

## DIANE CURRY AWARDED OBE

POPS would like to celebrate the achievement of Diane Curry, Director of Operations. In recognition of her work with Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) offenders and offenders' families. Diane has been awarded an OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours 2006 and will be receiving her award at the Palace within the next 6 months.

Diane Curry has championed issues affecting BME offenders and their families for over ten years. Some of her work has focused on the Black Prisoner Support Project (BPSP) in POPS and the National Body of Black Prisoner Support Group (NBBPSG).

The BPSP focuses on raising awareness of issues that affect BME offenders and strives towards ensuring equality of service for BME offenders. For over ten years, Diane has worked to ensure that those who have a statutory responsibility for BME offenders were addressing their specific needs. Diane has stated that the acceptance of the existence of institutional racism has been a major step forward in the prison service and the work she does.

Some of the services the BPSP have provided over the years have been:-

- 1-1 casework (Project funded by National Probation Service, Greater Manchester)
- Community based mentoring (Project funded by National Probation Service Greater Manchester)
- Black Prisoner Groupwork programme; delivering monthly group sessions to black men in custody in six prisons (funded by individual prisons).



Diane Curry OBE, POPS Director

The Black Prisoner programme is the current project that POPS is running and it aims to provide Black men with an understanding of their culture, provide empowerment and build confidence. The group also educates Black Offenders about how to make a complaint about any racially discriminate incidents, provides support to those offenders and enables their voice to be heard. All the group work sessions work towards a presentation in October to celebrate Black History Month.

The NBBPSG through its "Seed 4 BME" provides advice, information and capacity training to those wanting to develop services for BME offenders. It also organises conferences and policy consultation opportunities between NBBPSG members and Criminal Justice agencies.

Diane has vast experience in working for nine years within the Voluntary Sector of the Criminal Justice System and she also is a qualified social worker (BA Hons in Social Work Studies). Everyone at POPS and all the people Diane has helped in her career are extremely proud of her achievement.

Joseph Ganley, Junior Administrator

## REACTION TO DIANE'S AWARD

*"Congratulations on your well-deserved award"*

Ian Lockwood CBE,  
HMPS North West Area Manager

*"It couldn't have happened to a nicer person"*

Martin Glynn,  
Black Prisoner Group Work Facilitator

*"I'm completely taken aback!"*

Diane Curry OBE, POPS Director

## VISITOR CENTRE OPEN DAYS UPDATE

Yet again, it has been a very busy few months. We have successfully held two more Visitor Centre Grand Open Days in HMP Risley and HMP Buckley Hall. It must be said that none of these events would have been possible had it not been for our dedicated and enthusiastic staff and volunteers in each centre.

At HMP Risley's Open Day we "kitted" out our Portacabin with displays, posters and plenty of Caribbean food. We managed to attract so many delegates that an open house was declared! Families and other visitors learnt about POPS and were fed for the rest of the day!

The special guest and ribbon cutter was Steve Collett (Chief Probation Officer in Cheshire). Steve has worked with POPS for many years and was delighted to see how POPS had grown from strength to strength.

On the day of the event at HMP Buckley Hall the weather was glorious. Jo Gordon (NOMS Head of VCS and APVU) spoke about POPS' work with the prison and the prisons recent transition from a female to a male establishment. This event was one of Jo's last public outings before her move to Government Office London and we were delighted that she had taken time out of her schedule to open our centre.

We were also extremely privileged to have our new Board Member Robin Halward CB join us in celebrating the centres hard work, speaking about his new relationship with POPS and his history with the Prison Service in England and Northern Ireland.

Apart from the wonderful weather and inspirational speakers we were also treated to a delicious buffet provided by offenders learning catering skills in the prison. Thank you to them for adding an extra special dish to the day.... home made carrot cake! Yum yum!

Zoe Gan, Corporate Development Manager



POPS Chief Executive Farida Anderson MBE with Derek Harlock, a long-serving member of the Risley Visitor Centre Staff Team, at the Open Day in May

## POPS IN PARIS

*The European Committee for Children of Imprisoned Parents (EUROCHIPS) hosted a two-day conference in Paris on 12 and 13 May. The conference focused on the issue of children of imprisoned parents within the European Union and centred on the exchange of expertise and best practice. It was great that Grace and I were able to attend.*

The conference was held in the very grand Cite Internationale Universitaire and attended by over 350 practitioners from France, Belgium, Netherlands, UK, Sweden, Norway, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Luxemburg, Greece, Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic.



The Eiffel Tower, Paris

Seminars, workshops and presentations covered issues of children's rights, particularly those in relation to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, psychological aspects such as the experience of parental separation and long-term effects, legal perspectives and community based support projects. Representatives from various European states presented their service or project demonstrating that support for offenders children does not stop with prison play areas.

It was a demanding schedule going on well into the evening with a cocktail dinner concluding the first day (...well for the faint hearted maybe!) Making contact, talking and sharing practice with delegates from other countries was a central theme throughout the conference and was a valuable and motivating experience to improve both personal practice and further the work of POPS in respect of offenders children.

Karen Moorcroft, Playworker (HMP Risley)

## POPS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

The proof of having a good time somewhere is the fact that you immediately wish to go back.....and that is indeed the feeling of both myself and Farida Anderson MBE (Chief Executive) upon our return home from our visit to Northern Ireland.

