

PSR - Janet Louise SKINNER GRO - CRN: GG02409 - PNC: 33-993399H

# PRE-SENTENCE REPORT v3.03



This is a Pre-Sentence Report as defined in Section 158 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 and has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the National Standard for Pre-Sentence Reports.

**NATIONAL PROBATION SERVICE**  
for England and Wales

Humberside

## THIS REPORT IS A RESTRICTED DOCUMENT

OFFENDER'S DETAILS:	
Name	Janet Louise SKINNER
Date of Birth:	Age: GRO
Address:	<b>GRO</b>
Post Code:	

COURT DETAILS:	
Sentencing Court:	HULL
Court Type:	Crown Court
Local Justice Area:	Hull & Holderness
Date Report Requested:	5 January 2007
Date Report Required:	To Be Confirmed
Purpose of Sentencing	Not Stated
Level of Seriousness	Not Stated

OFFENCE DETAILS:	
Offence(s) (dealt with in this PSR):	Date of Offence(s):
False accounting	1 June 2006

PSR WRITER'S DETAILS:	
Name:	Emma Sutton
Official Title:	Trainee Probation Officer
Office Location:	Liberty Lane HULL HU1 1RS GRO

Date report completed and signed:	18 <sup>th</sup> January 2007
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## 1. Sources of Information

- 1.1 Ms Skinner has been interviewed by myself at Liberty House on one occasion. I have also had access to the Summary of Fact and her previous convictions document which shows this to be her first offence. Ms Skinner is not previously known to the Probation Service, Humberside.
- 1.2 **This report is underpinned and informed by an Offender Assessment System (OASys) in the identification of the risk of reconviction and the risk of harm presented by this defendant.**

## 2. Offence Analysis

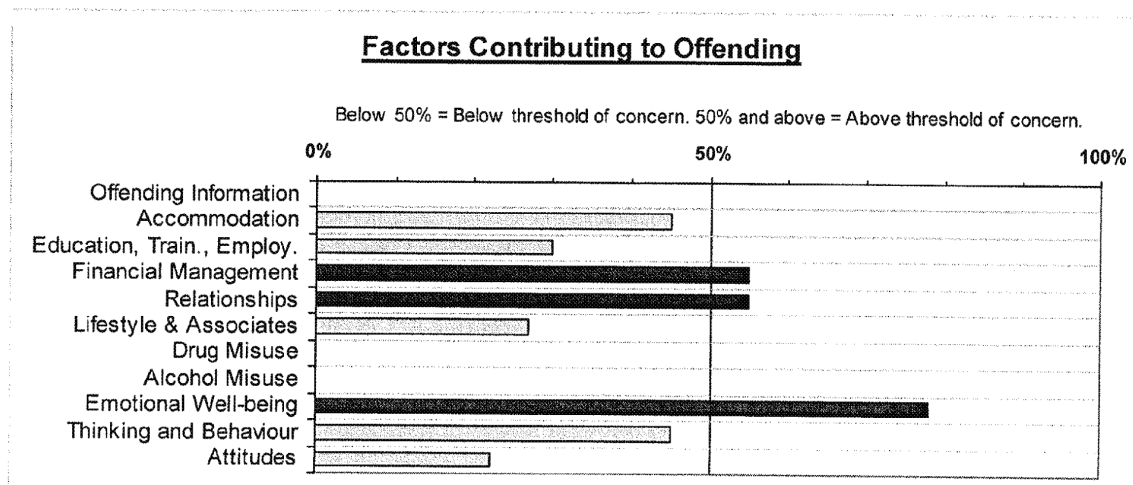
- 2.1 Ms Skinner is charged with false accounting for hiding losses of £59,216.43p from her employer. The original charge was theft from employer which was reduced in exchange for a guilty plea. She denies taking the cash.
- 2.2 Ms Skinner was employed by the Post Office as a Sub postmistress at their North Bransholme branch in Hull and was responsible for the cash transactions and accounts at the office. On Tuesday 30th May 2006, managers attended the branch as they were concerned about the large amount of cash apparently held on the premises. When they arrived, the managers claimed that Ms Skinner made an attempt to delay investigations and then informed them that they would notice a cash shortage of around £40,000. Ms Skinner then advised that she suspected another employee of stealing the money. Whilst investigations were in progress it was noted that an attempt was made to order a cash remittance of £40,000 to be delivered to the office. It is not known who requested this money, but the managers refused to accept this as they believed the cash holdings at the office already to be excessive.
- 2.3 Ms Skinner was then suspended from her post and a full audit was carried out the following day. The investigation revealed a shortage of £59,216.43p. Post Office investigating officers were called and Ms Skinner was interviewed under caution.
- 2.4 Ms Skinner admitted to knowing that the branch was carrying a large loss and stated that she had been inflating the cash holding in the accounts to produce a clear trading statement when it came to balancing the transactions each month. Ms Skinner claims that she initially noted the losses in January 2006 (of £7500). She claimed in the post office investigative interview that she told her staff about this but did not question them. However, when interviewed for her pre-sentence report, she stated that she told nobody of the losses she had noticed. She claims that the losses increased on a monthly basis and she failed to seek advice from anybody, continuing to inflate the cash holdings to hide the problem. She denies stealing the money and claims that she suspected a colleague. No charges have been brought against this employee.
- 2.5 Ms Skinner's account of the incident in interview concurs wholly with the information I have in the Statement of Fact.
- 2.6 Although Ms Skinner denies requesting the £40,000 cash delivery, she admits that it would be hard to trace whoever did, as such requests are made over the telephone. It is likely that whoever was responsible for this request was also responsible for the theft of the money and it appears to have been a last-minute attempt to hide the fact that cash was missing.

