

ADHD and the Irish Criminal Justice System: The Question of Inertia

Etain Quigley and Blanaid Gavin

Summary: Assessment of risk, both the likelihood of reoffending and Significant Risk of Serious Harm to Others, is a core component of a Probation Officer's role. Arguably, nowhere in Studies report ADHD rates of 26% for incarcerated adults and 30% for young people, highlighting an overrepresentation of this cohort within the prison/detention systems. There has been some progress internationally in terms of developing guidelines and protocols for criminal justice practitioners when presented with diagnosed and/or suspected cases of ADHD within the adult and youth justice fields. Further, there is a growing body of literature supporting better outcomes, in terms of reoffending and general life course progression, for those who are identified as having the condition and treated accordingly. However, the Irish system has been slow to make progress in this space. This paper presents international research, discusses why the Irish system has failed to develop a strategy to explore the potential for approaches currently being adopted elsewhere, and makes suggestions for next steps.

Keywords: Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, diagnosis, treatment, mental health, criminal justice, youth justice.