

# FREEDOM OF INFORMATION GUIDE

Guide to the Functions,  
Records, Rules and Practices  
of the Probation Service

Section 15 and 16 Reference Book



THE  
PROBATION  
SERVICE  
An tSeirbhís Phromhaidh

2008

## Contents

Freedom of Information	4
The Probation Service	8

### **Part 1 Section 15 Freedom of Information Acts 1997 & 2003**

Directors Office	11
Operations Directorate	12
Research, Training & Development Directorate	16
Corporate Services/Human Resources Directorate	18
Corporate Services	20
Finance	22
Human Resources	24
Information Technology	26

### **Part 2 Section 16 Freedom of Information Acts 1997 & 2003**

Introduction	29
Operations Directorate	30
Research, Training & Development Directorate	30
Corporate Services/Human Resources Directorate	31
Corporate Services	31
Finance	32
Human Resources	32
Information Technology	33

## Application under the Freedom of Information Acts 1997 & 2003

Under the Freedom of Information Acts 1997 & 2003, anyone is entitled to apply for access to information NOT otherwise publicly available.

Each person has a right to;

- Access records held by the Service
- Request correction of personal information relating to oneself held by the Service where it is inaccurate, incomplete or misleading
- Access to reasons for decisions made by the Service directly affecting oneself.

The following records come within the scope of the Act;

- All records relating to personal information held by the Service irrespective of when created
- All other records created from commencement date i.e.; 21 April 1998 (subject to certain exemptions)
- Any other records necessary to the understanding of a current record.

## Requests for information under the FOI Act should be addressed to;

Freedom of Information Officer  
The Probation Service  
Haymarket  
Smithfield  
Dublin 7

Applications must be in writing or alternatively e-mailed to [foi@probation.ie](mailto:foi@probation.ie) and should indicate that the information is sought under the Freedom of Information Act. If information is desired in a particular form (such as a photocopy, computer disk, etc) this should be specified in the application. Requests should be as detailed and specific as possible to enable the information sought to be identified. A day time telephone number should also be provided so that if necessary contact can be made to clarify details of the request.

## Rights of Review and Appeal

The FOI Act sets out a series of exemptions to protect sensitive information where its disclosure may damage key interests of the State or of third parties. Where a Department/Office invokes these provisions to withhold information, the decision may be appealed by the requester. Decisions in relation to deferral of access, charges, forms of access, etc. may also be appealed. Details of the appeals mechanisms are set out in the following paragraphs.

## Internal Review

You may seek an internal review of the initial decision, and this review will be carried out by an official at a higher level if;

- You are dissatisfied with the initial response received i.e; refusal of information, form of access charges etc., or
- You have not received a reply within 20 working days of the initial applications. This is deemed to be a refusal of the request and allows you to proceed to internal review.

A request for an internal review must be submitted in writing within 20 working days of the initial decision to;

Freedom of Information Officer  
The Probation Service  
Haymarket  
Smithfield  
Dublin 7

The Service must complete the review within 15 working days. An internal review must normally be completed before an appeal may be made to the Information Commissioner.

## Review by the Information Commissioner

Following completion of the internal review, if you are still dissatisfied, you may seek an independent review of the decision from the Information Commissioner. Alternatively, if a reply is not received from the Service within 15 working days,

this may be deemed to be a refusal and an appeal for a review may be made to the Information Commissioner.

Appeals must be made in writing to the Information Commissioner at the following address:

Office of the Information Commissioner  
 18 Lower Leeson Street,  
 Dublin 2.  
 Ph: 01-6395689  
 Lo-Call: 1890 22 30 30  
 Fax: 01-6395674 / 01-6395676  
 e-mail: info@oic.ie

### Appeals to the High Court

Section 42 of the Act allows for an appeal to the High Court on a point of law by a party to a review under section 34 or any other person affected by the decision of the Commissioner. The Freedom of Information Amendment Act 2003 provides for a right of appeal to the Supreme Court of the High Court decision.

