



Final Report to



Evaluation and Review of the Probation Service Funding Programme for Community-Based Organisations

November 2023



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Executive Summary

This report represents the culmination of an extensive evaluation and review conducted on behalf of the Probation Service regarding the funding policy programme for Community-Based Organisations (CBOs). The review was commissioned in early 2023 to provide a comprehensive understanding of the programme.

Throughout the evaluation process, we conducted a thorough analysis of the funding programme, gathering information and data on the CBOs involved. Furthermore, we engaged in consultations with a diverse range of stakeholders, seeking their perspectives and insights to inform our findings and recommendations.

By examining the intricacies of the funding policy programme and incorporating input from various stakeholders, we aimed to present a well-rounded assessment of the challenges and opportunities that CBOs funded by the Probation Service face. The ultimate goal of this report is to offer informed recommendations that will contribute to the future development, support, and funding of these essential CBOs.

Our report concludes that the CBOs add significant value to the Probation Service. The CBOs allow the Probation Service to provide important services to its clients, representing a significant part of their journey to desistance from crime. The aim of reducing criminal behaviour in the community is integral to the Probation Service's work and mission and the funding of the CBOs contributes considerably to this being achieved.

Under the terms of reference agreed with the Probation Service, our findings and recommendations include:

- Enhancements to the governance structures of the CBOs in line with best practice from the Charities Regulator;
- Improvements to the current systems for IT, data collection, and outcome measurements, to ensure that the Probation Service has an increased understanding of the needs, as well as the overall journey, of clients on a Probation Order; and
- Fully implementing the new Department of Justice policy for funded organisations while also introducing a multi-annual funding programme for CBOs.

We have designed our recommendations to provide effective guidance for the Probation Service, enabling it to strengthen its support for CBOs with a more effective funding model and enhance their participation in the justice system. The aim is to build on the success that

CBOs have already achieved, not only in positively impacting individuals but also in allowing these individuals to make a tangible difference within their communities.

By implementing our recommendations, the Probation Service can ensure that the CBOs are effectively able to help the Probation Service achieve its strategic goals and reduce crime within society. To aid the Probation Service in implementing our recommendations, we have included roadmaps at the end of this report for each recommendation, which detail the steps involved and the necessary timelines to achieve them successfully. Furthermore, it is noted that additional financial resourcing will be required in order for the Probation Service to implement some of these findings effectively.

1 Introduction

1.1 Project Background

The Probation Service engaged Crowe in March 2023 to undertake an evaluation and review of the Probation Service’s funding policy programme for Community-Based Organisations (CBOs). The scope of the assignment consisted of the following:

- Evaluating the extent to which funding provided by the Probation Service to Community-Based Organisations adds value to the Probation Service fulfilling its statutory remit and achieving its mission;
- Reviewing the extent to which the current funding allocation is balanced in relation to achieving the mission of the Probation Service;
- Considering the underpinning policy rationale for the Probation Service providing funding across sectors, and how such allocation is aligned with funding provided by those Departments; and
- Consider the Probation Service business planning processes against the Department of Justice policy for funded organisations issued in 2022.

1.2 Terms of Reference

The full terms of reference for the assignment are set out in the following table, which signposts where in this report the findings and recommendations relating to each point can be found.

Item	Description	Report Section
1	To assess the extent to which the funding provided to CBOs meets the strategic objectives of the Probation Service.	2
2	To assess the effectiveness of CBOs in supporting the work of the Probation Service and its clients.	3
3	To assess the synergies and overlaps between the funding provided by the Probation Service to CBOs and funding provided by other agencies.	4
4	To assess the steps needed to implement the new Department of Justice policy for funded CBOs.	5
5	To determine what resources and measures need to be put in place to ensure the effective funding of CBOs and the monitoring and governance of CBOs.	2 and 3

1.3 Current Position of Community-Based Organisations

The Probation Service offers a range of services to achieve its mission of bringing positive change in the behaviour of offenders, and funds multiple CBOs that assist it to deliver essential services to adult and young offenders in local communities.

The Probation Service's 2021–2023 Strategy Statement, under the strategic pillar of “Strengthening Collaboration and Engagement”, set a goal to “enhance our work through our community-based organisations delivering best practice, innovation, and measurable outcomes.” This highlights the CBOs' importance to the Probation Service in achieving these aims and objectives.

