INNER LONDON PROBATION AND AFTER CARE SERVICE

DAY TRAINING CENTRE, 123, GROVE PARK, LONDON, SE5.

A PROGRESS REPORT ON THE FIRST OPERATIONAL YEAR

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C O N T E N T S

(1) Introduction

Over the last decade there has been an increasing recognition of the need to find viable alternatives to imprisonment. Lord Justice Scarman, in a recent address to the Howard League, referred to the unsatisfactory results of custodial treatment in rehabilitating the offender. He suggested that there was some evidence that allowing an offender to continue in society, under supervision and control, could operate directly to strengthen his resistance to the pressures and temptations leading him back to crime. 'The policy of the law should be to provide as many alternatives to prison as ingenuity can suggest and our resources permit ... '

The Report of the Advisory Council on the Penal System (H.M.S.O., June 1970) recommended various measures to provide the courts with further alternatives to prison, including community service, hostel provision and the setting up of day training centres. These recommendations were incorporated in the Criminal Justice Act, 1972. Following the introduction of the Act, the Secretary of State set up four experimental day training centres in Sheffield, Liverpool, Pontypridd and Inner London. This report reviews the first year's working of the Inner London Centre.

Sections 20 and 53 of the Act provide that an offender may be made subject to a probation order with the requirement that he attends a Day Training Centre for sixty days, five days a week. Responsibility for his supervision rests with the probation staff at the centre from the date of the order and for a further month following the expiry of the sixty-day training period, when supervision is transferred to the officer serving the area where he lives.

The catchment area of the Inner London centre covers all Petty Sessions areas of Inner London and the City of London. An offender may be referred to the centre if he resides or will reside in one of those areas and has appeared before a magistrates' court in one of them; or has been committed to a Crown Court from a magistrates' court in one of those areas.

The Aim of the Centre

The aim of the centre is to induce change in the offender by involving him in a combination of therapeutic, educational and practical activities which will help and encourage him to examine his previous life-style and behaviour and discover new possibilities in himself and in others. The objective is an ambitious one, and less than a year has elapsed since the first group of men arrived at the centre. Nevertheless there is already encouraging evidence that significant progress can be made in developing greater self-awareness and latent feelings for others, and in assisting a man to perceive and consider different choices in his future behaviour. The experience at the day training centre forms a basis for the subsequent ongoing supervision by the probation officer in the offender's home area.

Setting Up the Centre

The Inner London Day Training Centre is a large detached Victorian house set in its own grounds at 123, Grove Park, Camberwell, S.E.5. It is an attractive and impressive building in an agreeable setting, and provides accommodation of a high standard for the centre's activities. Since its opening the building has been well cared for by those attending the centre, and the value of working in a pleasant and spacious environment has been recognised and appreciated by staff and participants.

The centre opened on 12 November 1973; the director and his staff of six probation officers, together with professional sessional staff and domestic staff, had already been appointed. An orientation course was devised for all the probation officers working at the centre, and careful and detailed planning of the programme was undertaken. A handbook was compiled covering the basic thinking behind the programme and the administrative procedures necessary for the efficient running of the centre. The basic aim was to develop a therapeutic environment within which close personal relationships between all the staff and participants could be achieved; the

realisation of the objectives of the centre was seen as depending on the establishment of a supportive and caring community.

Besides preparing themselves for their new roles, the staff set out to explain the purpose and aims of the centre to courts and probation officers. All magistrates' courts and higher courts in Inner London were visited by pairs of probation officers from the centre, and details of the programme, client profile, referral procedures, etc., were discussed with magistrates and judges. This was an important and necessary exercise, but in some respects a difficult one, since the staff were discussing a project as yet untried and lacked the concrete evidence that would be gained only by operational experience.

To familiarise the probation service with the basic programme and rationale of the project, a series of two-day workshops was arranged at the centre for probation officers and students working in London. The workshops offered a brief experience of the kind of course in which some of their probationers would later be involved. They were intended to demonstrate that the programme was purposely designed to be demanding, provoking and stimulating; and also that the support and opportunities provided when a participant left the centre were as important as what happened at the centre itself.

This preliminary work of planning and preparation occupied some four months. The first group of participants arrived at the centre to start their sixty-day training period on 18 March, 1974.