### Fees

Under the provision of the Freedom of Information Acts, 1997 and 2003, and of the relevant regulations, in certain cases a fee must be paid at the time of the making of a request or an appeal. This requirement to pay a fee came into force on 7th July 2003. Fees are not payable where the record(s) concerned contains or contain only personal information relation to the requester. If the fee is not paid the request/appeal is deemed not to have been made. However, in certain circumstances, no fee is payable or reduced fees may apply.

The details of when payment is necessary, and the rates of payment, are set out below:

Type of Request / Appeal	Original Request	Internal Review	Appeal to OIC
Access to personal information relating to the applicant	No Fee	No Fee	No Fee
Amendment to records (Section 17 of FOI Act)	No Fee	No Fee	No Fee
Statement of reasons (Section 18 of FOI Act)	No Fee	No Fee	No Fee
Appeal of decision to charge a fee	No Fee	No Fee	No Fee
Request to which Section 28(6) of the Act applies	No Fee	No Fee	No Fee
Access to a non-personal record by a non-medical card holder	€15	€75	€150
Request for a non-personal record by medical card holder or dependant of medical card holder	€10	€25	€50
Third parties appealing a decision of a public body to release their information on public interest grounds	-	-	€50

Rates accurate at time of publication

In addition to the application fees applicable for FOI request the following additional charges may apply:

- In respect of personal records, no fees are charged in respect of the cost of copying the records requested unless a large number of records are involved.
- In respect of other (non-personal) information, fees may be charged for the time spent in efficiently locating and copying records based on a standard hourly rate. No other charges will apply in respect of the time spent by the Service in considering requests.

A deposit may be payable where the total fee is likely to exceed €50.79. In these circumstances, the Service will, if requested, assist in amending the request so as to reduce or eliminate the necessity for a deposit.

Charges may be waived in the following circumstances;

- Where the collection and related costs would exceed the amount of the fee
- Where the information is of particular assistance to the understanding of an issue of national importance or
- In the case of personal information, where such charges would not be reasonable having regard to the means of the applicant.

## The Probation Service

The Probation Service is an agency within the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.

The role of the Service is to reduce the level of crime in the community and increase public safety by:

- The effective assessment and management of offenders
- Challenging offending behaviour
- Facilitating the integration of ex-offenders.

We provide probation supervision, community service, offending behaviour programmes and specialist support services, to both adult and young offenders, which aims to stop them committing further offences.

Many of our activities are inter-agency, and our key partners include the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Irish Youth Justice Service, the Court Service, Irish Prison Service, An Garda Síochána and a range of other organisations in the statutory sector as well as in the voluntary and community sector. We deliver services to individuals, communities, courts and prisons across the entire country. While our services are organised nationally, they are managed and delivered locally.

We have over 500 staff in offices in more than forty locations nationwide comprised of the following posts:

Director (1)  
Deputy Directors (3)  
Assistant Directors (2)  
Assistant Principal Probation Officers (12)  
Senior Probation Officers (57)  
Probation Officers (266)  
Probation Service Assistants (10)  
Community Service Supervisors (55)

Accountant (1)  
Assistant Principal Officers (2)

Higher Executive Officers (7)  
Executive Officers (11.5)  
Staff Officer (1)  
Clerical Officers (67)  
Service Officers (4)

Although part of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, the Probation Service is located separately and is managed on a day to day basis by the Director of the Probation Service.

The Probation Service Head Office is located at Athlumney House, Johnstown, Co. Meath.

Further information is available from the Probation Service website at [www.probation.ie](http://www.probation.ie).

**SECTION 15**  
**FREEDOM OF**  
**INFORMATION**  
**ACTS 1997 & 2003**

## Director's Office

### Role of the Office

The Director of the Probation Service is responsible for planning and management of the Probation Service as well as overall day to day administration.