CBOs complement the efforts of the Probation Service by providing valuable services aimed at modifying the behaviour of offenders. These CBOs, funded by the Probation Service, offer a diverse range of assistance to offenders, aiding them in addressing their actions and facilitating their successful reintegration into society. Some CBOs were specifically established by the Probation Service to cater to the unique needs of offenders within their community; such recognition stems from the understanding that CBOs can effectively fill gaps in the provision of necessary services for offenders.

In 2023, the Probation Service provided €18,532,000 to 59 CBOs across the country, including a pilot programme. This included an Adult Grant budget (Core and Non-core CBOs) of €12,370,000 and a Young Persons' Probation (YPP CBOs) budget of €5,155,000. The Probation Service's most recent review of funded projects took place almost 15 years ago when the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, with the assistance of external consultants, carried out a value-for-money and policy review. Crowe's analysis of this report alongside the Probation Service's current annual report highlighted that 54% (38) of the projects that were included in the 2007 review are still being funded, with a subsequent funding increase of €4,490,980. The 2022 annual report of CBOs funded today showed that just nine of these organisations accounted for roughly 30% of total funding in that year.

CBOs are required to submit annual applications for funding, which detail the necessary information regarding their programme, including anticipated outputs and required funding. These applications are then assessed in line with the business planning procedure recommendation in the 2008 Value for Money Report. This report also recommended that the project support team established within the Probation Service ensures governance procedures for these CBOs by developing detailed service-level agreements, specifying outputs, and establishing reporting requirements to ensure governance procedures.

1.4 Operation of the Funding Programme

The Community Programmes Unit within the Probation Service plays a crucial role in overseeing the monitoring and governance of the CBOs that receive funding from the Probation Service. This Unit has the responsibility of ensuring that the allocation of funds to CBOs aligns with the strategic objectives of the Probation Service.

To formalise the funding process, the Unit issues Funding Agreements to each CBO on an annual basis. These agreements outline the terms and conditions of the funding and serve as a contractual basis between the Probation Service and the CBO. The Unit also takes charge of ensuring that the CBOs comply with reporting requirements; this involves conducting regular reviews of client numbers, financial information, and other relevant documents specified in the Funding Agreements. By diligently monitoring these reports, the Unit ensures transparency, accountability, and effective use of funds provided. The Community Programmes Unit also has a responsibility for coordinating the payment process to CBOs; this involves managing the quarterly payments to the CBOs and ensuring that the financial support is disbursed in a timely manner.

Furthermore, the Unit actively engages in the ongoing monitoring of the CBOs. This includes establishing Funding Agreements that align with measurable outputs for each CBO. The Unit regularly reviews the performance of each CBO, evaluating their outputs and outcomes as specified in the funding agreements. A CBO database facilitates the generation of monthly and quarterly client reports. In case a CBO fails to deliver the agreed-upon outputs or submit the required documentation, appropriate procedures are in place, such as withholding payments until the issues are addressed.

The process for making referrals to CBOs from the Probation Service is intended to include inputting referrals to the CBOs on the Probation Service's internal Case Tracking System (CTS). This enables efficient cross-referencing of clients of the Probation Service with each respective CBO. Moreover, a more detailed manual referral form from the Probation Service is generally also forwarded to the CBO as a supporting document, ensuring a coordinated approach to client referrals.

1.5 Conduct of the Review

1.5.1 Overview

The review was conducted between March and July 2023 and involved four broad sets of tasks:

- A review of relevant documentation and information relating to the funding programme;
- Gathering information relating to the CBOs and the funding programme through site visits, surveys, and direct engagement with the Probation Service;
- Rigorous analysis of the information and data gathered through our review and an examination of the policy environment; and
- Development of interim and final reports, as well as other deliverables.

1.5.2 Documentary Review

We undertook a detailed documentary review of a range of relevant documentation relating to the current funding programme, paying particular attention to the Department of Justice's *Policy for the Management of Grant Funding Programmes to Non-Governmental Bodies*.

The objective of the documentary review was to deepen our familiarity with the CBOs and the current funding programme, to inform subsequent consultation exercises. This part of the review had the additional benefit of demonstrating the limitations of the data and information currently being collected and available within the Probation Service in relation to the CBOs and their funding.