Initially Farida was invited to speak at the IMB (Northern Ireland) conference about issues for offenders' families. Having agreed to do so, it was then felt to be a good idea to embark upon a 'fact finding' mission and to arrange to meet up with some agencies who are undertaking similar work to ourselves. This 'mission' allowed us to stay in Northern Ireland for 4 days and to meet with various agencies working in the Criminal Justice System.

Upon landing in Belfast (35 minutes from Manchester) we were met by Austin Treacy, Governor of HMP Maghaberry. Both myself and Farida were bowled over by his passion for the work

he was developing on behalf of families and particularly children of offenders. In fact at one point we had to remind him that prisoners families were our area of work and that we did not need converting. It was extremely refreshing for us to witness genuine interest in this group of people and also meet others who recognised their value in a reducing re-offending framework.

After a good nights sleep we were straight into action and paid a visit to HMP Maghaberry whereby we met Dave Eagleson, Governor who gave us a tour of the prison, introduced us to staff, showed us their Visitor Centre and introduced us to families. It was good to talk to families about their issues and to see how the prison was responding to them.

That evening we were guests of the HMPS NI Director General at Stormont House in the grounds of Stormont Castle! Farida at one point thought that they had mistaken us for royalty and to be honest when the chauffeur driven car arrived to take us to Stormont I was also beginning to wonder if they knew where we were from!!! However it transpired that they did indeed know what our roles were and what organisation we were from and that they were genuinely interested in our work and what role we play.

The next day we visited Hydebank Young Offenders, where we met some young men who were taking advantage of family visits. These visits were organised for all young men to spend quality time with their families, particularly their children. These visits took place in a comfortable room furnished with sofas, TV and toys for the children. The atmosphere was positive and productive for the young people and their families. A family liaison officer was on hand to offer support and these visits are over and above their normal visit allocation. They are also not bound by any incentive regime and are open to all offenders with children. Once again we were very well received and had a chance to look at the visits area, visitors centers... we left with more promises to return!

We made a quick stop off at NIACRO's office in Belfast and spent time comparing the various services that we both offer to families. This including their Prison Link Project that consisted of managing Visitor Centre, Mini bus transport for families and information packs. The biggest and most immediate difference was numbers. Northern Ireland's prison population is approximately 1400 including women and young offenders. That is comparable to the population of HMP Liverpool!

To sum up I would say that the issues facing the Criminal Justice Agencies in Northern Ireland are similar to ours, though on a smaller basis. However I came home with lots of enthusiasm and a great sense of 'Anything is possible' and it is all about having a 'Can do' attitude and a will to make it work. I found this attitude to be apparent in all the people I met and would like to extend an invitation to you all to come over to England to see the work of POPS in action and hopefully leave with us a little more of the 'I Can do'!!!!



Stormont, Northern Ireland

Diane Curry, Director

### THE HELPLINE POPS OVER TO LIZARS

Recently Helpline staff have been given the opportunity to facilitate a weekly advice surgery for the families and friends of prisoners at a branch of Robert Lizar Solicitors in Moss Side, Manchester. The sessions take place every Thursday morning from 10.00am – 12.00pm and will be staffed alternately by Ali Craythorne (Telephone Helpline Coordinator) and Jamal Anderson (Telephone Helpline Worker).

The initiative will allow us to take the service we offer, via the National Prisoners' Families Helpline, into the community and will enable us to reach more families from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities. Running concurrently with this project will be an advertisement for the Helpline in The Advocate newspaper, which is Greater Manchester's independent black newspaper that has an average monthly readership of 50,000.



The service is generally accessible by appointment but we are also able to accommodate families who attend the office on a 'drop in' basis. We are able to provide support and information about APVU, property, the prison system, sentence calculation, transfers and visiting although this list is not definitive!

As the following quote from a senior member of staff at Robert Lizar Solicitors demonstrates the response so far has been very positive...

*"I had a call this morning from the mother of a juvenile, asking me to push solicitor A to pressure the authorities to move her son to a prison closer to home. We have tried to assist this young offender with this problem previously. I explained that this was not A RIGHT and that solicitor A had tried to help by asking the authorities and explaining the difficulties.*

*I asked her if she had heard of POPS and she said she had spoken to them before, ages ago. I told her about the relationship we have with POPS and asked her to phone. She did and rang back later leaving a message that "it's all okay now...POPS sorted it out".*

Success already!

We also explained to the mother that her son had no legal right to be transferred and ran through the transfer process to her so that she could advise her son. We also assisted by contacting the Governor of the prison to explain the family circumstances, which would hopefully warrant the move. In response we received a telephone call from the Governor who assured us that the prison would do everything they could to promote the transfer of this young man nearer to home.

Whilst the project is still in its early days, our results so far are very positive. With increased promotion, including posters, newspaper articles and a mail out to anticipate, the venture should be very successful indeed.

Ali Craythorne, Telephone Helpline Coordinator

### HR UPDATE

POPS welcomes new staff and wishes them all the best in the future work they undertake within the organisation.

#### NEW STAFF

Stephen Gallagher	-	IMPACT Family Services Research Development Manager
Cory-Ann Curtis	-	Playworker at (Forest Bank)
Sylvia Curtis	-	Visitor Centre Co-ordinator (HMP Risley)
Judith Darville	-	Visitor Centre Co-ordinator (HMP Kirkham)
Alice Fidgen	-	Playworker (HMP Kirkham)

Please feel free to send any suggestions for the next issue to Joseph Ganley (Junior Administrator) at POPS Head Office.  
POPS—Valentine House—1079 Rochdale Road—Blackley—Manchester—M9 8AJ—0161 702 1000-mail@partnersofprisoners.co.uk