

THE PROBATION PRESS

Newsletter of The Probation Service

FEBRUARY 2007

Y.P.P. Update

The YPP service was officially launched by the Minister for Children, Brian Lenihan on 22nd November 2006, in St Vincent's Trust Project in Dublin 1.

On 1st January 2007 the role previously assumed by the Special Residential Services Board in Courts was transferred to YPP. Two dedicated YPP Probation Officers have been assigned to attend Children Courts in Dublin on a full time basis.



The Service continues planning for the commencement of Probation Supervised Community Sanctions under the Children Act 2001. Preparations for the rollout of these orders in YPP hub areas are underway! More details on this will follow in the next edition.



Brian Dack (Assistant Director, Y.P.P.), Vivian Geiran (Deputy Director, Operations), Brian Lenihan T.D. (Minister for Children), Michelle Shannon (Director, Irish Youth Justice Service) and Michael Donnellan (Director, Probation Service) at the Young Persons Probation launch on 22nd November 2006.

ADMINISTRATION REVIEW BEGINS

The Service has committed to critically review our management and staffing structures, capacity and operations and make the necessary changes to ensure greater efficiency and accountability. As part of this we are committed to carrying out an administrative review. The 'As Is' Audit will inform and underpin the review which we hope will help us identify how best to utilise our resources.

PMDS Integrated Model Goes Live

The implementation of the new integrated model is important for all probation staff, because PMDS is now part of how we do our jobs and requires everyone's co-operation to make it work!

While Research Training and Development are leading the implementation, Operations and Corporate Affairs & Human Resources are also interlinked with the whole process. A PMDS Implementation Group is currently being established with members from across the Service to co-ordinate the development of the revised PMDS.

The Role Profile Form for 2007 is now on the PSMS. This is a revised form as recommended by the Review Group and should be used across the Service from this year on. Role Profiles should be completed by the middle of February, Performance Evaluation Reviews by July, and Annual Assessment Forms by the middle of November 2007. A considerable amount of information is available on the Portal, including the report from the Review Group, the Action Plan, and copies of all the forms.

SERVICE SNAPSHOT 'AS IS' AUDIT PUBLISHED

The much awaited 'As Is' Audit was recently published and distributed to all staff. The Audit document highlights the Service's commitment to positive change and will inform future strategic planning.

Two working groups:

The Structures & Resources Review Group and the Policy, Practice & Procedures Group have been set up to action the Audit's findings.

The S.R.R.G. has published their first report along with new proposed regional structure and will issue their final report in March.



The P.P.P.G. are scheduled to begin deliberations in early February.



CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to all fourteen members of staff, both Dublin and regionally based, who successfully completed the Addiction Studies Certificate programme for the academic year 2005 to 2006. The programme was presented by the staff development section in conjunction with the National University of Ireland Maynooth. Michael Donnellan, Director of the Probation Service, and Josephine Finn, Co-ordinator, Adult Education National University of Ireland at Maynooth, presented the certificates to staff at Cassidy's Hotel on Monday 18th December 2006.

ABOVE: Addiction Studies Staff (South East region). BELOW: Addiction Studies Graduates with Michael Donnellan (Dublin)



CONTRIBUTE

If you would like to contribute to future issues of **The Probation Press** please notify Shane Hennessy, (Information Manager), by email schennessy@probation.ie.

WORKPLACE OF THE FUTURE: UPDATE

There was such a great response to invitations sent to all Probation staff by the Director, Michael Donnellan, to attend the recent consultation groups that two extra groups were organised to facilitate everyone. In all 253 Probation staff from all sections of the Service attended 13 nationwide consultation sessions!

This consultation process followed a commitment by the organisation to take steps in relation to the promotion of a work environment; characterised by mutual respect, that is both effective and caring. It will be enshrined in a Charter available and visible to everyone in the workplace. The consultation process also asked staff to consider the establishment of "designated contact persons" within the Service which would serve as an early intervention system to compliment and reinforce the existing Civil Service procedures as outlined in Circular 23/2005.

Probation staff engaged actively with the process and enthusiastically participated in the consultation groups showing a genuine desire to see progress being made in this whole area.

The draft final report by Graphite Human Resource Management has now been completed and all of the opinions and information gathered during the consultation sessions have contributed to the findings and recommendations made.

The report is now being considered by management, trade union and staff groups. Having considered the feedback, the Steering Group will then produce a final Workplace Charter and recommend a suggested way forward in relation to the designated contact persons and implementation of the Charter.

YOU'VE GOT EMAIL!

Would you believe that there are 190 million people in the world today who use email on a regular basis, sending approximately 35 billion messages a day?

Yes, it's true. A recent survey by America On Line revealed that people usually check their email five times a day: 25% of people can't live without it for more than 3 days at a time and 77% have more than one email account; 41% check their inbox first thing in the morning with 23% checking it while still in bed and 4% say they read their email in the bath!

Undoubtedly email has changed the way we communicate for good.