1.5.3 Site Visits and Data Collection

In order to assess the current functioning of the CBO funding programme, our team undertook a comprehensive approach. We distributed a survey to all 59 CBOs (including the pilot programme), while also conducting a series of site visits to a varied selection of CBOs. This process aimed to gather valuable insights into the perception of the funding programme from the CBOs themselves.

Our team also attended the 2023 Community-Based Organisation Summit, which allowed our team to develop a deeper understanding of the challenges and issues that the CBOs are currently facing. This event provided an opportunity to gain first-hand knowledge of the ongoing discourse and emerging trends within the CBO community.

We conducted a series of one-to-one interviews with a wide range of external stakeholders and personnel from the Probation Service. This approach allowed us to gather diverse perspectives and experiences, enabling a more comprehensive analysis of the CBO funding programme.

By employing this multifaceted approach, our team aimed to gather a holistic understanding of the operational dynamics, perceptions, challenges, and opportunities within the CBO funding programme. Our engagement activities are summarised in the following table.

Stakeholder Group	Engagement
Community-Based Organisations	Survey circulated to all 59 CBOs, to which there were 55 responses.
Community-Based Organisations	Site visits to 13 CBOs including Aiséirí Cahir, Candle Community Trust, Céim ar Chéim, Coolmine Therapeutic Community, Cornmarket Project, Fusion CPL, Le Chéile Mentoring, PACE CLG, PALLS, Restorative Justice in the Community, SAOL Project, Treo Port Lairge CLG, and WHAD Project.
Director of the Probation Service	Interview with the Director of the Probation Service.
Deputy Directors of the Probation Service	Interview with the Deputy Director (Prisoners and Reintegration), Deputy Director (Effective Practice), Deputy Director (Courts and Community), and Deputy Director (Corporate Affairs).
Probation Service Regional Managers	Interviews with two Regional Managers.
Assistant Principal Community Programmes	Interview with the Community Programmes Unit Assistant Principal.
Higher Executive Officer Probation Officer	Interview with the Community Programmes Unit Higher Executive Officer.
Probation Service Statistician and Data Officer	Interview with the current statistician for the Probation Service on secondment from the Central Statistics Office, and the Probation Service Data Officer.
Department of Justice	Interview with the Principal Officer for Governance Standards, the Principal Officer for Penal and Policing Policy, and the Principal Officer in Criminal Justice Governance in relation to Equality Budgeting.
Department of Rural and Community Development	Interview with the Principal Officer in the Community Division.
Irish Prison Service	Interview with the Principal Officer in the Care and Rehabilitation Unit.
Health Service Executive	Interview with the Business Manager in the Social Inclusion Unit.
Pobal	Interview with the Director of Funder Relationships and Business Development and the Criminal Justice Sector Social Enterprise Project Manager.

1.5.4 Analysis of Evidence

In conducting our analysis, we carefully examined the evidence derived from both comprehensive site visits and data collection from the survey of CBOs. This approach enabled us to explore the various aspects of the subject matter in a systematic manner. By organising our findings and their related recommendations into different themes, we were able to gain a deeper understanding of the underlying patterns and implications.

The evidence generated within this thorough review supports our findings. The evidence we collected substantiates and reinforces the recommendations we reached. Through rigorous examination and documentation, we ensured that our analysis was based on reliable information.

1.5.5 Reporting

Throughout the project, we maintained regular and effective communication with the Probation Service Community-Based Organisations Steering Group. This allowed us to keep them updated on our progress and to address promptly any issues or challenges we encountered. We presented our initial analysis and emerging findings to the Steering Group on 20 June 2023.

The presentation provided a platform for an in-depth discussion about the direction and progress of the project. It offered members of the Steering Group an opportunity to engage with our analysis, ask questions, and provide their input. Based on this dialogue, we further refined our findings and developed our recommendations, ensuring that our final report would be a comprehensive and accurate reflection of the needs of the Probation Service. This collaborative exchange of ideas added significant depth and richness to our work, enhancing the overall quality of our final deliverable.

2 Fulfilling Statutory Remit and Achieving Mission

2.1 Overview

The findings in this section were informed through our desk research and stakeholder engagements. This section of the report addresses the following items in the terms of reference:

- Assessing the extent to which the funding provided to CBOs meets the strategic objectives of the Probation Service; and
- Determining what resources and measures need to be put in place to ensure the effective funding of CBOs and the monitoring and governance of CBOs.

