



Lincolnshire Criminal Justice Board
Annual Report 2007/08

LINCOLNSHIRE
CRIMINAL JUSTICE BOARD

Criminal Justice System: working together for the public





Graham Nicholls
Chair of Lincolnshire Criminal Justice Board
Chief Officer, National Probation Service, Lincolnshire

LCJB Chair summary

In this report we would like to tell you about the work we have been doing on your behalf in the last year. Across the criminal justice system, and with our partner organisations, we have continued to form positive relationships and a better understanding of our respective strengths, assets and constraints to build an even more effective criminal justice system in Lincolnshire that is responsive to the needs of our local communities and increasingly engaged with them.

There is still plenty of work ahead of us, but working together and modernising our services will bring more offenders to justice, make sure that the interests of victims and witnesses are at the centre of our work and ensure that sentences are carried out effectively, in ways that reduce the likelihood of further offending. In achieving this, we will continue to build public confidence in what we do among the communities we serve.

Our work could not be achieved without the skill and dedication of our staff but I would also like to thank particularly those who give their time voluntarily in a wide range of roles and settings to make our services better. To all of them I would like to offer the Board's thanks for their dedication and hard work in making justice in Lincolnshire speedier and fairer for all.

What is the Criminal Justice System?



The criminal justice system works to help create a safer, fairer and more just society by maintaining law and order, and delivering an efficient justice system. It is made up of a number of agencies that work together to reduce crime, bring offences to justice, support victims and witnesses and punish and rehabilitate offenders.

What is the Lincolnshire Criminal Justice Board?

The Lincolnshire Criminal Justice Board (LCJB) is a partnership of agencies involved in the county's criminal justice system (CJS). It is one of 42 Local Criminal Justice Boards set up in 2003 as part of a Government initiative to transform the way the criminal justice system works at local level.

The Board consists of Chief Officers of:

- Lincolnshire Police
- Crown Prosecution Service
- Her Majesty's Court Service (both Magistrates' and Crown)
- Lincolnshire Youth Offending Service
- National Probation Service, Lincolnshire
- Her Majesty's Prison Service

In addition the board includes representatives of:

- The county's Community Safety Partnerships'
- Legal Services Commission

These agencies come together to take a joined up approach to justice and to:

- Improve victim and witness care
- Narrow the justice gap – bring more offences to justice
- Increase public confidence that the criminal justice system works and treats everyone fairly
- Increase court efficiency and effectiveness
- Tackle prolific offenders, including persistent young offenders

Together the agencies are responsible for meeting national targets to improve the criminal justice system for the people who live and work in Lincolnshire, as well as implementing a number of national reform projects:

- The Prosecutors' Pledge
- Conditional cautioning
- Magistrates' Court streamlining (CJSSS)
- Improve victim and witness care

Key stakeholders including Victim Support Plus, local authorities and voluntary organisations played a vital role in supporting the work of the agencies.

Helping to keep Lincolnshire
a safe place to live and work



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Victims and Witnesses

What have we done to improve victim and witness care and to increase the percentage of victims and witnesses that are satisfied with their overall experience of the criminal justice system?

- Our Volunteer Advisory Panel on victim and witness issues has been in operation since 2005 and won a National Justice award in November 2007. The Panel consists of independent members of the public, who identify areas for improvement and areas of best practice across the criminal justice system, in order to ensure that the interests of victims and witnesses are represented and are a core part of criminal justice system business.
- The Board has set up a Victim and Witness subgroup to drive positive change forward across the whole system.
- Victim Support and the Witness Care Units support witnesses at court and provide support to victims of crime.
- The Board has introduced the Witness Intermediary Scheme, ensuring better access to justice for vulnerable people.
- The Board is supporting the development of multi agency risk assessment conferences and specialist domestic abuse courts to support victims of domestic abuse.
- The Board has successfully implemented a Code of Practice for victims of crime, and during 2008/09 will implement the Witness Charter which sets out the standards of services that witnesses of crime can expect to receive from the criminal justice agencies in Lincolnshire.

- The chance of being a victim of crime in Lincolnshire is at the lowest since 1981.
- In the last year the confidence of victims and witnesses in the criminal justice system increased.
- For the first quarter of 2007/08 the percentage of victims and witnesses satisfied with their contact with the criminal justice system increased by 10%, compared to the full year for 2006/07.

Year on year we bring more offences to justice

During 2007/08, 14,755 offences were brought to justice.

