Offender Managers & Sentence Planning

What is an Offender Manager?

Offender Managers (OMs) are responsible for assessing what each offender requires, and for planning and co-ordinating the delivery of each case on their caseload. Offender Managers will usually be probation staff employed by Probation Boards, and will usually be based in the community.

However, during the middle phase of long-term imprisonment, frequent face-to-face work by the Offender Manager is unlikely to be either feasible or necessary. Consequently, in such cases, an Offender Supervisor will be appointed who will be responsible for implementing the sentence plan on a day-to-day basis within custody. It is the Offender Supervisor’s job to help the offender to make links between one intervention and another; to consolidate learning in to consistent behaviour in the offender’s social environment; and to promote compliance, monitor progress, and hold formal reviews with the Offender Manager at appropriate intervals so as to provide updates of the offender’s movement through his/her sentence plan.

An Offender Supervisor may be a Prison Officer, Prison Custody Officer, or other member of staff with the appropriate skills, including seconded Probation Staff, and they will usually be based within the Offender Management Unit at the prison.

In the community however, the Offender Manager usually acts as, and carries out the role of, both the Offender Manager and the Offender Supervisor. In some instances, however, an offender in the community may be provided with a separate Offender Supervisor to their Offender Manager in order to match staff capacity with demand. The Offender Supervisor, who in this instance may be referred to as Probation Service Officers, will work in close partnership with the Offender Manager, who are typically qualified Probation Officers.

Who has an Offender Manager?

All adult offenders with a determinate sentence of 12 months or more, all adult offenders with an indeterminate sentence, and all young adult offenders (aged 18 – 21) with more than 4 weeks to serve will have an offender manager / supervisor to manage their case.
What does an Offender Manager do?

Offender Managers are seen to be the ‘Responsible Officer’ and therefore have a duty, as per the Criminal Justice Act 2003, to:

- Make arrangements in connection with the requirements of the sentence
- Promote the offender’s compliance
- Take enforcement action as required

More specifically, Offender Managers:

- **Assess** the offender’s criminogenic needs and their associated risks (including risk of harm and risk of vulnerability), using the Offender Assessment System, or OASys for short. This helps them to identify the reasons for offending, and what may lead to reoffending, for example, money problems, issues with drugs and/or alcohol, lack of skills or qualifications, relationship problems, or a lack of suitable accommodation. The Offender Manager will collect information from a wide range of sources so as to complete their assessment, including from other agencies working with the offender, police files in regards to this particular offence, whether there have been any previous convictions, and the views of the offender him/herself.

- **Sentence Plan** – The Offender Manager will then be required to create a sentence plan based on the OASys assessment, alongside the requirements of the sentence and the resources available. The sentence plan is like an action plan, and will identify what the offender needs to do / what changes they need to make in order to try and prevent further offending behaviour. The Offender Manager will also be responsible for promoting and monitoring the offender’s compliance with their sentence plan, and for deciding who is to do what and when in order to meet all of the objectives on the plan. The scope of the plan should span the whole of the sentence. In order for the sentence plan to be meaningful to the offender, it is therefore vital that they engage in the assessment process and with the creation of the sentence plan, identifying appropriate objectives and interventions for themselves.

- **Implement** – The Offender Manager then needs to ensure that the Sentence Plan is implemented, and will arrange for appropriate activities and interventions to be delivered so as to address the offending behaviour and any associated needs. Interventions may be either mandatory or discretionary in respect the Offender Manager and either

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mandatory or voluntary on the part of the offender. In nature, they tend to be either:
- Restrictive / Punitive e.g. custody, HDC ‘tag’;
- Rehabilitative, e.g. accredited offending behaviour programmes, so as to facilitate change and to encourage the offender to learn new, pro-social attitudes and ways of behaving, for example, “Controlling Anger and Learning to Manage It (CALM)” – a course to assist with controlling negative emotions
- Restorative / Reparative, e.g. community service, so as to repair the harm caused to victims / the community. Restorative / Reparative interventions do tend to be more common for young offenders, however, some form of victim awareness should be included in most sentence plans.

- **Review** – The Offender Manager will be responsible for a continuous process of reviewing the OASys assessment and the sentence plan to ensure that these are still accurate and relevant, revising them as necessary. This therefore ensures that any changes in the offender’s needs, or any progress / regression made in terms of their offending behaviour is accounted for. Assessments and sentence plans may need to be re-shaped in the event of further offending and re-conviction, or as a result of changes in the offender’s lifestyle, circumstances or risk factors.

- **Evaluate / enforce** – The Offender Manager must evaluate the outcomes against the targets laid out in the sentence plan. Where the offender has not complied with the sentence plan, i.e. has breached, the Offender Manager will also be responsible for carrying out enforcement action. Enforcement requirements are largely a feature of the community phase of an offender pathway.

**How to contact your Offender Manager…**

In the community, you can contact your Offender Manager by speaking with your local probation office or your usual probation worker.

In custody, you can contact your Offender Supervisor by submitting a General Wing Application, which your Offender Supervisor should respond to.