Referral and Assessment

When an offender is referred by a court his case is adjourned for the centre to assess his suitability, a process that normally takes two days.

As will be seen later in a detailed consideration of the intake, the referral rate has in general been slower than was expected. This has resulted in the centre rarely being used to its full capacity. It has also

affected the programme, since without a regular intake of groups some of the community activities have been limited. Another result has been that the centre has accepted a number of offenders where, at this stage of its growth, there was a possibility of failure.

The assessment process is one of the most significant aspects of the programme. It is aimed at establishing whether or not an offender has a potential commitment to change and, if so, whether he needs the centre to enable him to effect it. For the referring officer it offers a diagnostic service and an opportunity to confer with others on a man's treatment needs. He obtains a second opinion on the man and his difficulties, and a deeper knowledge of him, through the intelligence, performance and personality tests carried out by a psychologist.

Physical examination is also a necessary part of the process, and psychiatric examination may also be carried out. The offender's ability to become involved in the process of change is measured by his participation, for example, in inter-group and art therapy activities.

The results of these various procedures are discussed by the centre staff with the offender and his probation officer. In this way both are made aware of the help the centre may have to offer. The man who is prepared to commit himself may be accepting his need for help for the first time, and for many this is a painful process. The fact is underlined that attendance at the centre is only part of an ongoing probation order with all that this involves.

Ideally the referring probation officer should be closely involved in the initiation of the plan of treatment during the sixty-day period. The involvement of the referring officer with the centre staff and the participant is regarded as an essential aspect of the centre's function in that it maintains the centre's role as an integral part of the Inner London Service. With any new treatment provision, constant vigilance is required in maintaining viable lines of communication and clarification of roles.

(2) The Programme

The model for the centre was based on extensive study of numerous training and therapeutic communities in various fields of health and social work, adapted for application to the field of probation. The centre represents a departure of the probation service from its traditionally recognised role. It is a move away from individual contact with offenders to a group-orientated system, with a further task of organising the specialist staff in the creation of a programme of activities of an educational, therapeutic and practical nature. The probation officer group bears the responsibility for the treatment given by the centre and for the centre's operation. The officers as a group influence all the participants: they are deeply committed to work-sharing and the organisation of resources; they perform a management function in relation to the men and their continued living in the community and they have an intensive contact with them through the small groups. An intensity of involvement and a full commitment to the work of the centre is demanded if the probation officer is to be effective in this role. The boundaries of working with the men are still ill-defined and often the difference between maintaining professional distance and becoming over-involved is minimal. The maintaining of that distance depends on a high degree of professionalism and of mutual staff support, combined with a belief in the project as an exciting and rewarding one.

The primary purpose of the programme is to enable the participants to become aware of the relationship between their feelings and their behaviour, and to provide experience which can make their desire for change take realistic forms. The programme is designed to take in a fresh group of eight or nine participants every four weeks and engage them in activities which are therapeutic, practical and remedial in nature.

When the centre is working to capacity, twenty-five men are participating with the staff in these activities. The small intake groups are the basic working units, and each is supervised jointly by a male and a female probation officer.

When the kind of participants who make up these groups, with all their past experiences, are brought together in a new situation demanding self-help, some stress naturally arises. In the main the probation officers have been able to use the stress to make the group cohesive and form a 'family unit'. For some groups cohesion has not been possible; a divided group then results and the stress continues. Both types of group provide ample opportunities for the men to share their feelings, but the second type is naturally more liable to experience critical periods or even breakdown during the programme.

In the cohesive group it has been found that participants can examine, through the experience they undergo, their earlier life situations and relate these to their current behaviour responses. In the divided group, the frustration and anger resulting from the inability to create a 'family unit' produce fear, depression and behaviour difficulties. These often include excessive drinking and sometimes further delinquency. In spite of this, they usually continue with the programme. Indeed, their chaos makes a contribution to the total life of the community. They learn through the sharing of experiences and acquire some tolerance of the behaviour of others, while the role of giver and helper is no longer the sole prerogative of the staff.

In detail, the programme falls into three categories: therapeutic, practical and remedial. A specimen programme of activities is shown on p. 7.

(i) Therapeutic activities

Therapeutic activities take up almost 50% of the programme. They are the activities in which life experiences are associated with feelings and are in turn related to behaviour and performance. It is from them that the 'real person' is likely to emerge, and without them it is doubtful whether the practical activities would be as fulfilling or the remedial ones possible in many cases.

