

Probation *works*

Newsletter of the Probation Service (Ireland)

January 2014

Restorative Justice, Probation Service Management Conference, Garda Diversion Project, Recent Research Published, Public Protection Advisory Group Seminar, Probation in the Press, Recidivism Study, Conference of Directors of Prisons and Directors of Probation in Europe, TREO.

Message from Director

While 2013 was a very exciting and productive one for the Probation Service, we look forward to the coming year, which is likely to present even more opportunities and challenges. The Probation Service's second recidivism study, published by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) last month, on offenders who had been under Probation supervision in 2008, showed an improvement in terms of reduced levels of reoffending, compared with the previous study (2007 cohort of offenders). Data such as that collated and published by the CSO provides a significant part of the essential baseline information required for us to make good service delivery decisions and measure our success, against our results-focused objectives. It also enables us to assess how we are doing, when benchmarked with comparable services in other jurisdictions.



Our management conference, held in Portlaoise last month, provided us with an opportunity to discuss current issues facing the Service, and clarify our organisational direction and priorities over the coming months and years. It was also an opportunity to refocus on the need for the commitment of everyone in the Service, as well as to maximise interagency work and real partnership, if we are to achieve our goal of helping to achieve a safer and fairer Ireland. Over the coming year, we will continue to focus on building quality and consistency in all we do, and in every transaction with our clients and customers, so as to reduce risk of harm and reoffending, make good the harm caused by crime and ensure effective implementation and management of Court orders.

The next edition of *Probation works* will be published in March.

Vivian Geiran, Director

Conference of Directors of Prisons and Directors of Probation in Europe (CDAP)

Probation Service Director, Vivian Geiran, and Michael Donnellan, Director General, IPS, made a joint presentation to the conference in Brussels in November 2013. The presentation, entitled – Probation and Prison in Ireland: From Poor Relation to Partnership Working - was very well received and is available by clicking on the icon above.



Conference papers and presentations by other delegates are available on the Council of Europe website or by clicking [here](#)

Recent Publications

The British Journal of Criminal Justice recently published an open access edition, dedicated to a review of the ongoing changes in probation in Britain.

In addition, a special edition of Scottish Justice Matters – dedicated to desistance - has just been published online. These publications are available by clicking on the relevant icons below.



The Probation Service, Headquarters, Haymarket, Smithfield, Dublin 7. Tel: (01) 817 3600

www.probation.ie

If you do not wish to receive this newsletter in the future you can unsubscribe by emailing us on psinfo@probation.ie including the word *unsubscribe* in the subject line.

TREO awarded All Ireland Pride of Place 2013 Special Award (November 2013)

Congratulations to **TREO**, a Community Based Organisation funded by the Probation Service, to support the work of the Service in Waterford.

TREO works on an individual and group basis to challenge offending behaviour, while providing education, training and life skill training initiatives. The award was announced at a gala ceremony in The Venue, Derry on Saturday on 16th November 2013 and recognises the very positive community impact that Treo is having in Waterford city and county.



TREO received one of only two Special Awards given in the Cities Competition. The judges said the award was given "in respect of an amazing project which involves helping a vulnerable group of young adults by confidence building, meaningful activity, work and engagement. It has had a major impact on its target group. Apart from the training and development of this vulnerable cohort the project also involves family members. This approach towards helping the families of the group gain confidence and understanding had a huge impact on the judges as did the leadership of the project and the level of innovation, care and compassion demonstrated".

Minister Shatter welcomes publication of CSO second Probation Recidivism Study 2008 – 2012

The Minister for Justice, Equality and Defence, Alan Shatter TD, welcomed the recent publication of the second Central Statistics Office Report on Recidivism in the Probation Service for the 2008 cohort.

On publication of the CSO's report Minister Shatter said, "This independent assessment by the Central Statistics Office of the impact of noncustodial measures on rates of re-offending is very important for informing the effectiveness of community sanctions. Specifically, this study focuses on a cohort of offenders from 2008, and shows the recidivism or re-offending rate of this cohort after a three year period. These categories of offenders did not go to prison but were given an alternative sanction by the Courts, such as a Probation Order or a Community Service Order. The results show that almost 60% of offenders given one of these alternative sanctions by the Courts in 2008 had not re-offended after three years."



The study's findings indicate that the recidivism or re-offending rate was 41% for the particular cohort of offenders who had been under probation supervision in the three years following the imposition of an order by the court. When compared with the equivalent cohort from the 2007 study there is a fall in recidivism of almost 8%. Males made up almost 87% of the total population assessed and had a higher recidivism rate than females. Recidivism rates, in most cases, were seen to decrease as the offender's age increased.

Public order offences are the most common original offences. Public Order is also the most common offence on reconviction. Go to the report by clicking on icon above.