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- 2.7 Motivation for this offence is difficult to assess. Ms Skinner admits to falsifying transactions to hide the losses. However, she is unable to offer a credible explanation of why she continued to do this if she suspected a colleague of stealing large amounts of cash. Given this, assessment of culpability is also problematic. The fact that the deception went on for five months demonstrates planning and premeditation. It is a concern that such a large amount of money was involved in the offence.
- 2.8 Ms Skinner maintains that she made a 'silly mistake' by hiding the losses and appears to be clearly distraught by the situation she is now in, claiming to feel great remorse. However, she does not present as having a full understanding of the huge financial loss she has caused to her employer.
- 2.9 The victim in this offence was The Post Office and Ms Skinner's actions caused large financial loss to them. This offence shows a substantial breach of trust. Ms Skinner failed to alert her employers to the losses, thus enabling them to increase rapidly over the 5 month period.
- 2.10 Her offence may also have had an emotional impact on the person Ms Skinner attempted to blame for the theft.
- 2.11 To date, no reparation has been made for the offence.

### 3. Offender Assessment and Likelihood of Reoffending

The OASys Chart below summarises the relevant factors which have been identified as contributing to the defendant's risk of reconviction. The indicators which exceed the mid-way point on the bar chart are those which need to be addressed in order to reduce the likelihood of further offences being committed.



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3.1 This is the first time Ms Skinner has come to the attention of the criminal justice system. This is therefore, not part of an established pattern of offending.

<b>Likelihood of reconviction:</b>	<b><u>Risk Is Low</u></b>	<i>Low-Medium</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Medium-High</i>	<i>High</i>
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3.2 Ms Skinner lives in her own home with her partner and two children. She tells me she currently has £689 in mortgage arrears and that a 'confiscation order' is being placed on her home in order to recover some of the losses experienced by the Post Office. This means that her accommodation status is currently unstable.

3.3 Ms Skinner estimates that she attended school approximately 60% of the time and left at the age of 16 without sitting her GCSE's. Ms Skinner has worked for the Post Office since 1995 and prior to this was raising her two children. She is currently working 23 hours a week in the EYMS call centre (verified). Her current employers are not aware of her offence and Ms Skinner is concerned that she will lose her job if they find out. Ms Skinner reports no problems with numeracy or literacy, and although this has not been verified, her previous role with the Post Office suggests that there are no issues in this area.

3.4

**GRO**

3.5

3.6 There are no known issues in relation to drug or alcohol misuse.

3.7

**GRO**

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3.8 Ms Skinner presents as having good interpersonal skills and an accurate insight into problematic areas of her life. However, she describes herself as being somewhat impulsive and the index offence indicates a lack of consequential thinking and poor problem solving skills. When discussing conflicts with her current partner it became evident that she is not always fully in control of her emotions and admits that her partner sometimes claims that her head is 'messed up'.

**GRO**

3.9 This is the first time Ms Skinner has come to the attention of the criminal justice system and whilst she does not display criminal attitudes it is difficult to assess her motivation to change as she does not view herself as a 'criminal'. She has indicated that she will comply fully with any requirements imposed on her and presented as polite and helpful in interview.

