

# Cumbria Probation Area

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique reference number:</b>	58737
<b>Name of lead inspector:</b>	Stephen Miller HMI
<b>Last day of inspection:</b>	8 April 2011
<b>Type of provider:</b>	Probation Trust
<b>Address:</b>	Lime House The Green Wetherall Carlisle CA4 8EW
<b>Telephone number:</b>	01228 560057

Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) Ofsted works in partnership with Her Majesty's Inspectorates of Prison and Probation and inspects the management and provision of learning and skills for offenders across the whole range of custodial establishments and probation areas. Inspections may include those serving whole or part of their sentence in the community.

Inspectors judge the quality of the provision against the common inspection framework for Further Education and Skills from September 2009 and contribute to the inspection frameworks of Her Majesty's Inspectorates of Prisons and Probation.

The following text is Ofsted's contribution to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation's OMI 2 report. A copy of the published inspection report can be found on [www.inspectorates.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmiprobation/inspect\\_reports/](http://www.inspectorates.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmiprobation/inspect_reports/)

## **Information about the probation area**

Cumbria Probation Trust (CPT, the trust) is the third geographical largest probation area in England and Wales and covers approx 2,600 square miles. The county's population is largely rural and has the second lowest population density among English counties. Cumbria is regarded as a safe place to live, and recorded crime is low. However, although parts of the county appear quite affluent there are significant pockets of deprivation with high levels of unemployment. There are also significant parts of the county with sparse and isolated communities with limited access to public transport and services.

Cumbria is also one of the country's least ethnically diverse counties, with 96% of the population categorised as indigenous White British around 480,000 of the 500,000 Cumbrians. However, the minority ethnic population of larger towns is closer to the national average.

The trust's headquarters are at Wetherall on the outskirts of Carlisle. Probation offices are located in Carlisle, Penrith, Whitehaven, Workington, Kendal, Barrow, and a small number of probation staff based at Her Majesty's Prison Haverigg, a category C prison. The approved premises for offenders provide accommodation for up to 24 male residents. The trust has two local delivery units. One serves the populations in the north and west and the other serves the south of the county. The trust employs around 182 staff. In 2010 Cumbria Probation Trust managed 2,208 supervision orders and 435 offenders released on license, 1,793 standard delivery reports and 663 fast delivery reports were produced for the courts they serve. Offenders completed 89,406 hours of work on community payback of which 17,757 were completed in individual placements.

### **Information about the offender learning and employability providers:**

<b>Lead providers and their subcontractors</b>	<b>Number of learners on discrete provision</b>	<b>Types of provision</b>
ACHIEVE	212	Employability skills training/literacy numeracy
BTCV( formally known as the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers)	40	Information advice and guidance
BTCV	15	Employability skills training
Lakes college	8	Variety of vocational courses
Routes to work	2	Employability skills
In Training	2	Various vocational courses.
Furness College	Variable	Literacy, numeracy/ vocational courses

Other providers	Number of learners	Type of provision
Phoenix Enterprise	Variable	Employability skills
West Coast Learning	Variable	Literacy, numeracy
Lawson's	Variable	CSCS / health and safety courses
MBW Training	Variable	Online learning employability skills

## Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

<b>Overall effectiveness of provision</b>	<b>Grade</b> satisfactory
---	---------------------------

<b>Capacity to improve</b>	<b>Grade</b> satisfactory
----------------------------	---------------------------

	<b>Grade descriptor</b>
Quality of provision	good
Assessment and sentence planning	
Implementation of interventions	
Achieving and sustaining outcomes	satisfactory
Leadership and management	satisfactory
Equality and diversity including aspects of safeguarding	satisfactory

## Overall effectiveness, including capacity to improve

The trust's systems for referring offenders to education training and employment activities were good. Access to, and the quality of, information advice and guidance were good. Assessment of offenders was satisfactory overall but the results of assessment were not shared between different providers. Offender managers had insufficient information and awareness of the range of education training and employment activities and received insufficient information on offenders' progress.

