

## Editorial

Welcome to the twelfth edition of the *Irish Probation Journal*. The *Irish Probation Journal*, now in its second decade, is an established and respected publisher of research and evaluation, policy and practice developments and critical analysis with a growing international readership and reputation.

The *Irish Probation Journal* seeks to ensure that each edition features a range of research studies, practice reports, policy commentaries and book reviews of relevance and interest to practitioners, policymakers, academics, legislators and students in the broad criminal justice and social policy fields. The broad range of contributions in this edition will, we hope, demonstrate that the *Irish Probation Journal* continues to achieve that objective.

Of particular note in this edition of the *Irish Probation Journal* is the number of valuable papers on criminal justice themes and issues which have not previously attracted the examination and study in Ireland that they merit. These include papers on sentencing, supervision of non-Irish nationals, working with offenders with mental illness, domestic violence, the operation of criminal networks and the historical role of literacy and education in Irish reformatory schools.

Garda Commissioner Nóirín O'Sullivan delivered the 8th Martin Tansey Memorial Lecture. Her paper features a clear focus on innovation, collaboration and partnership for An Garda Síochána. The Commissioner outlines her vision and programme for the transformation of An Garda Síochána to ensure a modern and professional culture founded on openness and transparency; good governance and robust policy oversight.

Kate O'Hara and Dr Mary Rogan present findings on sentencing patterns in Irish courts from a ground-breaking study on outcomes of short prison sentences and Community Service Orders. In the first study of its kind, the authors match offender characteristics across the groups, analyse the use of the sanctions and explore sentencing patterns. The

findings have value and relevance for sentencers and practitioners as well as policymakers and legislators as the debate about the use of short prison sentences continues.

Recall to custody of offenders on licence in Northern Ireland is considered by Cheryl Lamont and Christine Glenn. They outline the changes and impact of the new sentencing framework put in place by the Criminal Justice Order 2008 as well as considering recall data and the Department of Justice in Northern Ireland Review looking at reasons for recall. There is an emphasis on collaboration and shared learning to ensure that both the PBNI and Parole Commissioners continue to develop practice in this critical and sensitive task.

Laura Cotter's fascinating study explores the prevalence of mental illness amongst offenders in the prison and probation populations in the Republic of Ireland, a neglected but very significant topic. She examines the treatment of mentally ill offenders in prison and under community supervision, and critically reviews recent policy and practice developments. Drawing on international literature she makes proposals for the development of probation policy and practice in this important and sensitive field.

In his review of research on the prevalence and impact of domestic violence on children, John Devaney provides evidence to inform how professionals should respond to children's needs to best provide support and ensure their safety.

Denis Bracken, in a follow-up to his insightful study 'Probation Practice with Travellers' in the *Irish Probation Journal 2014*, reports on his study on practice with probationers from minority groups, in particular those from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds and discusses his findings.

In a timely article in this era of freedom of movement across borders in Europe Sarah Hilder and Hazel Kemshall report on an EU project examining the use of existing information exchange mechanisms and the monitoring, management and tracking systems available to Member States for use with serious violent or sexual offenders who travel across Europe.

Staying with the European theme, Jana Špero tells us of the relatively recent development of probation in Croatia, some of the particular challenges arising and also the energy and commitment Probation Officers are contributing to the reduction of offending and enhancing of public safety in Croatia.

Community Return is a unique innovative programme developed in Ireland which combines supervised release, resettlement after custody and community service to provide better resettlement outcomes and reduce the prison population. Gerry McNally and Andrew Brennan describe the development and implementation of the Community Return Programme, the results of a descriptive evaluation of its first twenty-six months, discuss key issues arising and look to the future of the Community Return Programme.

Lynsey Black examines the representation of offending women in Irish newspapers. She investigates how reports of offending women are constructed around a binary of 'good' and 'bad' and identifies how the detrimental effects of crime reporting extend beyond the prison and reinforce societal stereotypes which diminish all women.

Investigation of the effect of residential institutions over the last century in Ireland on the children and young adult residents has revealed serious allegations of institutionalised abuse and neglect over many years. Education in residential schools and other institutions has received little attention. Maighread Tobin examines literacy assessment and education in the Reformatory and Industrial Schools, the absence of detailed oversight and the consequences for the child residents in the care of the State.

In an innovative study Sean Redmond provides a new insight into the operation of criminal networks in Ireland and, in particular, their influence on children who become engaged in network activities. He explores the role of 'network' as an aggravating factor in influencing the career paths of children involved in criminal behaviour and argues that understanding of such involvement is a critical element for policy makers and practitioners in seeking solutions.

Christine Hunter looks at the development of restorative justice in Northern Ireland and considers how to enhance restorative practice for adult offenders in that jurisdiction. Continuing the restorative justice theme, Martin Quigley, Agnieszka Martynowicz, and Caroline Gardner report on their independent evaluation of Le Chéile's Restorative Justice Project, Ireland's first and only non-statutory youth restorative justice service.

This year, for the first time, the *Irish Probation Journal* includes a report on an important judgment at the Northern Ireland Court of Appeal which impacts directly on the work of the Probation Board for Northern Ireland in the application of risk assessment. The *Irish Probation Journal* will, in

future editions, include reports on court decisions and judgments in Ireland and in other jurisdictions which have relevance and import for probation practice, where available. If readers are aware of judgments or decisions, the *Irish Probation Journal* will welcome notice of such judgments or decisions and submissions by authors.

In each edition the *Irish Probation Journal* seeks to include reviews of significant publications of interest and relevance. This year we have three valuable reviews of important books which we anticipate will promote discussion and debate as well as contributing to understanding and practice. The *Irish Probation Journal* appreciates the contribution of reviewers in this and previous editions, invites books for review and welcomes review submissions for consideration.

Innovation, collaboration and effective partnership working permeate many of the contributions in this edition of the *Irish Probation Journal*. Co-operation among the criminal justice agencies as well as with statutory bodies and communities is increasingly being acknowledged as essential in the delivery of effective interventions. The engagement of the person as active participant in change is recognised as critical in the achievement of positive outcomes. The *Irish Probation Journal* is committed to encouraging and supporting development by providing a forum for research and evaluation, sharing practice, fostering innovation and promoting dialogue in criminal justice.

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