

IN THIS EDITION OF PROBATION WORKS: Joint PS-IPS Community Return Programme wins Civil Service Excellence in Innovation Award, New Irish Chair of PC-CP elected, Minister Fitzgerald commences Fines (Payment and Recovery) Act 2014, Director of Probation takes part in sentencing debate on Newstalk's Pat Kenny Show, Probation Service host CEP-EuroPris Workshop on the use of E-Learning methods, Third Central Statistics Office Reoffending Study for the Probation Service published, National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence published, North-South Cross-Border Co-operation in Probation, CEP publish special newsletter on the EU Victims' Rights Directive, EuroPris January newsletter published, Federal Probation Journal, Probation in Numbers, IASW Social Work Awards 2016, Date for Your Diary.

## Innovation and Creativity Award for Probation and Prison Services

The interagency (Probation-Prisons) Community Return programme, which helps ex-prisoners reintegrate in their communities, was awarded first prize in the *Excellence in Innovation* category of the inaugural Irish Civil Service Excellence Awards last month. The award reflects and recognises the hard work and dedication of Probation and Prisons staff, including those in our co-located Community Return Unit in Haymarket (Dublin) office, as well as all those working in communities and prisons across the country, who together have made Community Return such a success. As a result of that work, communities across Ireland are safer, as ex-prisoners are reintegrated, through structured and managed early release, in those communities

Since the scheme started in 2011, Community Return has facilitated the early release from prison of almost 2,000 prisoners who had been serving between one year and eight year sentences. Those who make good use of their time in prison, have behaved positively and engaged appropriately with their Sentence Management plan, avail of appropriate services, and come through the rigorous multi-disciplinary assessment process, may be released early and have community service work and a probation supervision programme substituted for their remaining jail time. The Community Return programme has been highly successful, recording a positive completion rate of around ninety percent. A big contributor to that success has been the excellent level of interagency co-operation involved. Those participating on the programme know that while they will be given every opportunity and assistance to succeed, failure to co-operate with their post-release programme will result in their being returned to custody, to serve the remainder of their prison sentence. At the awards ceremony in Dublin Castle, on Thursday 3rd December, Taoiseach Enda Kenny TD praised all the award winners and nominees, for exemplifying the values and commitment to public service of all involved, and for contributing so much to the improved wellbeing of individual citizens and communities across the country.



**Pictured (L to R):** Brian Dack, Asst Director; Minister Brendan Howlin TD; Taoiseach Enda Kenny TD; Robert Watt, Sec Gen, Dept of Public Expenditure and Reform; Prison Officer June Kelly and Probation Officer Justin McCarthy, receiving the award.

### Message from Director

Last month's Civil Service Excellence Award was the culmination of a busy and successful year for the Probation Service. As well as recognising the qualities of our excellent Probation staff and those of our Irish Prison Service colleagues, as well as those in our partner community and voluntary sector organisations, the award also recognised the strong interagency element which is critical to the success of the programme, and which is such an important part of the work of the Probation Service. Similarly strong interagency co-operation featured prominently for us throughout 2015, including for example the Joint Agency Response to Crime (JARC), which commenced in four locations in Dublin early last year and which was launched by Minister Frances Fitzgerald TD on 30<sup>th</sup> November (reported on in *Probation works*, November 2015 edition). We have committed, with the Irish Prison Service and An Garda Síochána, to continue to develop our close working relationships and co-operation, including through extending the JARC initiative to more locations over the coming months.



December also saw the historic first formal meeting of the heads of prison and probation services in Ireland, North and South, to specifically address areas of mutual concern and to agree issues and avenues for ongoing and future co-operation. Those opportunities include co-operating in programme development, sharing information and good practice, and joint, cross-border staff training, learning and development. The New Year – 2016 – will continue to present challenges to all of us. Nevertheless, the Probation Service will continue to rise to those challenges, delivering quality services to offenders, victims and communities, and further developing evidence-informed practice and building our organisational capacity to manage and deliver those services, in Courts, communities and prisons and places of detention, with our partner organisations, to help create a safer and fairer Ireland.

