide a resource or service for client groups, and included such enterprises as centres, clubs and groups. A few, however, aimed more widely and included potential as well as actual clients, such as a battered wives group. There seems to be a great deal of variation in the use made of resources other than Service resources.
   (c) Projects where the Service is involved as a partner with other local agencies in providing a resource for particular groups.
Such involvement normally starts at the planning stage and is usually for 'at risk' groups, for example, in drug projects, legal aid and literacy schemes and a free school project.

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

Several of these are on the borderline of liaison.

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

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

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

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

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

One final and important impression is that little use seems to have been made of community resources. Discussion seems to be mostly at inter-agency level, and all too often community involvement means middle-class involvement of, for example, bankers, solicitors on management committees and of middle-class accredited V.A's. The Working Party was not certain that V.A's should properly be included as examples of community involvement since they can in some sense be seen as adjunct to casework, and much of their value lies in
this area. We felt that volunteers, whether they are accredited or not, can be considered as 'community involvement' only when their significance in a particular situation rests on their being part of the community.

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

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

and

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

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

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

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

(b) Where the Service makes use of its own resources of time, money, facilities, buildings, etc. to provide a service which enables the client to get closer to the community, and its resources, or the community to get closer to the client. This is bridge building, implicit in the idea of a halfway house where the client's
special needs are met in a way which enables him to come closer to the community, and where the community can get closer to the client and see him more as an individual. This notion seems to be implicit in such new developments as Sherborne House, Community Service Orders and Bulldog Manpower Services Limited.

2. Other Groups.

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

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

Requirements and Pay-Offs.

To involve and be more involved in a community at the level of reaching special needs does have its price. It is not normally something that is simply added to the day's work. It requires that we know something about the resources that the community has to offer in our own area and a willingness to go out and explore them. It also calls for a willingness to look for other needs when we are already having difficulty in coping with the obvious ones and it does require resources in order to build bridges between clients and the community. At the same time there are pay-offs. Not only is some of our work transferred to the community, but also a wider range of help can be given to the client in ways which are often more acceptable to him.
Chapter 6

Self-Help Groups.

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

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

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

It may be useful to look at:

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

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

These roles can be identified as follows:

1. Where the worker sees symptoms of need (e.g. poor housing conditions, lack of play space, a dangerous road, a high delinquency rate), and goes about testing out acceptance of need among local people and helping them to get together to look at ways of tackling it.

2. Where the worker comes across an existing group which is having difficulties and offers support, advice, ideas towards helping the group achieve its aims more effectively.

3. Where a group has got through the stages outlined above and needs practical help e.g., somewhere to meet, duplicating facilities.

These three roles can also be seen as part of a continuum with 2 and 3 being fairly fluid. A follow-up to 3 could be complete withdrawal if a group becomes fully self-supporting or itself wishes to fold up.
The differentiation made between neighbourhood and special interest based groups in the evidence is not a clear one. It seems to depend on the way in which the term neighbourhood is interpreted, and most commonly this means a housing estate. It seems likely that special interest groups are also locally based, but in a bigger area, e.g., the patch covered by a probation office. Groups such as Prisoners' Wives Union, PROP, Mental Patients' Union, were referred to by officers where these organisations either have their headquarters in the patch or are especially active. Local groups may be set up, e.g., on the A.A. pattern, and probation officers have been active in helping to initiate and support these.

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

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

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

Having said that, the question arises how can we tune into this knowledge base. The community work approach suggests ways of finding out what are the needs of an area and how they are perceived by people living within it. The obvious source of information open to us is of course the client and his family. To this can be added simple observation of, for example, housing density, basic amenities, meeting places, and linking such observation with questions about what these factors mean in human terms to the local inhabitants. Written material like census figures, local newspapers, local authority publications
and pictorial representations such as maps of clients' homes, youth clubs, shopping areas, can also be used as ways of putting together a view of an area. Once this has been achieved it is possible to begin asking questions about meanings.