2.2 Value of CBOs to the Probation Service

2.2.1 *Strategic Consideration*

From a strategic perspective, the allocation of funds to CBOs holds significant merit for the Probation Service. These organisations occupy a pivotal role in the reduction of criminal activities within local communities, achieved through the provision of specified essential services to clients residing in those communities. Beyond this, CBOs actively foster a sense of belonging and responsibility in offenders and strengthen the bond between offenders and their respective communities.

Funding the CBOs serves as a catalyst towards the Probation Service achieving the objectives as outlined in the Probation Service Strategy Statement and Action Plan. This funding enables the Probation Service to effectively execute its mission by utilising the unique strengths and resources of these CBOs, which are based in the community where the clients are from. By strategically investing in CBOs, this allows the Probation Service to address criminal behaviour while also allowing the clients to achieve restoration with the communities they have harmed. The objectives of the plan fulfilled by the funding of CBOs include:

- Enhancing Community Safety; and
- Strengthening Collaboration and Engagement.

Additionally, the programme offers specialised support tailored to individuals during critical points of their lives. The CBOs' impact is supported by qualitative data demonstrating the positive effects these services have on the lives of those they serve. Moreover, CBOs meticulously gather and analyse outcome metrics relating to their clients, thereby

presenting tangible and quantifiable evidence of the degree of change achieved. These collected outcomes measure the level of change in the client as they engage with the services of the CBO.

Key Finding: The provision of services through funding provided by the Probation Service to the CBOs is of significant value and is an important element in ensuring that the Probation Service meets its statutory objectives. In our view, this model should be continued by the Probation Service (with some improvements recommended later in this report).

2.2.2 Means of Service Provision

It is important for the Probation Service to provide these services, via CBOs, since clients require these tailored services. Alternative access or timely assistance might not be readily available through other agencies in the communities. Furthermore, as the CBOs are based within communities, many employ individuals from the locality who have ties with the community – this allows CBOs to better understand the needs of the community and of the clients accessing the services.

Given that Probation Officers may lack the necessary resources to offer clients the required specialised supports, and given their existing caseloads, CBOs play a crucial role in providing a framework for offering such services. Furthermore, as CBOs are based in the community, and are a step removed from the Probation Service itself, clients are generally more likely to engage with the services offered by the CBOs. This eliminates the potential reluctance that people may have to engage with such services if they were offered by the Probation Service itself.

2.2.3 Qualitative and Quantitative Data

Throughout this assignment we have collected both quantitative and qualitative data to support this assertion that CBOs offer benefits to the Probation Service. The qualitative aspect encompasses diverse accounts shared by CBOs that we have visited, detailing how these services have positively influenced clients' lives and contributed to a decrease in their involvement in criminal activities. The quantitative data gathered from our survey of the CBOs, as well as from data provided by the Probation Service and from the Central Statistics Office, indicates that CBOs are delivering services across more than 14 different service types, ranging from education and training opportunities to restorative justice. The survey indicated that 20% of CBOs offer more than 10 specific services to clients, demonstrating the large volume of work being undertaken by the CBOs. Without funding the CBOs, it is unlikely

that the Probation Service would be able to offer such a range of services to their clients in a cost-effective manner.

While the CBOs offer a depth of experience and a wide range of specialised services for clients, throughout our review we noted a number of issues limiting the success the CBOs could have in achieving the objectives of the Probation Service's Strategy Statement and Action Plan. These issues are outlined in the following paragraphs.

2.3 Governance

2.3.1 Governance and Oversight Procedures

The governance and oversight procedures within the CBOs are important to ensure that they are working effectively and are helping the Probation Service to meet its statutory remit and achieve its mission.

During the evaluation process, a notable disparity was observed in governance arrangements among the CBOs. One of the key areas of divergence centred around the presence of staff members from the Probation Service simultaneously serving as Directors on the Boards of the CBOs.

Such governance arrangements raise important questions about potential conflicts of interest and the potential for compromised decision-making processes. When staff members of the Probation Service also hold positions on CBO Boards, it can blur the lines between the regulatory and operational aspects of the funding relationship. Such dual roles may inadvertently compromise the impartiality and independence of decision-making processes within the CBOs.