The next edition of *Probation works* will be published in March 2016.

**Vivian Geiran, Director**

## Historic North-South Meeting of the Directors of Prison and Probation Services



L to R: Michael Donnellan, Dir. Gen., Irish Prison Service; Cheryl Lamont (Acting) Director, Probation Board for Northern Ireland; Sue McAllister, Director of Reducing Reoffending and Dir. Gen., Northern Ireland Prison Service; and Vivian Geiran.

Last month (December 2015) saw the historic first four-way meeting of the Directors of Prison and Probation Services, North and South. At the meeting, which was held in Dundalk, the four Directors discussed current areas of co-operation and ways in which that co-operation, including programme delivery, learning and development, could be further developed. The four service heads plan to meet again on a regular basis each year, to monitor and build on our agreed shared co-operative work streams.



## New Irish Chair of PC-CP elected

The Council of Europe (CoE) working group on penological co-operation, the PC-CP, at its recent meeting (11 to 13 January 2016) in Strasbourg, elected Probation Service Director, Vivian Geiran, as Chairman of the working group. Vivian, who has represented Ireland on the nine-person CoE committee for the past two years, having been first elected in December 2013, said he is honoured at his election as Chair, and that he will use his term to further advance co-operation in probation and prison services across Europe, in order to improve standards and outcomes in prisons and probation systems for all concerned.

As part of the group's work programme for 2016, the PC-CP will also organise the annual conference of directors of prisons and probation in Europe, to be held in the Netherlands in June. The theme is *Community Involvement in Prison and Probation Work*. More information on the PC-CP is available at the link below:

[PC-CP website](#)

## Director of Probation Service welcomes the publication of the second National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence

The Director of the Probation Service, Vivian Geiran, welcomed the publication of the second National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence 2016-2021 which was launched by Ms. Frances Fitzgerald TD, Minister for Justice and Equality on 20th January 2016. The strategy, agreed by Government on 13 January 2016, envisages a range of actions to be implemented by State, voluntary and community sector organisations, including the Probation Service, aimed at preventing and responding to domestic, sexual and gender-based violence.



Speaking after the launch, Mr. Geiran commented "I welcome the publication of this national Strategy which, coupled with the range of legislative and other measures referenced by the Minister in her speech which, will support and protect victims, hold offenders to account, and introduce enhanced measures to address all aspects of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence. In particular I welcome the joined up approaches outlined in the Strategy and the recognition of the role we all must play in addressing this serious societal issue."

A copy of the national strategy is available on the [Department of Justice and Equality website](#) or by clicking on icon above.

The Probation Service's Domestic Violence Strategy is available on the Service's [website](#) in the Publications/General Publications area or can be accessed directly by clicking on the icon.



Above: Vivian Geiran, incoming PC-CP Chairman with Jörg Jesse, Vice-Chairman

## Minister Fitzgerald commences Fines (Payment and Recovery) Act 2014

On 11<sup>th</sup> January 2016 Minister for Justice and Equality, Frances Fitzgerald TD commenced the Fines (Payment and Recovery) Act 2014.

The Fines (Payment and Recovery) Act 2014 provides for a number of changes to the way in which fines may be paid. Among other things, it provides for the payment of fines by instalment, by attachment and recovery orders if appropriate, and by the substitution of community service orders for the fines.



The key new developments in the [Fines \(Payment and Recovery\) Act 2014](#) are that:

- *Fines will be set at a level that takes into account the person's financial circumstances;*
- *A Court shall, when imposing a fine on a person, inform the fined person of the payment options available;*
- *All fines over €100 can be paid by instalments;*
- *Where a person defaults, he or she is brought back to Court at which hearing the Judge will consider making an Attachment Order, a Recovery Order where the fine is more than €500, or a **Community Service Order**;*
- *There is no minimum level of fine that can be substituted by a Community Service Order;*
- *Where either an Attachment Order or a Recovery Order are made and the fine is still not recovered in full, the Court can make a **Community Service Order**; and*
- *Imprisonment will only apply where it is not possible to make a Community Service Order or where one is made and the person fails to comply with it.*

In the case of a fine arising from a summary conviction (District Court) a Community Service Order of between 30 and 100 hours may be ordered. Where the fine is in respect of a conviction on indictment (Circuit or higher Court), a Community Service Order may provide for between 40 and 240 hours of work.