(a) The Small Group

The basic therapeutic unit is the group to which a participant belongs, and with it he takes part in most of the therapeutic activities in which he is involved.

DAY TRAINING CENTRE PROGRAMME

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
9 - 9.30	C O F F E E *				
9.30 - 11.00	GROUP MEETING	INTER-GROUP ACTIVITY	GROUP MEETING	STAFF MEETING	GROUP MEETING
11 - 11.45	C O F F E E *				
11.15 - 12.45	ART GYM GARDENING	INTER-GROUP ACTIVITY	POTTERY ART CAR MAINTENANCE	GYM GARDENING	MUSIC DO IT YOURSELF WROUGHT IRON
12.45 - 2.00	L U N C H *				
2 - 3.30	ART GYM GARDENING	VIDEO OUTINGS	POTTERY ART CAR MAINTENANCE	HOUSE MEETING	MUSIC DO IT YOURSELF WROUGHT IRON
3.30 - 3.45	T E A *				
3.45 - 5.15	ART GYM GARDENING	VIDEO OUTINGS	POTTERY ART CAR MAINTENANCE	LEADERLESS GROUP	MUSIC DO IT YOURSELF WROUGHT IRON
5.30 - 8.30	CLUB				

* Refreshments and a mid-day meal are provided at the centre without charge to the participants.

The group meets with its probation officer at least three times a week. At these meetings the pattern of the group during its sixty-day life evolves. The task of the group is usually set during the early phases of its life in discussions between the probation officers and participants. The amount of lead given by the probation officers depends on their individual approach. In practice their leadership role lessens during the life of the group, but their authority always remains and becomes a constructive resource for the group.

In working out its task, the group clarifies its reasons for being at the centre, draws up the expectations of everyone concerned - including the courts - from the sixty-day period and, with the help of the probation officers, examines the resources available at the centre. From this, the group goes on to work out guide-lines on what it hopes to achieve from its involvement at the centre, and reviews this from time to time in relation to freshly-perceived realities as its life goes on.

(b) Art Therapy

The small group participates in this activity for one session a week.

Art therapy is a widely practiced form of psychotherapy and is valuable at two levels. One is as a communication from one person to another. The other and deeper level is one at which the individual can make new, non-rational connections that help to match up internal and external reality; i.e., feelings and behaviour. For most people, the potential for self-expression in colour - as in music, dance etc. - has been overlaid by social, educational and familial pressures, but it remains there, latent. Since most social intercourse is at a verbal level, it is there that people's blocks and defences are most effective. Art work by-passes many of these defences. At the same time, people have an inner knowledge of how far and how quickly they may permit themselves to relinquish their defences. The psyche is not wholly logical or rational; and art can penetrate where logic and reason cannot. It can operate at the level of the basic needs

that all people share: the need to love, to be loved, to feel successful, to share things.

The art therapist divides the sessions between an emphasis on communication and on developing imaginative potential. In its aspect as a form of communication, art calls forth from other members of the group responses of confirmation, reassurance, criticism and insight concerning his identity and actions. The work produced has a direct relationship with the individual's behaviour in the centre community and in his outside life; it is therefore important to view the work and the matter arising from it in the context of his real life. It has been found at the centre that the art groups have provided much information about the potentials and the inherent conflicts in members of the group. The time for art sessions is limited, and in working on the material arising from them the art therapist relies on the collaboration of the probation officers in holding on to,re-introducing and working on the feelings evoked by a particular session.

(c) Music Therapy

As with art therapy, groups participate in music therapy for one session a week.

The function of music therapy varies according to the recipient; people ranging from richly-endowed members of the professions to severely subnormal children unable to speak have benefited from it. At the day training centre it is useful in helping the participants to use their 'inner space' dynamically as a rehearsal ground for imagined acts and their possible consequences; to circumvent blocked verbal expression by the release of tension in expressing sound, producing a more fruitful liaison between the unconscious and the conscious; to develop group awareness, and experience at first hand a miniature society working in musical and social harmony; to experience socially acceptable catharsis; to develop awareness of themselves and their relationship to others in the group; to learn to bridge the gap between subverbal body tensions and verbal expression; and to increase the capacity for reflective thought.

