

SUPPORTING AND DELIVERING CHANGE

Strategy Statement 2006 -2007



THE
PROBATION
SERVICE

An tSeirbhís Phromhaidh



Safer communities through respect,
accountability, restoration
and social inclusion.

The Probation Service

The Probation Service is the lead agency in the assessment and management of offenders in our communities. On behalf of the Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform and in conjunction with the Courts Service, the Irish Prison Service, An Garda Síochána and the wider community, we provide high quality assessment of offenders and a professional and effective management of services and supports to bring about positive change in the behaviour of offenders.

What we do

- Risk evaluation and assessment reports for the Courts, Parole Board, Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform, Irish Prison Service and other authorities.
- Planning, co-ordination and delivery of effective supervised community sanctions.
- Managing, through effective partnership, dangerous offenders and those at risk of causing harm and reoffending.
- The reintegration of prisoners into society.

In these ways, we respond to the complex nature of offending behaviour, promote positive change in offenders, and help to break the cycle of crime and victimisation in order to reduce re-offending and protect the public.

Delivering on the Department's goals.

The Probation Service's priority will be to give effect to the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform's High Level Goal for the Service. As published, that is to:

...further advance our [Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform] structural and service reforms of an Garda Síochána, Courts, Prisons and Probation & Welfare Service to enable those agencies implement their mandates in the most effective and efficient way possible.' (Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform Strategy Statement, 2005 - 2007).

Our Values

In delivering on our mission statement, we are guided by the following core values:

1. Crime results in hurt and damage to victims and communities and must be met by an effective sanction.
2. Where appropriate, community sanctions are more fitting and effective than custody.
3. By engaging effectively with communities, particularly through a restorative justice model to address crime, we can enhance public safety and reduce offending patterns.
4. Each person has innate value, dignity and capacity for positive change and will be treated fairly, openly and with respect.
5. As with all members of society, offenders must accept personal responsibility for their behaviour.
6. We recognise the importance of accountability, efficiency, effectiveness and value for money in the provision of a quality public service.

Our practice is guided by:

- The United Nations Rules on Supervised Community Sanctions (*the 'Tokyo Rules'*).
- The Council Of Europe European Rules on Community Sanctions and Measures.
- The United Nations Rules on the Supervision of Young Offenders (*the 'Beijing Rules'*).
- The Code of Ethics of the Irish Association of Social Workers and the International Federation of Social Workers' *Ethics in Social Work: Statement of Principles*.

High Level Strategic Goals

We will continue to actively pursue the commitment to '*...delivery of the Department's business objectives through the effective use of our resources and the implementation of modernisation commitments under the "Sustaining Progress" Agreement.*' (DJELR, Strategy Statement 2005-2007, p.9).

We will create a strengthened Probation Service, built on shared national standards, and services that are locally developed and delivered.

We will build appropriate structures and interagency links, to ensure maximum co-ordination with key justice agencies in this and other jurisdictions.

Strategic Actions

1

Management and Staffing

We will critically review our management and staffing structures, capacity and operations and make the necessary changes to ensure greater efficiency and accountability.

2

Delivery of Effective Services

We will restructure our delivery of services to the courts and prisons by refocusing our resources in order to improve effectiveness, efficiency and increase output.

3

Young Persons' Probation

We will create Young Persons' Probation (YPP), a division of the Probation Service, and dedicate specific resources to it.

4

Funding and Service Delivery Agreements

We will review, and reform where appropriate, our funding and service delivery agreements with our partner agencies and projects to ensure they are in keeping with our refocused commitments.

5

Restorative Justice

We will further develop restorative justice models and reform and revitalise our delivery of Community Service.

6

Legislation and Policy

We will examine the legislative and policy requirements necessary, in conjunction with the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, to meet the new circumstances and demands faced by the Service.

1. Management and Staffing

We will critically review and develop our management and staffing structures, capacity and operations and make the necessary changes to ensure greater efficiency and accountability.

- A. We will create a new management structure under our key operational pillars including - Courts and Community, Corporate Services and Research, Training and Development.
- B. We will carry out an administrative review in the Service and make appropriate organisational and resourcing changes as required, to include a devolved financial and administrative structure.
- C. Develop appropriate strategic and operational planning and management in the areas of human resource management, information, and communications, and enhanced research, training and development capacity.

2. Delivery of effective services

We will restructure our delivery of services to the courts and prisons by refocusing our resources in order to improve effectiveness, efficiency and increase output.

- D. We will carry out a national review of how our services are organised and delivered; and rebalance and redistribute resources accordingly.
- E. We will engage at a high level with the Courts Service and the Judiciary in order to agree new priorities, forms and systems of service delivery.
- F. We will negotiate with the Irish Prison Service in order to refocus our services to prisons and prisoners, from a community perspective.

3. Young Persons' Probation:

We will create Young Persons' Probation (YPP) and dedicate specific resources to it.

- G. We will develop a strategic plan for Young Persons' Probation which will be a division of the Probation Service.
- H. We will target and deliver the service into areas of sufficient population and need (i.e. an expanded service in Dublin, plus concentrated services to begin with, in Cork, Limerick and Waterford).
- I. We will implement the sections of the Children Act, 2001 relating to Young Persons' Probation.

4. Funding and Service Delivery Agreements:

We will review, and reform where appropriate, our funding and service delivery agreements with our partner agencies and projects, to ensure they are in keeping with our refocused commitments.

- J. We will develop formal liaison links with relevant partner agencies both in Ireland and other jurisdictions.
- K. Through the Expenditure Review Initiative, we will identify the processes to be put in place in relation to partner agencies and funded projects, to ensure best practice, proper governance and value for money
- L. We will develop standards and structures for funded projects nationally to ensure added value to core probation work.

5. Restorative Justice:

We will further develop restorative justice models and reform and revitalise our delivery of Community Service.

- M. Using experience gained from previous restorative justice pilots, in which the Service has been involved, we will integrate as far as possible, restorative justice practice into our work.
- N. We will maximise the potential benefit of Community Service to local communities by reforming, revitalising, and restructuring its delivery.
- O. We will further enhance the voice of victims within the restorative justice model.

6. Legislation and Policy:

We will examine the legislative and policy requirements necessary, in conjunction with the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, to meet the new circumstances and demands faced by the Service.

- P. On the basis that appropriate legislation should inform and underpin our work, we will examine the legislative options for consideration by the Minister.
- Q. We will contribute to the overall policy development within the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.
- R. We will contribute to enhanced intergovernmental co-operation in relation to probation matters, and in particular the Intergovernmental Agreement on North-South Co-operation on Criminal Justice matters.

Strategic Actions



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