## Director of Probation takes part in sentencing debate on Newstalk's Pat Kenny Show

On 25th January 2016, Vivian Geiran, Director of the Probation Service took part in a live radio debate on Sentencing in Ireland. The article is available for listen back on the Newstalk website or at the following link.

[Sentencing in Ireland, Pat Kenny, Newstalk 106FM.](#)

The sentencing in Ireland discussion takes place in Parts 2 and 3 of the show.

## The Pat Kenny Show

Every weekday from 10am-12.30pm

**newstalk**  
106-108FM



## Probation related PUBLICATIONS



### North-South Cross-Border Co-operation in Probation

The 2015 edition of the Journal of Cross Border



Studies in Ireland contains an excellent article on the history of cross-border co-operation by the Probation Service with the Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI), by Paul Doran, Deputy Director, PBNI. The Journal is available via the following link: [Journal of Cross Border Studies](#) or by clicking on the icon above.

### CEP publish special newsletter on the EU Victims' Rights Directive

The CEP has recently published a special Newsletter on the EU Victims' Rights Directive December 2015. A copy of the newsletter is available by clicking on the icon above.



### EuroPris newsletter published

The January edition of the EuroPris newsletter has been published and is available by clicking on the icon above.



### Federal Probation Journal published

The December edition of the Federal Probation Journal has been published and is available by clicking on the icon above.



**Probation Service host CEP-EuroPris Workshop on the use of E-Learning methods**

On 10th -11th December 2015 at Haymarket the Probation Service, with the support of the Irish Prison Service, hosted a Confederation of European Probation (CEP)-Europris (the European Organisation for Prison Services) international workshop on the use of E-learning methods in the training of Prison and Probation staff.



The highly successful workshop was attended by experts from over 20 jurisdictions across Europe. The workshop was an intensive in-depth exploration and examination of the possibilities for the development and implementation of e-learning in the training and continuous professional development of probation and prison staff in Europe.

It was an important opportunity to share experience and expertise as well as identify partners for future developments. It was clear from the presentations and discussions that e-learning will play an increasing and valuable role in education, training skills development and continuous professional development for Prison and Probation staff now and in the future.

The workshop programme and papers will be available for download on the [Confederation of European Probation \(CEP\) website](#) and the [EuroPris website](#).



**Criminal Justice Platform Europe host ‘RADICALISATION AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM – Disengagement, prevention, monitoring’ Conference**

The Criminal Justice Platform Europe (CJPE) comprises – the Confederation of European Probation (CEP), the European Organisation of Prison and Correctional Services (EuroPris) and the European Forum for Restorative Justice (EFRJ) organised ‘RADICALISATION AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM – Disengagement, prevention, monitoring’ (A Conference of International Experts) last October. This issue has become an urgent priority for the CJPE members and the dangers caused by extremists to European countries are of paramount concern to the criminal justice systems in Member States.



Experts, policy-makers and practitioners from different EU countries reflected on the concept of radicalisation, exchanged national policies and programmes implemented to prevent radicalisation within prison settings or probation and to facilitate disengagement strategies for those who may already be radicalised.

The conference presentations and a summary of the discussions can be accessed [here](#)



**Probation in Numbers**

Point-in-time ‘snapshot’ headline statistics on the current probation caseload are published every month on our website. Figures reflecting numbers of individual persons under probation supervision are summarised under a range of headings, including by age, gender, regional spread and whether the individuals are in the community or in custody. Statistics on some specific categories of offenders, such as life sentence prisoners, sex offenders and ex-prisoners on the Community Return, are also included.

The latest figures, representing the Probation Service ‘caseload’ at the start of January 2016, are available by clicking on the icon.