The Director is supported by 3 Deputy Directors who are each responsible for one of the following Directorates:

- Operations Directorate
- Research, Training & Development Directorate
- Corporate Services/Human Resources Directorate

Each Deputy Director reports directly to the Director.

### Structure of the Office

The Director's office is staffed as follows:

Director (1)  
Higher Executive Officers (2)  
Executive Officers (2)  
Clerical Officers (3)

### Delivery of Service

The focus on delivery for the Director is to ensure that the Probation Service high level goals are met and the Service Strategic plan is implemented. This is underpinned by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform Strategic plan.

### Classes of Records Held

- Business Planning Documents
- Policy & Strategy Documents
- Internal and External Correspondence
- General Administration Documents

#### Information Available

- Probation Service Annual Report
- Probation Service Strategy Statement
- Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform Strategic Plan

#### Further Information

Requests for further information on the Probation Service should be addressed to:

The Director  
The Probation Service Head Office  
Athlumney House  
Johnstown  
Co. Meath.

## Operations Directorate

#### Role of the Directorate

The aim of the Operations Directorate is to reduce the risk of re-offending through quality assessments and effective supervision and re-integration of offenders. To achieve this, staff provide probation work and related services to the courts, prisons and places of detention.

The work involves:

- Preparing pre-sanction assessments for the courts
- Supervising offenders in the community who are referred by the court
- Supervising offenders released conditionally from custody.

#### Structure of the Directorate

The Directorate is comprised of the following posts:

- Deputy Director (1)
- Assistant Directors (2)
- Assistant Principal Probation Officers/Regional Managers (9)
- Assistant Principal (1)
- Senior Probation Officers (57)
- Probation Officers (266)
- Probation Service Assistants (10)
- Community Service Supervisors (55)

The Deputy Director for Operations has overall responsibility for the day to day administration, planning and management of this Directorate and reports regularly to the Director of the Probation Service.

The Assistant Directors report to the Deputy Director for Operations and have responsibility for Young Persons Probation and Community Service & Service Funded Projects.

Delivery of the service at local level is organised on a team basis using a regional structure. There are 7 Operational Regions. Two of these;

- Young Persons Probation
- Prisoners, Risk and Resettlement

are organised nationally. The other 5 regions, as follows, are the responsibility of an Assistant Principal Probation Officer (or Regional Manager);

- Dublin North & North East
- Dublin South & Wicklow
- Midlands & South East
- South West
- West/North-West & Westmeath

Administrative support for the Operations Directorate and all regional offices is provided by staff of the Corporate Services Directorate.

## Delivery of Service

The broad phases of the criminal justice process are as follows:

### *Investigation – Prosecution – Trial – Sanction*

The Probation Service is sometimes involved in the Criminal Justice Process during the trial phase, for example when a court requires a Probation Officer to hold a family conference. More often, we become involved in the criminal justice process between the trial and sanction phases, often in cases where a trial court requires a pre-sanction assessment and report to assist in deciding on an appropriate sanction. In some cases, the court may be considering placing an offender on probation supervision or community service.

Where the court decides on a community based sanction we are responsible for managing the sanction and supervising the offender. We help offenders to become better citizens and make good the harm done by crime. We also undertake whatever steps are appropriate to reduce the risk of future harm or re-offending by the offender.

We have an important role in planning and preparing for the release of prisoners and their return to the community. We also supervise some offenders after their release from prison. This particular role is focused on reintegrating the offender in society, with the priority of protecting the public and reducing the risk of re-offending.

The Probation Service co-operates with criminal justice agencies in other jurisdictions, especially in cases where offenders move between countries.

We also work closely with a wide range of other partner departments and agencies, including those in the statutory, voluntary and community sectors to achieve our mutual goals of building a better and safer society.

## Information Available

- Probation Service Annual Report
- Probation Service Strategy Statement
- Information Leaflets & Booklets
- Victims Charter
- Practice Guidelines & Standards

All of the above information is available from the Probation Service website at [www.probation.ie](http://www.probation.ie).