CPS Lincolnshire has opened up its decision making process to external scrutiny of the local community by establishing a hate crime scrutiny panel. The panel consists of representatives from the voluntary and community sector; an independent lawyer, senior police and CPS personnel. The panel review a selection of finalised hate crime cases - offences motivated by hate or prejudice - and identify good practice, areas for improvement and suggest areas for change. This will ensure that the best possible service is given to victims and witnesses of hate crime thereby encouraging them to stay within the court process to its conclusion. Community and voluntary representatives will as a result of this process become better informed and equipped to support victims to come forward and report hate crime when it happens.



EVIDENCE

Enforcement

We have worked hard to increase court efficiency and effectiveness, and to ensure high levels of compliance with sentences and orders of the court.

- Under the Proceeds of Crime Act, courts seized over £650,000 of illegal assets.
- We have consistently exceeded our fine enforcement target of 90%.
- We have reduced the number of outstanding fail to appear warrants during the year by 30%.
- We executed 62% of fail to appear warrants for the most serious offences within 14 days, 62% of fail to appear warrants for serious offences within 21 days, and executed 50% of fail to appear warrants for less serious offences within 28 days.

Community Penalties

- Offenders carried out over 62,000 hours of unpaid work worth approximately £ 350,000 (value at minimum wage).

- Breaches of community penalties took no more than 38 working days to be resolved. This was an improvement of 2 days on the previous year.
- We also resolved 60% of cases within 25 working days, meeting our target.

Unpaid Work

Unpaid work is a penalty imposed by courts that requires the offender to complete a specified number of hours of unpaid work that benefits the community.

- Mostly one off projects.
- Clear compensation to the community by unpaid work within local charity and voluntary organisations.
- 62,000 hours of work completed county-wide in 2007/08.
- Projects for 'community payback' nominated by local communities.
- Offenders receive skills training that reduces the risk of further offending.
- Types of unpaid work: building an adventure playground, litter collection, Skegness re-cycling project.

Prolific and Other Priority Offenders (PPOs)

This group of offenders represents the relatively small number of those who commit disproportionately high number of acquisitive offences such as theft and burglary

We have continued to work with Prolific and Other Priority Offenders (PPOs) in order to address their offending behaviour; not only through rigorous uses of appropriate criminal justice processes, but also through the support mechanisms that local schemes are able to provide, assisting individuals to address those areas of their lives that lead them to offend, such as substance misuse, a lack of education and training or problems securing stable accommodation.

- 3 schemes operate within the county based upon police divisions, each having its own multi-agency delivery group.
- Activity is overseen by a new PPO Strategic Management Board set up in October 2007.
- Recent analysis of a sample group of PPOs showed a 22% reduction in offending levels after 12 months on the scheme.

- PPOs are considered for discharge following 12 months compliant behaviour, resulting from effective interventions, treatment and case management.

Persistent Young Offenders (PYOs)

It is of great importance that young offenders, particularly those who commit a relatively high number of offences are dealt with quickly by the courts.

- In 2007 we average arrest to sentence period of 56 days (average 65 days), the equal 6th best performance in the country.

This is an improvement of 36 days over the 2006 performance figure of 92 days. Work was undertaken locally to ensure effective case management of all PYO proceedings, through a multi-agency Case Progression Group. Regular performance monitoring processes with individual case analysis were established along with improved IT systems to make sure that performance information is accurate and up to date.



Public Confidence

- Overall crime has been reduced from 55,217 recorded cases in 2006/2007 to 51,102 in 2007/08, a reduction of 8%.
- Violent crime reduced by 9%, from 9,746 recorded cases in 2006/07 to 8,918 in 2007/08.
- Detections increased to 28% of all reported crime (14,260 cases were detected in 2007/08).
- 79% of people in Lincolnshire said they were satisfied with the service they received from the police.
- The local survey results for 2007/08 indicate that confidence in the criminal justice system in Lincolnshire was closer to 60%.

Focus for 2008/09

- Extending CJSSS into Youth Courts.
- Improving service to victims of domestic abuse.
- Improving the automated flows of information between the agencies using joined up information technology systems.
- Implementation of the Witness Charter to support the Code of Practice for Victims.
- Raising awareness of hate crimes to improve reporting.
- Seeking new ways to encourage public participation in the criminal justice system.

Projects and Initiatives

- Introduction of speedier justice in the Magistrates' Courts (CJSSS).
- Diversion of minor offences away from Court by introducing conditional cautions.
- Support for vulnerable victims and witnesses through the Intermediary Scheme.
- Support to victims at every stage of the Prosecutors' Pledge.

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