

*First Edition, September 2004*  
*Editorial*

It is with great pride that we launch the first edition of the Irish Probation Journal. This is a significant development in the history of the Probation and Welfare Service and the Probation Board for Northern Ireland. We hope that the Journal will become an annual record of issues facing Probation staff in the two services. It is hoped the Journal will help 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. We have also received good advice from our Advisory Panel and the Editor of the Probation Journal, Hindpal Singh Bhui. While the two services in Ireland have worked closely together for many years the impetus for this initiative arose from the Belfast Agreement (1998). One of the key outcomes of the Agreement was the Criminal Justice Review published in March 2000. There was a chapter devoted to cross-border co-operation and both services have continued to work even more closely together with the support of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and the Northern Ireland Office. This Journal is a concrete example of cross-border co-operation and a further example is highlighted in the article in this edition on the PROTECT N&S Project.

There is a variety of interesting articles in this edition, which we hope will encourage dialogue not only within and between Probation services, but also in the wider Criminal Justice arena. We have been provided with examples of good practice in Ireland but have also sought to introduce an international dimension with articles from Fergus McNeill (Scotland) and Jim Bonta (Canada). One important theme that emerges clearly through numerous contributions to this edition of the journal is the value of effective interagency co-operation. We would hope that this publication represents a practical step towards enhancing such co-operation. We also recognise that there are many important areas within Probation and Criminal Justice work which are not included in this collection of articles and hope that readers will be sufficiently motivated to ensure their particular interest is reflected in next year's edition.

Paul Doran, Probation Board for Northern Ireland  
Vivian Geiran, Probation & Welfare Service  
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