



Thames Valley Probation nominations shortlisted for Howard League for Penal Reform Awards 2011

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Thames Valley Probation is pleased to announce that three projects it has nominated for the Howard League for Penal Reform Community Programme Awards 2011 have been shortlisted.

Last year, Thames Valley Probation won the Howard League for Penal Reform award for its pioneering work on Restorative Justice. The three nominations this year are all partnership projects, with probation working alongside other organisations to reduce re-offending.

Gerry Marshall, Chief Executive of Thames Valley Probation, said: 'I am delighted that the projects we put forward have been shortlisted. They all show how beneficial partnerships are and how working together can provide the best possible service to communities in Thames Valley, alongside rehabilitating offenders and leading them towards crime-free lives.'

The winners will be announced on July 6, 2011 at the awards ceremony, The Kings Fund, London. Awards will be presented by Ian Hislop, the Editor of *Private Eye* and regular panellist on BBC1's *Have I Got News for You*.

Crispin Blunt, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Justice, will be guest speaker at the event.

The three projects are:

Women Category: Alana House, Reading (women's community project) run by Parents and Children Together (PACT)

The centre is run by family support charity Parents And Children Together and will offer a support service for women in Reading. The work is supported by partnerships that include Thames Valley Probation Trust, HMP Bronzefield, Thames Valley Police, Reading Borough Council, Reading Citizens Advice Bureau and several support services for victims of violence, those with substance misuse issues and women with health needs.

The main aims of the centre are to reduce the numbers of women for whom problems escalate to the point that they become involved with the criminal justice system and to strengthen families and community support in the Reading area. The centre provides a 'safe space' for women and children to access services, learn new skills and make changes.

Unpaid Work Category: The Household Cavalry Regiment, Windsor, Berkshire and Thames Valley Probation

Thames Valley Probation has been engaging directly with the Armed Forces since evidence emerged of the increase in ex-service personnel on probation caseloads and in prison. Joint discussions of other shared interests and concerns then developed.

The Household Cavalry Regiment is an individual work placement for offenders completing their Community Payback hours. The placement started in September 2010 on a trial basis, but mutually beneficial arrangements between all parties involved have meant the project has continued to be a success. Since then, 11 offenders have completed 1,118.5hrs of Community Payback work, at no direct cost to the probation service or the general public.

The Household Cavalry placement is different as they are willing to accept a wide range of convictions including violent offenders and offenders that would normally have to be placed within a group setting. Offenders report directly to the Army barracks, are supervised by army personnel and work alongside them to complete a variety of tasks such as gardening, maintenance and cleaning. By placing unemployed offenders at The Household Cavalry,

offenders learn about working within a structured environment and gain work ethics - essential qualities needed to become a contributing member of society, which benefits the wider community.

Education, Training and Employment Category: Thames Valley Probation's Bridge to Employment (B2E) team, working with Milton Keynes College, East Berkshire Colleges and SOVA charity (Supporting Others through Volunteer Action)

Funding and structures for education, training and employment opportunities for offenders are complex and vary across the country. Thames Valley Probation's Bridge to Employment team (B2E) works in partnership with Milton Keynes College, which has the contract to deliver OLASS (Offender Learning and Skills Service) across Thames Valley with the assessment and mentoring often done by other colleges and organisations on their behalf.

To make learning accessible, for many offenders there needs to be a bridging service. This is because offenders do not access existing community provision readily. Many have a track record of avoiding education plus they have chaotic and unstable lifestyles. The bridge helps guide offenders into mainstream provision in an effective way and many go on to achieve successful educational and employment outcomes.

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Notes for Editors

Additional information

Thames Valley Probation works with adult offenders, supervising them through their Community Orders and assisting with rehabilitation. We also supervise offenders released from prison on licence and work with victims of serious crime. The main aim of the service is to increase public protection and reduce the re-offending rate.

For more information, visit our website at: www.thamesvalleyprobation.gov.uk or contact Fiona Tarrant, Communications Manager, Fiona.tarrant@thames-valley.probation.gsi.gov.uk