Music is a unique therapeutic medium. Besides exercising every part of a person, physical, mental, emotional and spiritual, it takes place dynamically through the medium of time. As a psychotherapy it can modify feelings, allowing for the change of one emotion into another, with a release of tension through the expression of pre-verbal sound. The sessions raise deep issues which are frequently and fruitfully discussed by the participants and their probation officers in the small group meetings.

(d) Role Play

This is used mostly in the early stages of the group's life, a double session being devoted to it in the first few weeks. It is used in conjunction with audio-visual equipment. The form it takes depends on the make-up of the group. In a group where there are strong anti-authority feelings the leader might set up within the group situations with which the participants are familiar in real life where these feelings are strongly aroused, for instance, a court scene. Members of the group play the various roles and act out the scene. Very soon the participants move on from merely simulating appropriate behaviour to showing their real selves. In the play-back and discussion which follow immediately afterwards the participants see themselves as they really are, and their handling of their particular role is clearly seen by all. Their being open to such close examination and criticism is often a painful experience for them but nevertheless they seem on the whole to enjoy the activity. Used at an early stage, its value lies in breaking down barriers and helping to bring the group together. This present use of role-play is rather limited, and its value to the programme could be enhanced by a wider application. The technique offers great scope in the teaching of social skills and, used in conjunction with other activities, opportunities for developing self-awareness.

(e) Self-supporting Groups

These are small groups held weekly in which the group operates without its probation officers. Their success depends very much on the degree to which

the group needs its probation officers to sustain it. The group able to operate independently can achieve a great deal through peer learning and the increased self-esteem which comes from making its own contribution to the life of the community. This, like role-play, is an activity whose potential could be further developed. It could represent the ultimate in participation on the part of the men, but the group has to be one in whose ability the staff has confidence.

(f) Inter-group Activity

This is a community activity in which the small groups merge. It is operated by Playspace, an educational trust aimed at promoting enjoyment, clear communication and, through integration, a more comfortable living and working environment. The Trust has operated at various levels in the rehabilitation of offenders. At the Day Training Centre it offers a variety of techniques to enable the groups to work together through play and discussion. Inter-group activity is based on games theory: as children, we played games and learned by doing so, but as adults we are often too inhibited by social conventions to feel free to express ourselves. Inter-group activity attempts to break through the social conditioning of a person's life experiences and make free expression possible. Enjoyment of life is enhanced by discovering and acknowledging one's particular skills and learning how to use them most effectively. The generally water-tight compartments of work and play spring leaks, allowing a flow of creativity which promotes both integration and enjoyment.

The flexibility of the method not only provides a general therapy but also allows for any particular stress or difficulty the community is experiencing to be explored. For instance, in a rather divided group in its last two weeks at the centre, some of the participants began to behave aggressively. In talking this out in the small group it was found that it related to their fears of leaving the centre. In the inter-group activity, the feelings of

separation, loss, anxiety and depression were explored. The participants were able to relate these feelings to their fears of leaving the centre and express them in a more appropriate way through tears and the expression of qualities of warmth and compassion that had lain dormant for many years. In view of the 'tough, manly' world of prison to which so many have adapted themselves over the years, the experience of acknowledging and expressing such feelings is a hard and painful one. It is also conducive to growth, since the feelings are real and an essential part of human relationships.

The Playspace Trust makes a contribution of fundamental importance to the programme; it is perhaps a process that needs to be experienced to be fully understood.

(ii) Practical activities

The therapeutic activities are compulsory, but a participant selects his own forms of practical activity. The activities include the gymnasium, art, car maintenance, Do-It-Yourself, gardening, pottery and wrought iron work. At any one session a participant will have two or three of these to choose from. They are activities commonly used in many places of treatment, training and rehabilitation, to promote the development of skills and relaxation. Within the programme of the centre they have a particular importance in that - except perhaps for the gymnasium, the one activity in this category that is group-based - they reveal the effect the therapies are having on the participant.

