

# **A Practitioner's Response to 'Chronic Offenders and the Syndrome of Antisociality: Offending is a Minor Feature!'**

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**Summary:** This paper is a practitioner's response to 'Chronic Offenders and the Syndrome of Antisociality: Offending is a Minor Feature!' by Georgia Zara and David P. Farrington, published in *Irish Probation Journal*, October 2016. That thought-provoking article focused on the psychology of chronic offenders through the exploration of both their criminal careers and their life stories. This response reflects on key themes that Zara and Farrington identified, based on their analysis of quantitative and qualitative data from the Cambridge Study in Delinquent Development (CSDD). These include: the definition and characteristics of a chronic offender; the syndrome of antisociality and its trajectory in the lives of chronic offenders; the pervasive themes of hopelessness, failure and loss; and the challenge for professionals in identifying and pursuing interventions that can break (or at least modify) the syndrome of antisociality. Similarly to that article, based on two extensive case histories, the reflections in this paper draw from the experience of a probation practitioner working, within an assessment framework, with people whose lives have been characterised by patterns of abuse, neglect and social rejection as well as criminality.

**Keywords:** Chronic offenders, criminal careers, antisociality, probation, assessment, change, hope, desistance, multi-agency working.