

Editorial

This is the second edition of the Irish Probation Journal. We received very positive feedback about the first edition which was published in September 2004 at the launch of the Protect North and South project in Armagh. On that occasion we outlined our hope that the Journal would become an annual record of issues facing probation staff in the two services and would help in the development of professional practice within the overall objective of reducing crime and the harm it does.

The Editorial Committee would like to thank all the contributors as well as the two services for making this Journal possible. Once again we have received sound advice from our Advisory Panel as well as financial support from the NI Statistics and Research Agency to fund this edition. As we noted last year, the two services in Ireland have worked closely together for many years but the impetus for recent initiatives arose from the Belfast Agreement (1998) and the subsequent Criminal Justice Review (2000). In July of this year, that initiative was given added impetus by the signing of the Agreement on Co-operation on Criminal Justice Matters by Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Mr. Michael Mc Dowell TD and Mr David Hanson MP, Minister for Criminal Justice. This agreement flows from the earlier documents. It provides for further 'enhancement of existing areas of co-operation, and the development of new areas, including exchanges of personnel, joint conferences, research, training and exchange of good practice; as well as increased operational co-operation in criminal justice generally, and specifically in the management of offenders across the two jurisdictions. In this context, we are pleased to see the progress of the Protect N and S project which is covered in this edition.

It is always challenging to produce a second edition of any publication but we have been impressed by the enthusiasm and commitment of our contributors. We are aware that there are currently major policy reviews ongoing in both jurisdictions on the issue of domestic violence and for that reason have featured three separate articles from different perspectives in this challenging area. One criticism often levelled at agencies working with offenders is the lack of consideration given to victims and we are pleased to have two articles from both jurisdictions addressing this criticism. It is also important to consider how others see us and therefore articles on impressions from students and, indeed, from offenders, attempt to address this deficit. In the other articles we have tried to provide a balance of innovative practice, social issues, effective practice and current policy issues. Once again we have also included contributions from outside Ireland and we welcome the articles from David Morran and Sam Lewis et al.

Finally, we would once again ask any potential contributors to submit articles for next year's publication. We want to encourage dialogue both within the probation service and also in the wider Criminal Justice arena. This is a rapidly changing environment and we would wish the Irish Probation Journal to reflect ongoing developments in this important area.

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