Full Text of Minister's Press Release :**CSO Recidivism Report**

The Probation Service in Numbers

The Probation Service and CSO recently published a second recidivism study. Key findings included:

3,761 - the number of offenders placed on probation and community service in 2008 and whose reconviction rate was tracked by the Central Statistics Office.

3 - the number of years their reconviction was tracked.

59% - had no convictions in the three years after being on probation or community service.

4.3% - the improvement (reduction) in reconviction rates for 2008 probationers, compared with the 2007 research cohort.

The full report is available on our website www.pprobation.ie or by clicking [here](#)

If you do not wish to receive this newsletter in the future you can unsubscribe by emailing us on psinfo@probation.ie including the word *unsubscribe* in the subject line.

Marking a life's work Retirement of Anna Connolly, Regional Manager



Anna Connolly, Regional Manager, has announced her retirement from the Probation Service with effect from 31st January 2014. Since joining the Probation Service in 1975 Anna Connolly has worked as Probation Officer, Senior Probation Officer and Regional Manager in every area of work in the Service. Throughout her time in the Probation Service Anna has been energetic, attentive and professional in all her practice and tasks as Probation Officer and manager.

As well as her commitment in working with offenders, Anna has had a particular interest and expertise in family law matters and mediation and made an important contribution in the establishment of family mediation services in Ireland in the 1980s. More recently, Anna has been instrumental in the re-organising and re-energising of Community Service across the country with impressive results. She is also well known to many outside the Probation Service and elsewhere through her contributions to conferences, working groups and international events.

Anna leaves the Probation Service with fond memories and a legacy of achievements as well as the sincere appreciation and best wishes of all her colleagues and friends. A function to mark Anna Connolly's retirement will be held on Friday 31st January 2014 at the *Radisson Blu Hotel, Golden Lane, Dublin 8*.

Minister Shatter publishes Annual Report of the Committee appointed to monitor the effectiveness of the Garda Diversion Project 2012

Last month (December 2013) the Minister for Justice, Equality and Defence, Alan Shatter TD, published the 2012 Annual Report on the Garda Diversion Programme. The Minister noted the reduction in the number of children coming to the attention of An Garda Síochána in 2012 compared to the previous year. This reduction continues the yearly downward trend since 2007. The figures show that 563 less children came to the notice of An Garda Síochána in 2012, representing a 4.4% decrease on 2011. The Minister also welcomed the expansion of the restorative justice process with a 15% increase in practice on 2011 figures.

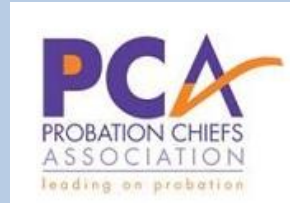


The Minister noted that the majority of children who were admitted to the Programme were given an informal caution, i.e. a caution without supervision by a Garda Juvenile Liaison Officer (6,265). A caution without supervision is generally applied for a first offence or a repeat minor offence.

2,840 children were given a formal caution, with a period of JLO (Juvenile Liaison Officer) supervision. 1,850 children were deemed unsuitable for diversion and these files were returned to the local Superintendent for possible prosecution. **Full text of Minister's Speech**

Probation Chiefs Association (GB) launch new free access book on Probation

The Probation Chiefs Association (PCA) last week published a book to



celebrate the achievements and successes of the probation service in England and Wales. The book features contributions from Probation Trusts, retired probation members and staff associations to reflect on their own highlights, memorable moments and proudest achievements. Access the electronic version of the book here

The book aims "...to create a legacy that features some of the many achievements of the people who have helped to make probation an outstanding and award-winning service." It "...showcases the exceptional work undertaken by probation staff past and present, whether through collaborative partnerships and local projects or through personal endeavour..."

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Director elected to Council of Europe body

Vivian Geiran has been elected to represent Ireland on the Council for Penological Co-operation (PC-CP), a working group which operates under the European Committee on Crime Problems (CDPC) of the Council of Europe (CoE). The PC-CP carries out a range of functions, including following and making proposals on the operation of probation and prison systems in Europe, monitoring the operation of probation and prison rules, the annual penal statistics of the CoE (SPACE I & II), as well as exploring and commenting on a range of related issues. More information about the work of the PC-CP can be found on the CoE website: www.coe.int

If you do not wish to receive this newsletter in the future you can unsubscribe by emailing us on psinfo@probation.ie including the word *unsubscribe* in the subject line.

Publication of the Probation Service Restorative Justice Strategy "Repairing the harm: A Victim Sensitive Response to Offending"

The Probation Service's Restorative Justice Strategy was published in November 2013. The strategy commits the Probation Service, through a framework of specific, targeted actions to further develop the wider application of restorative practice in the work of the Probation Service. The Strategy builds on the Probation Service achievements to date in the use of Restorative Justice Practice in its work in the courts and the community.