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

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

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

On a broader level and well within the stated policy and task of the Service are the possibilities of extending more localised projects for offenders subject to Community Service Orders, recruitment of locally based voluntary associates and obtaining increased information about formal and informal local resources. Allied to all these is the prospect of a greater credibility for the Service as a concerned and interested body in local terms. One could anticipate also increasingly useful co-ordination with other service agencies and a widening of perspective to enable probation officers to see their clients as part of a whole rather than as isolated individuals in conflict with their environment and society.
All these ideas and possibilities require testing and two methods of doing this have been mooted. The first would be the appointment of one officer - see Appendix 'A Community Work Job in The Inner London Probation & After-Care Service'. Another suggestion is that of the appointment of an office team based on a small enough area, to allow for low potential caseloads, to work together using community work methods with more conventional tools of the probation officer's trade, again on an experimental basis. The latter would appear to be a more effective method of testing the validity of such activity recognising that it is also the more expensive in terms both of finance and manpower.
Chapter 7
The Rest of the Country

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

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

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

One inference that may be drawn from the spread of community involvement throughout the country is that the problems of inner city areas and their high delinquency rates do not lend themselves to traditional casework solutions. Another is that a service identified increasingly with the prevention of recidivism hankers after the more primary kind of prevention as a revolt against being locked at the 'correctional' end of the spectrum.
In the reports we read the work of the Voluntary Associates is an interesting omission. In some areas other community groups are used in activities with clients. In Newcastle and Surrey for instance, pupils from secondary schools have been involved in two different projects: one a day centre for alcoholics, the other a short-stay hostel for young people. What evidence there is supports the case for the use of a wider range of people from the community than that represented by voluntary associates. There is ample evidence that the Probation Service and other statutory agencies are beginning to use ex-offenders as a volunteer resource.

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

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

The Home Office Inspectorate with their national overview could offer leadership and initiative in this. They have been interested for a number of years in the 'community work of the Probation Service'. In 1970 the Home Office sponsored a week's course on the subject at the University of York; in 1971 a paper on the theme was read by an inspector at the C.P.O/H.O. Annual Conference; in 1975 a special interest group was set up to consider the community work of the Probation Service; in 1976 an inspector of long standing was sponsored for a full-time course at the National Institute of Social Work on Community Work and Social Policy. We await the fruits of this long period of gestation.
Chapter 8

Summary

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

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

Community Involvement as a Process.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Some criteria are clearly required and we therefore suggest the following framework for considering community involvement projects:
1. Is this method likely to best meet the needs of the client, i.e., does it help the client?

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

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

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

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

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

Chapter 9

Implications for the Organisational Setting

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

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

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

Barbara Butler of Brunel University advocates one way to alleviate unnecessary suffering and bewilderment caused to people as they come up against welfare systems: this is to develop community support units. On the assumption that human beings are
not readily adaptable to mass group life, this means essentially going 'small-scale'. Certainly some officers think that multi-team groupings make involvement in communities difficult.

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

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

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

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

Few officers live in the neighbourhood which they serve, and this is another factor which limits involvement with the community. One remedy is for the Service to make available for probation officers housing in the centre of communities.
In summary, the extent to which the Service fulfils its commitment to be involved with the community depends partly on the way it organises its physical context, the location, size and type of its office accommodation, its method of work allocation and work sharing, and its staffing policy in so far as staff are encouraged to become mobile. Increase in efficiency in one direction may be accompanied by a lessening of community involvement in another. The organisation of the Service's personal and physical resources as an unconscious defence against the community remains a real possibility.
Chapter 10

Implications for Resources

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

To summarise: greater community involvement requires only very limited additional material resources. Of more importance is the need for greater flexibility in the use of our present resources of buildings and manpower, and it is the non-material resources of authority and resourcefulness of which we are most in need.
Chapter 11

Recommendations

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

We make the following specific recommendations:–

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"The philosophy of community work is simple: it has to be
since no two community workers seem able to agree on more
than the most rudimentary aspects of their work. It appeals
alike to the left and right-wing schools of thought, being
in one way an extention of 'power to the people' and direct
action, and in the other an extention of Victorian self-help.