## Classes of Records Held

Records held in electronic and paper format by the Operations Directorate are as follows:

- Documents relating to the management of offenders
- File Registries
- Victim Impact Reports
- Documents relating to Projects funded by the Probation Service
- Planning & Policy documents in relation to the running of the Directorate
- General administration documents in relation to the running of the Directorate including staff management and liaison with Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform and other Government Departments and Bodies.

## Further Information

Requests for further information should be addressed to:

Deputy Director of Operations  
The Probation Service Head Office  
Athlumney House  
Johnstown  
Co. Meath.

## Research, Training & Development Directorate

### Role of the Directorate

The Research, Training & Development Directorate is responsible for the following:

- Monitoring emerging research
- Planning and undertaking programme effectiveness research
- Critically reviewing current legislative base
- Developing and articulating proposals for new legislation
- Updating and expanding practice and procedure guidelines
- Bringing an enhanced victim focus into day to day probation practice
- Encouraging interest by the Service in restorative justice
- Planning and delivery of training programmes
- Leading to the implementation of the integrated model of PMDS
- Strengthening management skill and capacity
- Updating staff on new developments, legislation and guidelines
- Co-ordinating external training opportunities
- Contributing to training in other bodies
- Support and training for training staff

### Structure of the Directorate

The Research & Development Directorate comprises the following posts:

- Deputy Director of Research, Training & Development (1)
- Assistant Principal Probation Officer (2)
- Senior Probation Officer (1)
- Probation Officers (4)

The Deputy Director for Research, Training & Development has overall responsibility for the day to day administration, planning and management of this Directorate and reports regularly to the Director of the Probation Service.

Administrative support for the Research, Training & Development Directorate is provided by staff of the Corporate Services Directorate.

### Delivery of Service

Customers of the Research, Training & Development Directorate would comprise of the staff and management of the Probation Service

The Research, Training & Development Directorate would also liaise with the Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform, other agencies of the Department and other Government Departments.

In relation to the provision of services directly to members of the public the main interaction is this regard would be:

- European Probation services with particular reference to the Probation Service of Northern Ireland (PBNI)
- Universities in relation to Student work placements
- Other training institutions and training bodies

### Information Available

- Probation Service Annual Report
- Probation Service Strategy Statement
- Research Publications as listed on the Probation Service website

### Classes of Records Held

- Policy Documents
- Legislative Documents
- Research Documents
- Documents in relation to PMDS
- Training Courses - Content, Applications and Schedules
- Applications for external training
- Documents in relation to training expenditure
- Documents in relation to the development of practice & procedure guidelines
- Documents in relation to Restorative Justice

### Further Information

Request for further information should be addressed to:

Deputy Director for Research, Training & Development  
The Probation Service Head Office  
Athlumney House  
Johnstown  
Co. Meath.

## Corporate Services/Human Resources Directorate

### Role of the Directorate

The role of the Corporate Services/Human Resources Directorate is to:

- Provide effective and efficient financial management of the Probation Service
- Provide accurate and high quality information
- Provide a safe and accessible environment for staff and Service users
- Integrate and co-ordinate with all directorates to achieve the Probation Service goal of reducing re-offending.

The Deputy Director for Corporate Services/Human Resources has overall responsibility for the day to day administration, planning and management of this Directorate and reports regularly to the Director of the Probation Service.

### Structure of the Directorate

The Directorate is comprised of four units each with distinct functions and responsibilities;

- Corporate Services Unit
- Finance Unit
- Human Resources Unit
- Information Technology Unit

And is comprised of the following posts;

Deputy Director (1)  
Assistant Principal Probation Officer (1)  
Assistant Principal Officer (1)  
Higher Executive Officers (5)  
Executive Officers (9.5)  
Staff Officer (1)  
Clerical Officers (67)  
Service Officers (4)

Administrative support is provided by Corporate Services staff to the Director's office and all other Directorates.

### Further Information

Request for further information should be addressed to:

Deputy Director for Corporate Services/Human Resources  
The Probation Service Head Office  
Athlumney House  
Johnstown  
Co. Meath.