Car maintenance, Do-It-Yourself and wrought iron appeal to the group at certain stages of its life, but it is in the shaping of wood, plastic or metal that the participants encounter problems that expose their lack of skill and knowledge. They are enthusiastic enough in starting to produce articles, but to complete them they need considerable sympathetic help and support. Their lack of confidence is so acute that they are convinced of their inability to produce even the simplest article, and tend to go through the motions of production without putting themselves to the test of finishing it. The

participants who are benefiting most from the therapies are those who face up to the tasks they undertake - in whatever activity it may be - in a reasonably adequate manner. They are able to make use of their relationships, particularly with the instructors, accepting their guidance in the tasks; in other words, they accept their limitations and want to do something about them.

The two practical activities that seem to be always popular are art and pottery. Art is often made use of by those who have considerable difficulty in expressing themselves in a socially acceptable way. They use this activity as an extension of the art therapy sessions, find it satisfying and enjoyable and, at the same time, produce some very exciting work. Clay, like paint, is more malleable than wood or metal, and a lack of skill can be compensated for by the freedom of self-expression. In this way pottery comes nearer to the therapies than most of the practical activities and offers a safer and less vulnerable form of expression. This feeling of safety gives the instructors a better chance of making contact with the participants and of helping them through the relationships that develop. An instructor has commented that 'the experience is more one of learning to exist with others socially than simply learning a skill or creating a series of tactile expressions. At best, it is both; it has rarely been neither.'

(iii) Remedial activities

Three activities fall into this category: remedial teaching, outings and community meetings.

(a) Remedial teaching

It was expected at first that the remedial teacher would largely be dealing with illiteracy, but this has not proved to be the case. Experience with those referred to the centre has shown that most of those who were unable to read and write on completing their educations, and have since spent a lot of time in penal institutions, have already had help with the problem in those institutions. Those

arriving at the centre who have been unable to profit from the facilities offered in prison are heavily defended against learning at all. Nevertheless, even with these marked progress has been made, though the time available is short.

In general, when the emotional barriers to learning are broken down, an ability to use both written and spoken language markedly increases. The remedial teacher is as a result mostly concerned with developing the potential that reveals itself, and some encouraging results have been produced.

(b) Outings

It was at first envisaged that these would be along educational and cultural lines: such as visits to museums, art galleries, theatres, etc. in conjunction with projects at the centre. The activity underwent some changes as the programme evolved. For a time it was seen purely as recreation. The men sought to relive some of the pleasures of their childhood, such as fishing, visiting the seaside, cockling etc. At the present time educational and cultural activities are again coming to the fore, together with community activities. There is a general inclination on the part of the participants to want to contribute to the local scene by helping in various forms of social work. It seems that this activity is likely to settle into the three categories of educational, recreational and helping. The overlapping of the groups ensures a continuity in all three.

(c) The Community Meeting

The whole house meets weekly in the community meeting. Staff and participants are involved in discussing the running of the centre and codes of behaviour are drawn up. The meetings are remedial in that participants are involved in making decisions affecting the whole community. This is often a new experience for them and the implicit responsibility brings strong reactions from them. In the early stages they usually try to create the 'them and us' or 'screws and

cons' situation that brings them control and security when in prison. At later stages their contribution is responsible and reliable. They have to contribute because so much of what goes on in the house affects them and reflects their behaviour and attitude. Talking out rather than acting out situations is not an easy experience for them; nor is living without the chaos that they are accustomed to creating by their behaviour. They gain from learning that destruction does not result, and cope acceptably with the conflicts and rivalries inherent in the group system. The giving of this kind of shared responsibility does not ease the task of the staff, but in the long run aids the purpose of the centre.

(3) The Participants

The professional task of the centre is to provide, as an integral part of the probation service, a course of non-custodial treatment and training that will satisfy both the courts and the community as an effective alternative to imprisonment. The requirement that attendance at the centre shall be for a maximum period of sixty days not only structures the kind of programme that is provided, but also sets certain limits on the type of offender that the centre can help.

In the light of experience a general description becomes possible of those who have been assessed as suitable. They are offenders between 21 and 45 years of age who have considerable histories of delinquency but do not have excessively damaged personalities. Despite their personality difficulties, they have some capacity and commitment to change. They have experienced deprivation and disturbed backgrounds in their early development. Their current behaviour difficulties show themselves in the form of delinquency, poor work records and a low tolerance of frustration. They are largely of the character-disorder type, and as such tend to have a limited set of behaviour responses which lead to a rigid stereotyped life, and correspondingly see others,

as they see themselves, in rigid stereotyped ways.

