

## Court Work

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Members of a court team prepare reports for the criminal courts that inform the sentencing decisions of magistrates and judges. An average-sized Probation Area calculated that during a 12 month period its court staff had prepared more than 6000 reports for the criminal courts.

A full Pre-Sentence Report offers an analysis of the offence and gives an insight into the offender's circumstances and background, and proposes the sentence most likely to reduce risk and prevent further crimes.

Sentencers want to see that the report addresses two key questions that the:

- public is going to be protected by the proposed measure and
- offender has been appropriately dealt with by this punishment.

For many offenders the Probation court staff are their first contact with the Probation Service. Members of the court team are often seconded to the team for a number of years to allow them to build up a level of expertise in court report writing.

Court staff are also asked to provide a simpler version called a Specific Sentence Report. The report gives an immediate assessment and sentencing advice enabling the courts to deal quickly with less serious matters.