## Corporate Services Unit

The role of the unit is to provide support services to the Probation Service. It is responsible for the following:

- Partnership
- Health & Safety
- Data Protection
- Freedom of Information
- Parliamentary Questions
- Communication
- Customer Service
- Management of Contracts
- Provision, maintenance and security of accommodation
- Purchase of office supplies & furniture
- Purchase of non-IT equipment and services
- Telecommunications
- Management of information
- File Registry
- Telephonist services
- Administrative support nationally

### Structure of the Unit

The Corporate Services Unit is located at the Probation Service, Haymarket, Smithfield, Dublin 7 it currently comprises personnel as follows:

- Higher Executive Officer (3)
- Executive Officers (2)
- Clerical Officers (2)

The Corporate Services Unit reports to the Deputy Director for Corporate Services/Human Resources.

### Delivery of Service

Customers of the Corporate Services unit would comprise of the staff and management of the Probation Service and service funded projects.

The Corporate Services Unit also liaise with the Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform, other agencies of the Department and other Government Departments.

In relation to the provision of services directly to members of the public the main interaction in this regard would be:

- suppliers of goods, equipment and services
- contractors who would provide advice, expertise and consultancy.
- Queries from general public

### Information Available

- Probation Service Annual Report
- Probation Service Strategy Statement
- Customer Charter
- Quality Customer Service Action Plan
- Health & Safety Statement

### Classes of Records Held

The Corporate Services Unit holds records in both electronic and paper form in relation to the following:

- Procurement/Contract Details
- Central File Registry
- Parliamentary Questions
- Records pertaining to general administration of the section
- Records pertaining to Health & Safety
- Freedom of Information Files
- Data Protection Registration details
- Correspondence documents

## Finance Unit

### Role of the Unit

The Finance unit is responsible for the following:

- Financial management and planning, including the provision and interpretation of financial data
- Financial reporting and control
- End of Year Reporting to Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform
- Revision and documentation of financial management systems and development of necessary procedures & guidelines
- Purchase of non-IT equipment for the Probation Service
- Processing of non-IT related invoices for Dublin offices
- Supervision & control of regional finance officers
- Recommendation for funding and general financial management of funded projects and bodies

### Structure of the Unit

The Finance Unit is located at the Probation Service, Haymarket, Smithfield, Dublin 7 and currently comprises 4 personnel as follows:

Accountant (1)  
Executive Officer (1)  
Clerical Officers (2)

The Finance Unit reports to the Deputy Director for Corporate Services/Human Resources.

The Finance Unit is supported in each region by a designated administrative officer who is responsible for local financial functions and reports to the Accountant in the Finance Unit.

### Delivery of Service

Customers of the Finance Unit would mainly comprise of the staff and management of the Probation Service.

The Finance Unit also liase with the Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform and the Department of Finance in relation to financial matters.

In relation to the provision of services directly to members of the public the main interaction in this regard would be with suppliers of goods, equipment or services. The Finance Unit is subject to the following:

- Department of Finance Regulations
- Prompt Payment of Accounts Act 1997
- National & EU Procurement Guidelines
- Decisions from the Mullarkey Report

### Information Available

- Probation Service Annual Report
- Probation Service Strategy Statement
- Monthly Expenditure Report

### Classes of Records Held

The Finance Unit holds records in both electronic and paper format as follows;

- Financial records relating to the procurement of non-IT goods, equipment and services
- Documents relating to purchases of non-IT goods, equipment and services
- Invoices and supporting documentation
- Creditors Statements
- Financial Planning information
- Financial and accounting information
- Financial management guidelines & procedures
- Documents relating to the general administration of the section

## Human Resources Unit

### Role of the Unit

The Human Resources Unit (HR Unit) is responsible for the following:

- Recruitment, assignments, transfers and promotions of Probation Officers
- Recruitment and assignments of Locums
- Assignments of Administration staff
- Staffing levels
- Development of Staff Handbook
- Co-Ordinator for “Designated Contact Persons” under the Dignity at Work Charter
- Career enquiries
- General HR work

### Structure of the Unit

The HR Unit is located at the Probation Service, Haymarket, Smithfield, Dublin 7 and currently comprises 6 personnel as follows:

Assistant Principal Probation Officer (1)  
Assistant Principal Officer (1)  
Higher Executive Officer (1)  
Executive Officers (1)  
Clerical Officers (2)

The HR Unit reports to the Deputy Director for Corporate Services/Human Resources.

### Delivery of Service

Most dealings of the HR unit would be with staff and management of the Probation Service.

The HR Unit liaises with the Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform on personnel and staffing matters.

In relation to the provision of services directly to members of the public the main interaction in this regard would be;

- Advertising Agencies
- Enquiries from the Public

### Information Available

- Probation Service Annual Report
- Probation Service Strategy Statement
- Dignity at Work Charter
- Customer Charter
- Quality Customer Service Action Plan

### Classes of Records Held

#### *Personal Information relating to staff*

Personal information is held on the Probation Services' computer network and on centrally stored paper files. Personal information is managed on the file relating to the individual officer.

#### *Non-Personal Information*

Non-personal information would consist of;

- Copies of publications of the Probation Service
- General HR related documents

## Information Technology Unit

### Role of the Unit

The role of the unit is the provision and support of an effective IT infrastructure which facilitates the Probation Service in pursuit of its objectives.

It is responsible for the following:

- Operational support for existing computer systems including system security and availability of facilities
- Maintenance and enhancement of existing systems and technical architectures
- Development, management and support of the Probation Service network
- Provision of Service Desk support
- Management and support of existing applications
- Design, development and implementation of new applications as required
- Procurement of IT related hardware, software, consumables and IT related services.
- Ensuring compliance with Data Protection Legislation
- Implementation of the Information Technology Strategy

### Structure of the Unit

The IT Unit is located at the Probation Service, Haymarket, Smithfield, Dublin 7 and currently comprises 5 personnel as follows:

Higher Executive Officer (1)  
Executive Officer (1)  
Clerical Officers (2)

The IT Unit reports to the Deputy Director for Corporate Services/Human Resources.

### Delivery of Service

Customers of the IT unit would comprise of the staff and management of the Probation Service and Linkage Workers working in Probation Service locations.

The IT Unit also liaise with the Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform, other agencies of the Department and other Government Departments.

In relation to the provision of services directly to members of the public the main interaction in this regard would be:

- suppliers of IT goods and equipment
- contractors who would provide advice, expertise and consultancy in areas of an IT nature.

### Information Available

- Probation Service Annual Report
- Probation Service Strategy Statement
- Probation Service Acceptable Usage Policy

### Classes of Records Held

The IT Unit holds records in both electronic and paper form.

The IT Unit is responsible for the storage and back-up of electronic data from all applications provided by the Probation Service which is currently the following:

- Probation Service Case Tracking System
- Management Information System
- Probation Service Management System (Internal HR database)
- Non-Offender Related Management System
- E-mail accounts
- Document Library

Records stored by the IT Unit may also consist of the following in either electronic or paper format:

- Technical reports and system documentation
- Financial records relating to the procurement of IT goods/equipment and IT purchases,
- Financial and accounting information
- Information relating to the general administration of the section.

## SECTION 16 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACTS 1997 & 2003

### Introduction

Section 16 of the Freedom of Information Act requires the Service to prepare, publish and make available the rules, procedures, practices, guidelines and interpretations, and an index of any precedents kept for the purposes of decisions, under any enactment or scheme administered by the Probation Service with respect to the rights, privileges, benefits, obligations, penalties or other sanctions to which members of the public are entitled or subject to under the enactment of the scheme together with information in relation to the manner or intended manner of administration of any such enactment or scheme.