Up to the end of the first year, 201 offenders had been referred to the centre. Of these, 141 were actually assessed; of the remainder, 35 failed to keep the appointment, 21 had their appointments cancelled prior to assessment (because they committed further offences while on remand or were subsequently found to be ineligible by age or other reason), and 4 were still to be assessed.

Of the 141 assessed, 81 were found suitable and were made subject to probation orders with a condition of attendance at the centre. (The actual number of orders was 83, since two men had second orders made on them). Eleven more were found suitable but were disposed of in some other fashion by the courts; 46 were considered unsuitable; and three were still awaiting the courts' decisions.

Of the 81 accepted, 56 were single and 25 married. Four of the married men were separated and either divorced or in the process of being divorced; ten had severe marriage problems with long periods of separation, and the remaining eleven had reasonably stable marriages.

The average age of the 81 men was 30 with a range of ages from 20 to 48. One was a registered drug addict who markedly reduced his dosage while at the centre. Four others had used pills frequently and others had used them when available; but none was unfit or unable to undertake the programme.

Of the 81 upon whom orders were made, five failed to start, either because they received prison sentences for further offences before the course began, or absconded. 46 have completed the course satisfactorily, 16 are currently attending and six are awaiting the commencement of a course. The remainder have failed to complete the course; some committed further offences for which they received prison sentences; some had prolonged periods of sickness; one disappeared, and one could not accept the programme, and the probation order was modified to remove the condition of attending the centre.

Date of referral

So far nine groups, each numbering six to nine participants, have started at the centre. The dates of starting, and intervals between them, are as follows:

Group	Date of Starting	Number of weeks after previous group
1	18 March 74	-
2	29 April 74	6
3	20 May 74	3
4	1 July 74	6
5	27 August 74	8
6	16 September 74	3
7	11 November 74	8
8	20 January 75	10
9	24 February 75	5

It will be seen that during the first year of the project the centre has usually been running at less than maximum capacity. The referral rate has been disappointing, though it has to be recognised that an experimental project of this type takes time not only to establish itself but also to become accepted by the courts and the probation service. The centre needs a higher rate of referrals from the probation service; as the second year of the three-year experiment starts, it is hoped that the centre will be seen more clearly as an integral part of the Inner London service. This should be aided by its incorporation since 1 January 1975 within the Southwark region; before this it was more in isolation as a specialist unit.

Previous Records

A detailed analysis was made of the records of 117 offenders coming to the centre between March 1974 and February 1975. Nearly all had at least one

larceny offence on their records (the average number of larceny convictions was 11.6); 56% had committed offences connected with motor-cars; 52% had been convicted of violence, and 38% of fraud. Robbery, sex offences and arson were represented by 15%, 6% and 4% respectively. Rape and homicide did not appear on any of the records. Drugs and drink offences appeared on 19% and 18% of the records respectively, though 46% said they had taken drugs on more than one or two occasions, and 32% admitted either frequent drunkenness or having been picked up by the police for being drunk. The 18% of drinking offences included convictions of driving under the influence of drink.

A small percentage, i.e. 17%, had been heavily involved in crime as a means of making money. 43% had been dependent on crime 'from time to time'. 40%, however, had either never made money from crime, or had never had a financial motive for their offending pattern of behaviour; they were, in other words, irrational offenders. Only 12% had never served either a borstal or a prison sentence (except on remand). The average time actually spent in a penal institution was 30.5 months; 'sentenced' time was approximately four years. 38% had been separated from their parents before the age of 15.

Various offences have been committed by participants while attending the centre. These have included theft, shoplifting, taking and driving away, and being drunk and disorderly. Except for the three who received prison sentences - one of whom appealed and in due course returned to the centre to start with another group - all have come back to the centre to finish the course, having received either a fine, a conditional discharge, an absolute discharge or a deferred sentence. Altogether, thirteen have committed offences while at the centre; two more had to appear before the court while at the centre for offences committed previously.

While at the centre, participants receive an allowance in line with supplementary benefit rates. Where a man has been receiving supplementary benefit immediately before attending the centre, the same rate of allowance is usually paid, plus the fares to the centre. In other cases, the amount is calculated by the executive officer of the centre in accordance with D.H.S.S. procedures, a home visit being made if necessary. The centre is responsible for paying allowances during the period of attendance, and payment of exceptional needs grants, such as clothing grants, are also made as necessary. Decisions on such payments are normally made after discussions with the probation staff, the director and, when necessary, the D.H.S.S. and the home probation officer.