Teaching, learning and coaching were good with a wide variety of strategies to engage offenders. A wide range of provision was available to offenders with a good focus on personal development and employability skills. Offenders received good levels of support that met their individual needs. Community payback projects placed a strong emphasis on helping offenders develop good employability skills, but these were insufficiently recorded to use as evidence for employers. Overall attendance at

education training and employment courses was low. Offenders achievement of qualifications were satisfactory with good development of employability and personal skills

Senior managers had a clear direction for the development of learning and skills. Good and effective partnership links to expand the range of provision had been made. Equality and diversity were satisfactory with appropriate arrangements in place to support offender vulnerability.

The trust's capacity to improve was satisfactory. The range of community payback projects had improved and access across the county to a variety of education training and employment opportunities had significantly increased. The processes to assess the overall quality of provision were underdeveloped and no overall self-assessment report was in place. Data were collected but not sufficiently analysed. This was the first inspection for Cumbria probation with no previous inspection report available

### **What does Cumbria Probation Trust need to do to improve further?**

- Improve the information and understanding of offender managers on the range of education training and employment interventions and ensure that information on assessment and progress is shared with offender managers and all providers.
- Introduce a system to better record and evidence work skills developed on community payback to enable offenders to recognise their progress and use as evidence to employers.
- Implement self-assessment arrangements and use data analysis effectively as a tool to measure, evaluate and further improve the education training and employment provision.

### **Offender perspective - learning and employability as confirmed by inspectors.**

A total of 33 offenders were seen and spoken to as part of the inspection process, individually or in groups. Offenders spoke highly of the personal and employment support they received on their programmes. They liked the teaching and coaching, particularly the high levels of individual support they received, and considered the help they received as above and beyond that expected before starting their programmes. Offenders liked the way they were treated and felt that there was a good level of mutual respect between them and staff. Offenders on community payback liked the opportunity to improve their community and many enjoyed their work. They enjoyed being part of a team and the way they were consulted about how tasks should be planned. Offenders thought they were well prepared at induction for their work and they liked the strong emphasis on health and safety. Offenders wanted more projects in areas closer to where they lived, to reduce travelling, and more opportunities to choose the type of projects they did.

## **Main inspection report**

### **The quality of provision**

**Grade** good

#### Assessment and sentence planning

The trust's systems for referring offenders to education training and employment were good and well understood by staff. Achieve, who were located within probation premises, provided a good point of reference for referrals. Based on a thorough assessment of offenders' needs they referred offenders to their own commissioned provision or to other independent providers, particularly for the provision of literacy, numeracy and language support.

Careers information and guidance were good. Offenders had good access to careers information and guidance throughout the county. Staff were knowledgeable and had a wide range of experience both inside and outside the probation trust. They had a good understanding of local employment opportunities. Assessment of need had a clear focus on assessing offenders' skills and aspirations, and ensuring that goals and action plans were realistic and linked to improving employment prospects.

Offender managers made sufficient referrals to education, training and employment assessments to exceed their national targets. The process for referral to assessment was clear. Assessments made by offender managers and providers were not sufficiently well shared and assessments were frequently duplicated. Offender managers had insufficient information on the types of interventions that were available for offenders. Feedback from referrals of offenders to education, training and employment interventions was insufficient for offender managers to use effectively at supervision or reviews with offenders. The use of court orders directing offenders to an education training employment intervention was infrequent, with no clear understanding of where this would be beneficial to the offender.

Offenders' assessments for community payback work were good. Offenders' prior skills were matched, where possible, to available work. Health assessments were made to establish suitability of work projects.

#### Implementation of interventions

The provision to improve the employment prospects of unemployed offenders was good. The range of interventions clearly met their needs in developing employability skills and preparing them for employment opportunities.

A wide range of provision was available, from that which catered for offenders who were job ready to those who lacked confidence and self esteem and required

significant amounts of individual support. Teaching, learning and coaching were generally good and successfully engaged learners. Teaching staff were skilled at working with offenders and used a variety of strategies to motivate learners. Assessment of progress was timely and recorded appropriately; action planning and target setting were generally effective. Offenders on construction courses at the Lakes College used photographic evidence to demonstrate the skills they had acquired and the successful projects they had completed. Reviews of progress were frequent and good feedback was provided to offenders.