The intention is that all the rules, precedents etc. under which decisions are made which affect the rights, privileges, benefits of individual citizens will be available publicly, so that every citizen can make an informed judgement as to whether his/her entitlements have been accorded in full.

The Service administers relatively few enactments or schemes of the type covered by section 16. However, information on the rules, guidelines etc. used by the Probation Service in the course of its business is provided for information purposes.

## Operations Directorate

### Legislation

Probation of Offenders Act 1907 as amended by the Criminal Justice (Administration) Act 1914 and applied by subsequent Acts. (Probation Orders).  
Misuse of Drugs Act 1977/1984.  
Criminal Justice (Community Service) Act 1983. (Community Service Orders).  
Criminal Justice Act 1960. (Supervision of Offenders on release from custody).  
Criminal Justice Act 2006. (Part Suspended sentences).  
Children Act 2001.  
Sex Offenders Act 2001.  
Criminal Justice Act 2003 (Temporary Release of Prisoners).  
District Court Rules.

## Research Training & Development Directorate

### PMDS

This directorate is responsible for the roll-out of the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) in the Probation Service and for ensuring that any necessary support and training is provided in support of this.

This is operated in accordance with procedures outlined in the Department of Finance publications and circulars and overseen by the Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform.

## Corporate Services/Human Resources Directorate

### Corporate Services Unit

#### *Data Protection*

The Probation Service was registered for Data Protection in 2006 as required under the Data Protection Act 1988 and 2003. Corporate Services Unit is responsible for reviewing and updating this registration on an on-going basis.

#### *Freedom of Information*

The administration of Freedom of Information in the Probation Service is outlined in Part 1 of this reference book (page 3 - 5). Under the Freedom of Information Acts 1997 & 2003 anyone is entitled to apply for access to information not otherwise publicly available.

#### *Health & Safety*

Procedures relating to matters of Health and Safety in the Probation Service are set out in the Probation Service safety statement.

#### *Parliamentary Questions*

Corporate Services is responsible for the management and co-ordination of Parliamentary Questions.

#### *Purchase of Goods/Services*

The award of contracts by the Probation Service is in accordance with procedures outlined in the Department of Finance publications and circulars.

Published procurement procedures are:

- Public Financial Procedures
- Public Procurement
- An Outline of Government Contracts Procedures

These are available from the Government Publications Sales Office.

#### *Customer Service*

Probation Service policy in relation to customer service is contained in the Probation Service Customer Service Charter.

## **Finance Unit**

### ***Accounting Requirements and Practices***

The principles of Government Accounting are mainly derived from the Constitution and from the institutional and financial relationships between parliament and the executive which have been developed over the years. All administrators in Government Departments are responsible for managing and using state resources and detailed rules and procedures are laid down by the Department of Finance to ensure that this is achieved.

The rules, procedures and guidelines under which the Finance Unit operates are as follows;

- Public Financial Procedures
- Prompt Payment of Accounts Act 1997
- Public Procurement
- An Outline of Government Contracts Procedures

These publications are available from the Government Publications Sales Office.

## **Human Resources Unit**

The Human Resources Unit operates in accordance with the provisions of the Department of Finance circulars held in the Personnel Code. This Code is available from [www.codpearsanra.gov.ie](http://www.codpearsanra.gov.ie)

It is also responsible for the implementation of the Probation Service “Dignity at Work” policy which is contained in the “Dignity at Work” charter.

The Probation Service is an equal opportunities employer and is bound by the Equal Status Act 2000.

## **Information Technology Unit**

### ***Procurement of Goods or Services***

The award of I.T. contracts by the Probation Service is in accordance with procedures outlined in the Department of Finance publications and circulars.

The overarching circular in relation to I.T. contracts is Department of Finance Circular 16/97: New Delegation Arrangement for IT related expenditure (including Office Machinery).

Published procurement procedures are:

- Public Financial Procedures
- Public Procurement
- An Outline of Government Contracts Procedures

These are available from the Government Publications Sales Office.