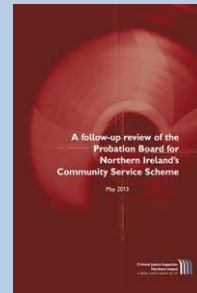


Welcoming the publication of the strategy, Minister for Justice, Equality and Defence said "The Probation Service works to enhance public safety, reduce reoffending, make good the harm caused by offending and ensure that court orders are implemented. The underlying principles of Restorative Justice are reflected in the goals of the Probation Service, in particular that through challenging offender behaviour, offenders can be brought to understand that their behaviour is wrong and in accepting responsibility for their behaviour they must repair the harm suffered by victims and the wider community".

Following the final report of the National Commission on Restorative Justice in 2011, the Probation Service requested two Community Based Organisations funded by the Probation Service; Restorative Justice Services (RJS) and Nenagh Community Reparation Project (NCRP) to expand the delivery of their services to the Courts on a twelve month pilot basis. RJS expanded its services to the Court of Criminal Justice while the Nenagh Community Reparation Project extended its Services from Nenagh District Court, to courts in Roscrea, Borrisokane, Thurles and Tipperary, covering all of the District Court Area No.8. During the pilot period RJS received a total of 168 referrals and NCRP 58 referrals from the courts. These referrals included a significant number of "more serious" offences.

Commenting on the outcome of the pilot Minister Shatter said "The Probation Service pilot expansion of the two Restorative Justice projects has clearly demonstrated that Restorative Justice Interventions are a realistic option to be considered within the overall range of sentence disposals and represents a cost effective alternative to a custodial sentence. I am pleased to say that my Department through the Probation Service will provide additional funding totalling €107,550 to support the further expansion of Restorative Justice Service in the CCJ and Cork District Courts".

Probation Service Director, Vivian Geiran said: "Restorative approaches have been a feature of the Probation Service's work for many years. This new strategy sets out a clear vision and plan for how we will further embed restorative practice in our work with offenders, victims and communities to help achieve a safer and fairer society."



Community Service Scheme Report



Community Supervision of Offenders Report

Northern Ireland Inspectorate welcomes progress on recommendations to improve Probation Board's Community Service Scheme

A follow-up review of the Probation Board for Northern Ireland's (PBNI's) Community Service scheme has found the organisation has worked diligently over the last three years to address the spirit of recommendations made by Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJI) in its original inspection report.

Inspectors found that eight of the 15 recommendations had been fully achieved with a further six partially achieved when they revisited this area of the PBNI's work. One further recommendation was assessed as no longer relevant.

The Inspectorate's progress report follows on from the positive progress outlined in the Inspectorate's recent report on the supervision of offenders within the community which found that on many occasions the standards which applied in Northern Ireland exceed those in England and Wales.

Both reports are available on the Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland website or by clicking on the relevant report icons above.

Reduce re-offending to create safer communities

If you do not wish to receive this newsletter in the future you can unsubscribe by emailing us on psinfo@probation.ie including the word *unsubscribe* in the subject line.

Community Project Profile

Restorative Justice in the Community (RJC), a Probation programme providing restorative interventions, is celebrating big changes in 2014! New premises, a new name and plans for expansion make it an exciting time for the project.



Who we are:

Restorative Justice in the Community (RJC), formerly Nenagh Community Reparation Project, is a restorative justice project currently operating in Counties Tipperary and Offaly. Established in 1999 with support and funding from the Probation Service, the project was initially established to provide a service to Nenagh District Court in North Tipperary and did so from 1999 to 2010.

Following the publication of the report of the National Commission on Restorative Justice, it was agreed in 2011 to put in place a pilot programme to expand the services of the project. From 2011 to 2013 the project was rolled out across new communities and now takes referrals from six towns within Counties Tipperary and Offaly. The project has seen a fourfold increase in its level of referrals received through the expansion.

What we do:

The project works with adults of all ages and seeks to bring together everyone affected by an offence to decide how to repair the harm caused. This objective is achieved using restorative processes and the agreement of a contract of reparative actions.

RJC operates within a strong ethos of community engagement. The project was formed in 1999 with a voluntary Board of Management and we also recruit, train and maintain a panel of community volunteers in each of the communities in which we work.

The community volunteers play an important role in the restorative process, by their work on Repatriation Panels, including meeting with offenders and others, to clarify the impact of the offending and agree an action plan to make good the harm caused. Community groups also facilitate our participants in making amends to the community by welcoming their help, as many of our participants volunteer their time helping out with local community organisations.