Tutors established good working relationships in supportive learning environments. Offenders received very helpful individual coaching and remained interested and motivated throughout their learning sessions. On some programmes, a well produced range of detailed and thorough action plans, containing short steps, guided and supported offenders effectively in their development of vocational knowledge and understanding during their learning activities.

Literacy and numeracy were integrated well into many of their programmes. For example, offenders working on a gardens project used numeracy skills in calculating areas and laying out vegetable beds. In theory sessions they were encouraged to write about the progress they had made during their practical activities in the garden.

Offenders in approved premises benefited from the well paced learning sessions which engaged and motivated them. Although taught by non teaching staff, good working relationships had been established and a range of relevant practical activities were used to maintain the interest of offenders and develop personal skills in preparing them for employment.

Access to learning and skills provision was good and facilitated through an extensive variety of interventions from a range of organisations. For example BTCV, had a clear focus and an extensive range of interventions that included work-placement opportunities, entry to paid employment, college programmes and accredited courses in literacy, numeracy and language. Recently introduced basic food hygiene courses used fresh products grown in their own garden and maintained by a group of offenders. Good access to specialist providers supported offenders in their learning activities.

Cumbria Probation Trust provided a good variety of community payback projects with a good focus on improving employability skills. Some key activities such as the fencing of environmental areas and horticulture projects provided good opportunities for offenders to develop skills that would improve their employment prospects within the local area. Community payback projects focused on providing a variety of opportunities for offenders to develop work skills and provided meaningful work. Offenders recognised the value of their work to their local communities and most offenders enjoyed their activities. Beneficiaries valued the work carried out by offenders. Offenders were included in planning each task and produced a written project plan. Offenders with higher skill levels were matched with the less experienced to help them develop new skills quickly. Supervisors placed a strong emphasis on health and safety. Standards of behaviour and clear guidance for

offenders were established at a very effective pre-placement session. The good personal and vocational skills developed by offenders were insufficiently recorded to enable offenders to recognise the progress they had made and how this could be used to improve employment prospects.

Offenders were clear about how they could convert part of their community payback sentence to an education or training course. This was well promoted at the pre-placement to work induction and during job skills sessions. During 2010 around 223 offenders took the opportunity to utilise part of their sentence for training.

Offenders received good support to help produce curriculum vitae (CV's), carry out job search activities and deal with disclosure. Staff were skilled at encouraging offenders and helping them feel positive about their abilities. Clear and realistic guidance was provided on employment opportunities and how to apply for and produce a job application. Staff had a good understanding of the local labour market and were realistic in guiding offenders' aspirations. They were skilled at supporting offenders with complex needs such as mental health, accommodation, finance and personal development issues. Individual specialist support was available for offenders requiring help with developing their literacy and numeracy skills. Some providers supported offenders by helping with travel costs or providing taxis to planned sessions. Drop in sessions for job search activities were available with many of the providers.

## **Achieving and sustaining outcomes**

**Grade** satisfactory

Offenders developed good personal and employability skills on a variety of community payback projects. Offenders demonstrated good problem solving and team working skills with a good work ethic. Feedback from offenders indicated that a significant number valued the skills they developed and could recognise how this could improve their employment prospects. Offenders had a good understanding of health and safety and used equipment in a confident and safe way.

In the last three years the trust has met their nationally set targets for referrals to education, training and employment. In 2009/10 around 40% of offenders referred to a course were successful in gaining a qualification; this had been maintained in the 2010/11 period. Achievement on short one day courses was high; however the number of courses currently available had reduced due to funding cuts.

In 2009/10, the trust exceeded its national target for the number of offenders under supervision who found sustained employment on discharge of the order with around 50% being successful.

Much work had been undertaken by providers to improve attendance on planned education training and employment sessions although some improvements had been made attendance at around 50% remained low.