CORPORATE SERVICES / HUMAN RESOURCES NEWS

Information and Communications Department

We said goodbye to Rory and Stephen of PWC on 21st December 2006. They had been working with the Service for the last 3 years. During that time the Service made huge strides in rolling out PCs to all our staff and developing a nationwide case tracking system. In 2007 we plan to build on what we have developed so far, including the Archangel Project and Management Information System. We will also be undertaking some new projects with the building move from Smithfield and the development of a dual site to protect our information. We are confident that with the help of new ICT Manager John Keenan and our team of IT staff that 2007 will be a busy and productive year. Take a look at our website if you get a chance: www.probation.ie

Did you know that the Chris, Brian and Denise in the Service desk dealt with 1815 calls in November and 1180 in December 2006. That's an average of 82 and 62 calls per working day respectively!

As required under the Data Protection Act 1988 and 2003 the Probation Service has registered with the Data Protection Commissioner. You can view our details by logging onto www.dataprotection.ie

Finance Unit

In 2006 we changed over from the 'Prisons Vote' to the 'Justice Vote'. As well as a Finance Unit in Smithfield we established cost centres around the country to manage our expenditure more locally. The Finance Unit is managed by Valerie Callanan our accountant who joined us in October 2006.

Last year the Probation Service annual budget was €49,719,000. This year our budget has increased by 19% to €59,323,000. The biggest increase was in our funding for juvenile offending initiatives.

MERIT SCHEME

The Probation Service merit scheme arises from an agreement between Service management and IMPACT under the Programme for Competitiveness and Work. The scheme has two elements:

- 1) Allowance of up to €7,000 per annum granted for a period of 3 years, which will be pensionable
- 2) Awards of up to €3,500 made on the basis of professional performance that merits commendation

Applications for inclusion in this scheme will be considered twice yearly in April and October. Forms can be obtained from Corporate Services/Human Resources in Smithfield.

HUMAN RESOURCES

This is a busy time for the HR division of the Probation Service. We are currently holding a competition for permanent Probation Officers. We had a huge volume of applications, and 132 have been shortlisted for interview. Interviews started on 23rd January and will be held until 27th February 2007.

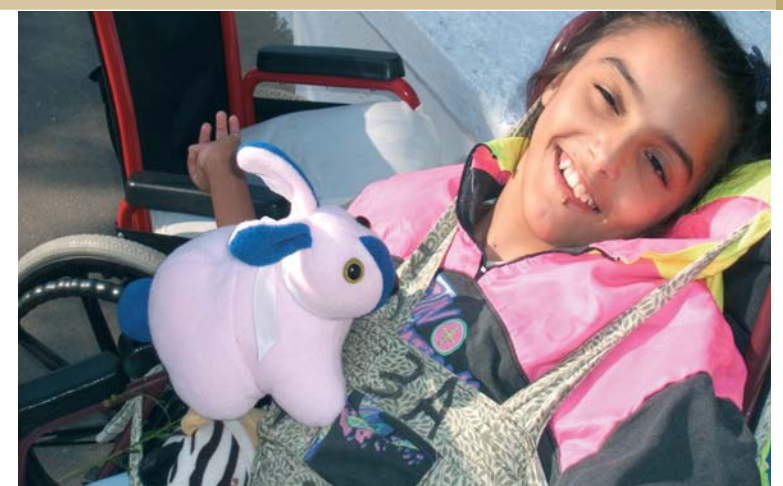
We plan to advertise for locum Probation Officers in mid-February. We will also be holding competitions for Senior Probation Officers and Assistant Principal/Regional Managers this year.



Community Service: Teddies Go Global!

For many years, the Community Service Soft Toy Project based in Dublin 1 has manufactured a variety of soft toys that have been donated to Temple Street Hospital and many other Irish children's wards and hospitals. While continuing to donate toys to hospitals in Ireland, in 2005 we expanded our horizons and, at the request of the Irish Army, the Community Service Toy Project provided teddy bears and other soft toys for Liberia in Africa. These received a great reception from the children there as can be seen from these photographs.

In 2006 we sent a consignment of teddy bears to Hincesti Orphanage in Moldova, with the invaluable assistance of the Service Officers in Smithfield who organised the packing and postage. The Republic of Moldova is an ex-Soviet state located between Romania and the Ukraine and is one of the poorest countries in Europe. In 2000 an Irish woman, Suzie O'Connell, founded Outreach Moldova after visiting an isolated orphanage for disabled girls in that country. At that time, conditions for the children were incredibly grim, with no heating, no furniture, little food, and no running water. Since the intervention of Outreach Moldova, the orphanage has been transformed. It is now physically comfortable, with children receiving the appropriate medical treatment. They also have sports facilities, and some of the children hope to compete in the Special



In the photo is Lalita, who suffers from cerebral palsy, pictured with her teddy bear from the Community Service Project.

Olympics in Beijing in 2008. It is also the first time in the history of Moldova that education has been offered to disabled children.

Three members of Probation Service have travelled to Moldova to work with the children: Laura Wason, Probation Officer, Dundalk; Betty Dowling, Community Service Supervisor (Toy Project); and Sile Loughrey, Probation Officer (DUBLIN 1,3).

The Director of Outreach Moldova expressed his gratitude, reporting that the children loved the brightly coloured teddy bears and that they had made wonderful birthday gifts. A second consignment was dispatched in December in time for Santa to deliver them to all the children. The Director and staff of the orphanage have asked us to thank all the Probation staff and offenders who have contributed to making the toys and to tell them of the happiness that their work brings to these orphaned and disabled children.