The idea was presented to us by a member of our staff who
had just done a course on it in York. We had been wondering
about the problem of community involvement and Voluntary
Associates for some time, very conscious that when working
in a totally impoverished area our casework contribution
was a drop in the ocean. We immediately saw the concepts
as relevant to our work with clients, but whether there was
more to it than the basic idea of helping a community to
help itself, I simply do not remember from those days. That
was the simple fascinating idea and we set out as a group
to find the means to implement it.

As probation officers we did the natural thing and looked
for the area with the greatest concentration of referrals
to ourselves. This approach violates all the best community
work ideals but in itself validated our involvement. We
considered all our listed supervision, probation and after-
care cases, and the densest pocket was the Haggerston Estate,
a badly run down G.L.C. property surrounded by Hackney estates,
giving all the outward appearances of dereliction and decay.
Even if we had thought of involving tenants in our planning,
we were not able at the time to think of anyone suitable.

After investing in a series of very wearing meetings, the
Project Management Committee was formed. With it came the
first direct benefit for myself: I rapidly developed a wide
network of contacts, people who were involved closely with
Haggerston in all sorts of ways, and whose co-operation has
made my day to day work so much easier. In particular I
should mention the health visitor whose caseload substantially
overlapped my own, and Centreprise, whose advice and
experience was invaluable.

As a young and inexperienced officer, like so many London
officers at any given moment, I acquired through an area-
based operation a network of positive contacts which might
otherwise have taken years to grow. We worked together as
a team and by Spring 1972 launched a play group to be run
by local mothers in the hope that this might provide the
first grouping from which other things might grow. It was quickly followed by a Summer holiday project for all the school children in the area. Before the thing was even off the ground its practical value was clear. The Fire Brigade put on record the fact that school holidays involved them in a trip to the estate every two days on average, but over this six-week period they were called only once. Vandalism is an important indicator of social breakdown. Our intervention was almost immediately justified and demonstrated in the field of juvenile delinquency.

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

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

We saw on the next estate an early spin-off from Haggerston when a couple of our most problem-laden families initiated their own play group. I would never have dreamed of asking them to do so from my own social work perspective, but they had the drive, and the achievement might have helped them
with their problems. Some of our clients are very well integrated in their own area and have a great capacity to take on social work tasks despite their personal problems. If we have given them the right opportunity, the resources we use up in doing so turn into permanent capital investment as we increase the resources available in an area to cope with social problems.

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

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

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

Some Community Projects in Other Areas

1. **Nottingham**

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

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

2. **Liverpool**

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

3. **Sheffield**

An advertisement put out by the South Yorkshire Service reads:

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

Qualified social workers or probation officers are invited to apply.

The work of the four detached probation officers is based on a house run by them in a very seedy part of the city and their object is to make contact with and care for drug addicts and prostitutes.
They have facilities for putting people up over night and then they continue work with them in the community during the day. They have some contact with other probation officers but seem to work mostly on their own. They have run an evening club at the Day Training Centre and have started a 'drop in' centre attached to the probation offices.
Appendix 'C'

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


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

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

It has three main aims:

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

the value for personal fulfilment of belonging in a community.

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

ASPECTS OF THE COMMUNITY WORK FUNCTION

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

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

Community planning and policy formulation. This includes the collection and presentation of relevant social data, analysis of the effect on people and on existing organisations of economic and technical developments, and of population changes on the need for services and facilities, and drawing up proposals for social policy decisions in the light of this information."
A good deal has been written about the content and direction of social change - my view is that the key to this is the allocation of resources in the direction of disadvantaged groups and disadvantaged areas.

A PROBATION SERVICE PERSPECTIVE

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

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

A JOB DEFINITION

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

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

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

TASKS

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

2. To identify the needs and problems of clients (other than their delinquency) related to poverty, housing stress and unemployment etc.
3. To make links between 1 and 2 - i.e. between environmental stress and delinquency - including types of delinquency.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- 39 -
Appendix 'D'

Bibliography


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


END