#### 4. Assessment of the Risk of Harm

4.1 **During the course of the assessment it has been identified that there are concerns about coping in custody and risk of self-harm.** It is felt that Ms Skinner is at risk of injury, illness or death, if suicide is attempted again. It is considered that this risk will be reduced with continued support from her partner and children and resolution of the current criminal proceedings.

**GRO**

4.2 **During the course of the assessment it has been identified that there are concerns about risk of breach of trust.** As her offence involved a clear breach of trust it is felt that Ms Skinner may pose a risk of financial loss to employers in the future, should she find herself working with money, or with vulnerable people.

**GRO**

4.3 It is not felt that Ms Skinner poses a risk to anyone in any other ways than those mentioned above.

4.4 Ms Skinner is deemed to present a low risk of reoffending.

#### 5. Conclusion

5.1 The defendant is aware that the offence is so serious that a custodial sentence may be implemented. Whilst such a penalty would serve to punish Ms Skinner, it would also signify the termination of her employment and thus put further financial strain on a family already under considerable pressure. In addition to these potential problems, there are concerns in relation to coping in custody as outlined in the Assessment of Risk of Harm sections above.

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- 5.2 Given that Ms Skinner has no previous convictions, it is felt that she could be dealt with by way of a suspended sentence order with the following requirements:
- A requirement to perform unpaid work in the region of 150-300 hours as directed by the responsible officer
  - A supervision requirement for a period of 12 months
- 5.3 I have also considered an offending behaviour programme requirement, but due to her low risk of reoffending, the defendant is outside the criteria.
- 5.4 The unpaid work requirement would afford community reparation whilst punishing Ms Skinner by restricting her already limited free-time.
- 5.5 The supervision requirement would allow the likelihood of reoffending and the problem areas to be addressed, most importantly her financial management, emotional well being and thinking skills. Ms Skinner has indicated that she is motivated to address these areas of her life.
- 5.6 Ms Skinner has been assessed as suitable for the requirements outlined above and has indicated a willingness to comply with such an order. She is well aware of the powers available to the court, should she fail to do so.
- 5.7 At the time of writing this report, the Court date was unconfirmed. Should Ms Skinner be subject to a Community Order or Suspended Sentence Order, Please contact Liberty House Duty unit for her initial appointment with a Probation Services Officer.

Signed:

**GRO**

Date: 19/01/07

Emma Sutton  
Trainee Probation Officer  
Probation Office  
Liberty lane  
HULL  
HU1 1RS

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<b>Objectives and Plans</b>					
<b>The Priority for setting objectives is:</b>		<b>1) Reduce risk of serious harm</b> <b>2) Reduce offending related factors</b>			
<b>Relevant offending related item</b>	<b>Objective - what are you trying to achieve?</b>	<b>How will progress be measured?</b>	<b>What will be done to achieve the objective?</b>	<b>Who will do the work?</b>	<b>What is the timescale for the work?</b>
THINKING SKILLS	Develop a range of thinking and behavioural skills which can be used to avoid offending	OASys self-assessment Self-Report Evidence/demonstration of remorse for offending Evidence/demonstration of recognition of the wider implications of offending on the community Offender Manager Reviews of case. No further arrest incidents	(1) Case Management 1 to 1 counselling -	Offender  Probation Staff -	sixteen weeks
			(2) - -	- - -	-
			(3) - -	- - -	-
RELATIONSHIPS	Improved management of personal relationships	OASys self-assessment Evidence of development of new friendships/widening social circle Evidence of strengthening of family relationships Offender Manager reviews of case No further arrest incidents	(1) Case Management 1 to 1 counselling -	Offender  Probation Staff -	sixteen weeks
			(2) - -	- - -	-
			(3) - -	- - -	-

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EMOTIONAL WELLBEING	Improved self management/use of coping skills/self control	Evidence from OASys Self Assessment Self Report Evidence of increased self esteem Evidence of attachment to community based facilities Evidence of development of new friendships and widening social circle	(1) Case Management 1 to 1 counselling -	Offender Probation Staff -	sixteen weeks
			(2) - -	- -	-
			(3) - -	- -	-
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT	Manage financial affairs within existing income	OASys Self Assessment Evidence of preparation of income and expenditure sheet Self Report Offender Manager Reviews of case No further arrest incidents linked to finances	(1) Case Management 1 to 1 counselling -	Offender Probation Staff -	sixteen weeks
			(2) - -	- -	-
			(3) - -	- -	-