What next:

In 2014, in partnership with the Probation Service, the project plans to expand into Cork City and to offer a service to Cork City District Courts. This is a great opportunity for the project and with such big plans afoot changes were required. The project moved to new premises in June 2013 and a new name was chosen to reflect the growth of the project in recent years and its continued development. Restorative Justice in the Community (RJC) is the name that has been agreed and work is on-going at present rebranding the project. The new website www.rjc.ie will be launched soon, so watch this space!

European treatment and transition management of high risk offenders project 2012-2014 Justice Co-operation Project (JCN)

Estonia, Finland, Ireland and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania (Germany), with the University of Greifswald as advisers, are partners in an EU funded project to examine and develop best practice in the transition management and supervision of high risk offenders leaving custody, as well as developing a body of knowledge and creating an EU network of expertise in this area. The project began in November 2012 and will be concluded in October 2014.

The final conference of the European treatment and transition management of high risk offenders project will be held in the Yachting & Spar Resort Hohe Düne in Rostock-Warnemünde (<http://www.hohe-duene.de>) from 3rd to 5th September 2014.



The Conference will feature important presentations on the findings from the project, valuable contributions from experts and lively workshop discussions. It will be a not-to-be-missed opportunity for networking, to meet with experienced colleagues and experts in offender transition management, to exchange knowledge and develop partnerships.

There will be special conference travel, attendance and conference arrangements in place for participants. As places will be limited please contact the German JCN team for further information as early as possible by e-mail at: jcn.conference@jm.mv-regierung.de.

If you do not wish to receive this newsletter in the future you can unsubscribe by emailing us on psinfo@probation.ie including the word *unsubscribe* in the subject line.

Probation Service Management Conference

The first Probation Service Management Conference (Leading the Probation Service for Lasting Change) was held on 5th and 6th December 2013 at the Irish Prison Service Training College, Brian Stack House, Portlaoise and was attended by all Probation Service managers

The Director, Vivian Geiran, outlined the purpose of the conference as being to reaffirm the vision, values and focus of the Probation Service. He mapped the key steps for managers and leaders in the Service into the future, describing the structure and steps with specific targets and initiatives required to deliver lasting change e.g. Standards for quality development, a framework for offender supervision, staff supervision, development and performance. The Probation Service plans to implement a comprehensive framework of practice rules, standards and quality assurance based on the Council of Europe European Probation Rules.



Pictured above with Professor Rob Canton, are Ita Burke, Deputy Director HR & Corporate Affairs and Suzanne Vella, Deputy Director Operations

A keynote presentation on quality and standards in probation was delivered by Professor Rob Canton, De Montfort University, Leicester on the theme: Managing and Delivering Quality Service: What Rules, Standards and Inspection can do for us. Professor Canton delivered a balanced, informative and engaging presentation on the rationale, principles and value of rules, standards and an inspection process and the contribution they can make in strengthening quality in governance and practice in the Probation Service.

Working from his own experience and wide knowledge, Professor Canton acknowledged the importance of consistency and accountability, and described the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in a challenging implementation process. Commenting on valuable lessons learned from experiences in England and Wales and elsewhere, he emphasised the necessity of balancing *accountability* and *discretion* in practice.

As one of the lead authors of the Council of Europe European Probation Rules in 2010, Professor Canton explained how the Council of Europe seeks to promote consistency and continuity across Europe, especially in good probation practice with sound assessment and effective interventions based on agreed ethical principles.

Professor Canton emphasised the need to apply standards such as the Council of Europe European Probation Rules to the whole organisation and the need for the buy-in of the whole organisation in introducing rules and standards as part of quality assurance and proper accountability so that authorities and the public can have confidence in the work of Probation bodies. Rules and standards also assist in giving support and guidance in preparing the Service for external inspection and in retaining a sharp focus on quality service delivery.

In concluding, Professor Canton stated his view that desistance from crime is accomplished by individuals making a life in which offending has no place. In probation, treating people with respect and decency is an ethical responsibility that, in his view, is also the way that is most likely to bring about change.

Engagement, consultation and participation in the implementation of a framework of rules, standards and inspection have benefits for all interests in enhancing service quality, promoting improved practice and assuring accountability for all on whom the work of the Probation Service impacts; offenders, victims, the criminal justice system and the wider community.

Positive Article on Probation in the Press

"It's a win-win option for everyone", writes Helen O'Callaghan, when those convicted of a crime can avoid jail by doing worthwhile work for the community.....please read on by clicking the newspaper article icon above.



Eurovista Probation Journal Publication

Volume 3 Issue 1 of the Eurovista Probation Journal has recently been published. The entire issue is devoted to contributions made by people who have desisted from offending, some of whom may indeed describe themselves as in a continuing process of desistance. EuroVista is free to access and download on the Eurovista website at <http://www.euro-vista.org/>