(4) The Staff

The full-time staff of the centre number sixteen, including the director, six probation officers, the executive officer, secretarial staff and telephonist, ancillary worker, cook and assistant cook, and gardener.

The sessional staff of sixteen includes the art therapist, three music therapists, two Playspace staff, the remedial teacher, instructors in pottery, art, wrought iron work and do-it-yourself, an expert in inter-action role-play, an adviser on accommodation and employment, a psychiatrist and a psychologist.

The executive officer is responsible for the day-to-day running of the centre in matters such as the obtaining of supplies, control of expenditure, catering, building maintenance, dealing with supplies for and fees of specialist instructors, supervision of secretarial and ancillary staff, and the payment of allowances.

Because of the close ties that develop between staff and participants, staff support groups are regarded as of major importance. Probation staff are joined by the visiting psychiatrist and psychologist in a weekly discussion group where problems of involvement with the men and management of the work

with them are discussed. Probation officers also have a fortnightly meeting with the director at which professional and business matters are dealt with. The house staff meet the probation staff in a fortnightly meeting to discuss problems of involvement and the running of the house.

(5) Relations with the Local Community

When the centre opened the Chief Probation Officer set up a consultative committee whose members included a number of local residents, representatives of the police and members of the staff of the centre. Opportunities are constantly sought of increasing the centre's involvement in the life of the local community and familiarising the community with the work of the centre.

(6) Conclusions

The success of the project must ultimately be measured by the reconviction rate of those who have left the centre. It is still too early for firm data on this to be available. At the present stage there is little more to go on than general observations of the changes that occur during a participant's time at the centre and of his ability to adjust his life-style afterwards. Undoubtedly many have been better equipped by their experience to use the help of their probation officer in improving their social functioning. Some have acquired a new dignity from the recognition that their offences were a form of social suicide, and have accepted that they have used prison as a refuge or a means of controlling their worst fears or feelings. They are able to accept the need for medical treatment and to respond to it. Dormant skills have emerged or re-emerged, sensitive and warmer feelings have been aired without fear, learning has become easier and failure not so debilitating. Often the degree of influence seems marginal, but the overall results are encouraging. On the negative side, some participants have become too dependent on the centre, or have been unable to use the experience profitably.

Others may need secondary forms of treatment which the centre has not been able to provide or organise, and priority is being given to this aspect in discussing the centre's development.

Research into the project is being undertaken by the Home Office Research Unit, which bases its work on an examination of changes of attitude in the participants at all four Day Training Centres. There is scope for other research, particularly in the field of referral.

It seems clear that the fact of being accepted for the centre in itself gives offenders new hope. Many feel that they have something to give, and wish to work in communities where their life experiences and institutional experiences enable them to contribute something of value. Others become interested in the idea of moving on to sheltered workshops where they could test out the new confidence they have acquired in basic skills. Many could usefully participate in supported work programmes such as those developed by the Inner London Service in conjunction with the VERA Institute of Justice, New York.

The programme of the centre is a complex and relatively expensive one, but it must be borne in mind that those accepted are among the most deprived and emotionally debilitated members of society. Many have been damaged to such a degree that their capacity to function on their own has been gravely and perhaps fundamentally impaired. At the centre, barriers between staff and participants are broken down as a result of the closer communication and understanding that develops within the democratic structure of the community. Many of the participants experience themselves and their potential for growth for the first time. Much of this cannot be achieved without stress and anxiety and parts of the programme can be extremely painful. The participants constantly refer to the contrast between their experience at the centre and the

prison situation, where it is easy to avoid looking at difficulties of personality or relationships, to deny one's own responsibility for one's own actions, and to remain isolated.

Much is to be learned from previous experimental projects in the penal field, so many of which have started out with high hopes which have not been fully realised; the initial impetus has been lost with time, institutional structures have taken over and counter-cultures have developed, inhibiting spontaneity, imagination and initiative. The staff regards it as important to bear these dangers always in mind and to seek to retain the fundamental principles with which the centre began its work.

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