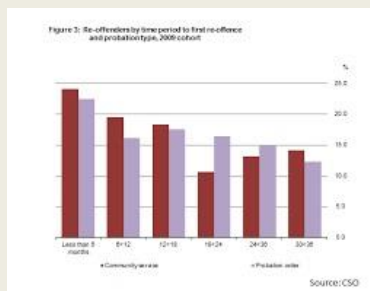
**Date for Your Diary**

The third Irish Criminal Justice Agencies conference, organised in partnership with the Association for Criminal Justice Research and Development (ACJRD), will be held on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2016 in Dublin Castle. The conference theme will be: *Evidence-Informed Decision Making: Putting research into practice in Criminal Justice*. More information will be available in due course in *Probation works* newsletter, as well as on the probation.ie and acjrd.ie websites.



### Third Central Statistics Office Reoffending Study for the Probation Service published

The third Central Statistics Office Recidivism Studies for the Probation Service was published on 14th December 2015. The Probation Recidivism Study is a detailed report of recidivism (re-offending) among offenders placed under Probation Service supervision in 2009. The Central Statistics Office (CSO), at the same time published their study with the Irish Prison Service on recidivism among prisoners released in 2009.



The recidivism research projects were undertaken in partnership with the CSO, specifically the Crime Statistics Section, who facilitated the linking of Irish Prison Service data, Probation Service data, Garda Síochána records and Courts Service records.

The Probation Recidivism Study reports that close to 63% of offenders did not reoffend within a three-year period of being placed under Probation Service supervision. The re-offending rates were lower for females with almost 70% of females not reoffending in the period. When compared with the 2008 cohort the overall recidivism rate fell from 41.0% to 37.3% an absolute change of -3.8%.

The re-offending rate for offenders on Community Service Orders was lower than in the previous report on the 2008 cohort; 67.5% did not re-offend in comparison with 61.6% in the 2008 cohort report. The re-offending rate for offenders on Probation Supervision was also lower; almost 60% did not re-offend in comparison with 57.7% in the previous study.

Commenting on the report, Minister for Justice and Equality Frances Fitzgerald said ***"I welcome the fact that recidivism levels for both those who were released from prison in 2009 and those who were supervised by the Probation Service have fallen by 3.5% and 3.7% respectively. I am confident that the joint initiatives recently introduced, including the Community Return and Community Support Schemes, will result in lower recidivism levels being reported in the prison cohort in future. I am very pleased with the continued improvement in offending reduction among those on probation supervision."***

The Minister commended the work of the CSO in facilitating the undertaking of the recidivism studies. The Minister acknowledged their continued partnership with the Probation Service and Irish Prison Service in publishing these valuable studies which will inform the work of both services in helping to make communities safer and reduce victimisation.

The CSO Report on the Probation Service 2009 cohort Recidivism Study is available on the Central Statistics Office website at [www.cso.ie](http://www.cso.ie) and also by following the publications link on the Probation Service website at [www.probation.ie](http://www.probation.ie). Alternatively it can be accessed by clicking on the bar chart graphic above.



**Pictured at last year's awards ceremony (from left):** Donal O'Malley (Chair, IASW), Aideen McDonnell (Winner, Practice Teacher of the Year Award), Majella Hickey, Probation Officer (Practice Teacher Award Finalist, Vivian Geiran (receiving Finalist Award on behalf of David Williamson, SPO) and Senator Jillian van Turnhout

### IASW Social Work Awards 2016

The Irish Association of Social Workers (IASW) has published a call for nominations of social workers for their annual social work awards. According to the IASW, "the awards, which are in the second year, will showcase some of the most innovative and pioneering work being carried out by social workers in Ireland. There are five categories: newly qualified social worker of the year, social worker of the year, practice teacher of the year, social work team of the year and social work researcher of the year. Closing date for nominations is **31<sup>st</sup> March 2016** and the finals and awards presentation will be on **17<sup>th</sup> June 2016** in Croke Park, Dublin. Further details and nomination forms are available on the IASW website or by clicking on the IASW icon below.

