

Editorial

This is a time of change in Ireland and internationally, not only in the political, economic and social contexts but also within probation, which operates within these contexts. There is an increasing momentum for probation agencies to seek to work collaboratively on a range of different levels, including the professional, the organisational and the operational. Probation does not work in isolation and partnership is key to achieving safer communities. Engagement across the criminal justice family, North and South, with colleagues in other bodies and organisations and with our voluntary and community partners is critical in ensuring that our work is effective.

The recent formalised co-operation between the Probation Service in Ireland and the Probation Board of Northern Ireland in the Public Protection Advisory Group is described by the Directors of the services in this volume. Policing and justice powers were devolved to Northern Ireland on 12 April 2010 and a new Department of Justice with its own Minister was created. The impact of devolution and the implications for probation in Northern Ireland are explored in a paper based on a recently delivered speech by Brian McCaughey.

The two Ministers for Justice met recently and acknowledged the benefits of working closely together to ‘drive forward a range of criminal justice initiatives to make Ireland, both North and South, a better and safer place to live’. Arrangements for co-ordinating and strengthening the management of offenders in the community by Probation and other services in both jurisdictions are a priority, as outlined in William J. McAuley’s paper on PPANI.

The current economic crisis is impacting on Probation services across Europe, and at this time more than ever we need to review the efficiency and effectiveness of how we deliver our services. Managing change is a major challenge for Probation services everywhere. We are all aware that

organisations that actively involve staff and stakeholders in this process have the best chance of success. Some of the papers in this issue address the interests of service users in particular in this changing Ireland, and explore the responses we need to make both organisationally and on the frontline.

A number of papers look at ways of working with offenders so that victimisation and the harm caused by their offending can be reduced. Cormac Russell highlights the benefits of an asset-based community development approach. Risk-based case management is an effective tool in preventing reoffending and enhancing community safety. Denis C. Bracken explores implications for practice using data from his research study with Irish Probation Officers.

In Margaret Griffin and Patricia Kelleher's paper, young men from disadvantaged communities in Limerick city challenge us to consider the personal and social context of male offenders, the need to engage them and the importance of creating effective partnerships if we are to be relevant and effective in addressing their offending behaviour. Two contributions on practice by Mary Trainor and Rachel Lillis outline contemporary approaches in the management of Community Service and working with young offenders.

The 3rd Annual Martin Tansey Memorial Lecture, hosted by the Association of Criminal Justice Research and Development, was delivered on 26 May 2010 at the Criminal Courts of Justice in Dublin. Therapeutic jurisprudence as applied in sentencing, probation and parole was the topic, and is described here in a most stimulating paper by Professor David Wexler. Professor Wexler, the leading authority and author in the field, calls for academic-practitioner, interdisciplinary and international partnerships to expand further the study and practical application of therapeutic jurisprudence.

Prison is necessary and inevitable for some offenders. The impact of imprisonment on prisoners and for their families can prove to be a serious barrier in reintegration following a period in custody; often the very issues that may have contributed to the offending and incarceration in the first place remain to be addressed. The impact on families is often neglected or overlooked. Issues in the reintegration of prisoners and the secondary impact of imprisonment are real challenges in our work, and are explored in a paper by Agnieszka Martynowicz and Martin Quigley and one by Jessica Breen.

This is the seventh edition of *Irish Probation Journal* and the Editorial Committee is grateful to PBNI and the Probation Service for their ongoing support, as well as to all those who have contributed to this edition, including the advisory panel and publishers. Most especially we would like to thank our contributors in this edition, representing both the academic and practitioner perspectives in their contributions.

The focus of *Irish Probation Journal* will continue to be to publish high-quality papers to inform and stimulate debate and challenge us at every level to develop and enhance research and practice and to play our part in making the island of Ireland a safer and better place.

Suzanne Vella
Probation Service

Jean O'Neill
Probation Board for Northern Ireland

September 2010