

# **Making the Difference That Makes a Difference: Leading Probation on the Island of Ireland**

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**Summary:** What does it take to be an effective leader in the public sector, and specifically in probation organisations, today? Why does it matter? Many books and articles focus on the subject of leadership, the changing context and the demands that require leaders to select, at different times, a variety of responses and adopt a range of roles in order to be effective. Since its inception on the island of Ireland, leaders of probation – North and South – have led their organisations through the challenges of their times. This article briefly reviews the wider functions of leadership, provides an overview of the organisations and explores some of the challenges and opportunities for the current leadership of probation, North and South.

**Keywords:** Leadership, change, management, probation, criminal justice, public sector, challenges, budget, transformation, Ireland, Northern Ireland.