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade** satisfactory

Senior managers had a clear direction for the development of the learning and skills provision throughout the county and a strong focus on improvement. Senior managers had responded well to the changes in funding sources and had worked hard at providing direction for the trust to meet the new environment. Links with partner agencies were good and placed a clear focus on extending and maximising the available provision throughout the county. The trust worked closely with key partners who have clearly defined areas of interventions with offenders. The trust's recent review of its strategy for referrals to education training and employment had led to changes that better supported offenders, improving the role of offender managers in the process. The trust recognised the need to recruit and appoint an education, training and employment manager, to have overall responsibility for the operational aspects of the provision.

The provision for community payback was managed well with good links between supervisors and offender managers to ensure that offenders were directed and referred to the most appropriate projects. Less than 1% of community payback sessions were cancelled, which was good.

Equality, diversity, and arrangements to support offender vulnerability were satisfactory. A single equality scheme and action plan were in place. Community payback projects took place at times to accommodate employed offenders. Offenders who required childcare were accommodated well and there was a strong awareness of the needs of women offenders. Adaptive equipment and resources to help accommodate learners' wider needs, such as large text for the visually impaired, were available. High levels of mutual respect were in place between offenders, tutors and supervisors. Standards of behaviour were generally good and inappropriate behaviour was successfully challenged. Offenders received good information on equality and diversity during their pre-placement induction before commencing work. Tutors were skilled at developing equality themes within the sessions to help offenders gain a wider understanding of equality and how this linked to appropriate standards in behaviour.

Safeguarding arrangements to support the vulnerability of offenders were satisfactory. Policies and guidance were clear and supported managers and staff well in their work. A separate policy was in place for the promotion of safeguarding and the welfare of children. All staff received appropriate training. The trust had a strong focus on risk assessment and safe working environments.

Systems for self-assessment and formalised processes for quality improvement were insufficiently developed. The trust did not sufficiently evaluate all aspects of the education training and employment provision to develop a complete overview of strengths and areas for improvement. Although the trust made satisfactory progress against the targets they had set for improvements, and data were collated on a monthly basis, the quality monitoring of key processes to evaluate and assure their effectiveness was insufficient. The systems that were being used to assure the



quality of provision to which offenders were being referred were insufficiently thorough.

The trust's analysis of data was insufficient. Although monitoring and recording of offender learning and skills data were detailed and thorough, the trust had recognised the need to analyse data to provide clear information on the overall success of offenders on an individual course basis.

### **Information about the inspection**

1. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and one additional inspectors, assisted by the Cumbria Probation Trust's head of area interventions as coordinator, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of providers most recent self-assessment reports and development plans, comments from funding bodies and data on offenders achievements.
2. Inspectors used a range of methods to gather the views of learners including group and individual interviews. They also visited learning sessions, assessments or progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from a range of programmes.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)			
<b>Provider Name:</b>	Cumbria probation Trust	<b>Inspection No</b>	366075
<b>Learning types: 14 – 16:</b> Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; <b>16-18 Learner responsive:</b> FE full-time and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including E2E); <b>19+ responsive:</b> FE full- and part-time courses; <b>Employer responsive:</b> Train to Gain, apprenticeships <b>Blank Column:</b> insert Judicial Services or Nextstep as appropriate			

Grades <b>using the 4 point scale</b> 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	<b>Overall</b>					
<b>Approximate number of enrolled learners</b>	250					
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>					
<b>Capacity to improve (No previous inspection)</b>	3					
<b>A. Outcomes for learners</b>	<b>3</b>					
A1. How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	3					
A1.a) How well do learners attain their learning goals?	3					
A1.b) How well do learners progress?	3					
A2. How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2					
A3. How safe do learners feel?	3					
A4. Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*	NA					
A5. How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*	2					
<b>B. Quality of provision</b>	<b>2</b>					
B1. How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2					
B2. How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2					
B3. How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	2					
B4. How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2					
<b>C. Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>					
C1. How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	2					
C2. How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*	na					
C3. How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	3					
C4. How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	3					
C5. How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	3					
C6. How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	4					
C7. How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	3					

\*where applicable to the type of provision

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this report in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 03001231231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester, M1 2WD

T: 03001231231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)