It is worth highlighting that many of the CBOs that have a staff member from the Probation Service serving as a Director of the Board are content with this arrangement. These CBOs believe that it provides their Board and organisation with a direct communication line to the Probation Service, allowing these CBOs to establish a direct and immediate connection with the Probation Service. The perception from CBOs is that this member allows for increased communication, collaboration, and exchange of information between the CBO and the Probation Service. The CBOs also feel that this member enables them to stay well informed about probation-related matters, policies, and initiatives, which in turn helps them align their organisation's goals and activities more effectively.

Furthermore, this arrangement offers a unique perspective and expertise that the Probation Service representative on the Board brings to the CBO's decision-making processes. The Probation Service representative's first-hand knowledge and experience in the field of probation allows for a comprehensive understanding of the challenges, needs, and opportunities within the justice system. This valuable insight can greatly inform the CBO's strategic planning, programme development, and implementation, enhancing the overall effectiveness and impact of the CBO's initiatives.

2.3.2 *Need for Clear Separation*

Despite these benefits, it is our opinion that in order to maintain the integrity and transparency of the funding programme, it is essential to ensure clear separation between the governance structures of the CBOs and the Probation Service, in line with best practice from the Charities Regulator, particularly in light of the General Scheme of the Charities (Amendment) Bill 2022 (the Bill), which was published in May 2022. Although the primary purpose of the Bill is to facilitate the introduction of financial accounting regulations for charitable organisations, the Charities Regulator has taken the opportunity to include additional governance-related items in the proposed Bill. The Regulator considers these additional items necessary to strengthen the regulatory framework and provide clarity on certain issues that may not have been fully addressed in the Charities Act 2009.

Delineating distinct roles and responsibilities can minimise potential conflicts of interest and can establish a more robust framework for governance. Therefore, it is recommended that the Probation Service ensures that staff of the Probation Service are not members of the Boards of CBOs. This recommendation should be applied to both larger core CBOs as well as smaller non-core and YPP CBOs. It would be expected that this change will have a greater impact on the smaller CBOs, and that these CBOs may need a higher level of support and guidance through the transition period.

While it is stipulated in the CBO funding agreements that "All CBOs must meet with the Local Probation Service Senior Probation Officer quarterly and the Regional Manager at least once a year. All CBOs should link in with the Probation Service local teams on a regular basis", it would be important that these interactions are increased to ensure there is no communication breakdown as a result of staff members of the Probation Service no longer being represented on the Boards of the CBOs. It is recommended that the Project Managers ensure that they meet with both the Local Senior Probation Officer and the Regional Manager on a quarterly basis, which is an increase from the current stipulated annual meeting. There should also be an annual meeting between the Board of the CBO and representatives from the Probation Service to provide updates on client numbers and their progress with other targets. If there are concerns regarding the CBO, these meetings should happen on a more frequent basis.

Moreover, it is imperative to establish robust communication systems between the CBOs and the Probation Service. These systems should be designed to enhance the existing processes and facilitate ongoing dialogues between the Probation Service and CBOs in the absence of a staff member of the Probation Service being present on Boards. The aim is to discuss and evaluate the services and programmes being delivered while also addressing matters related to performance and governance.

2.3.3 *Improving Contract Management Arrangements*

To achieve the above goal, a new process must be implemented, which includes regular contract management meetings. It is important to note that meetings between the CBOs and the Probation Service already take place on a regular basis. However, it is proposed that these meetings serve as opportunities to specify desired outcomes and metrics in the service-level agreements, with CBOs providing regular reports on their progress toward meeting these targets. Additionally, an annual meeting between the local Senior Probation Officer and the Board of the CBO should be arranged to comprehensively review the overall performance and impact of the CBO.

By establishing these communication mechanisms, the Probation Service can maintain close oversight of the services being provided by the CBO, ensuring that they align with the intended objectives and contribute effectively to the criminal justice system's goals. The formalisation of these meetings will allow the Probation Service to bridge the gap of any link or connection that may be lost as a result of Probation Officers no longer being Board Members. This two-way dialogue will foster transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement in the services delivered by CBOs, ultimately benefiting the clients they serve.

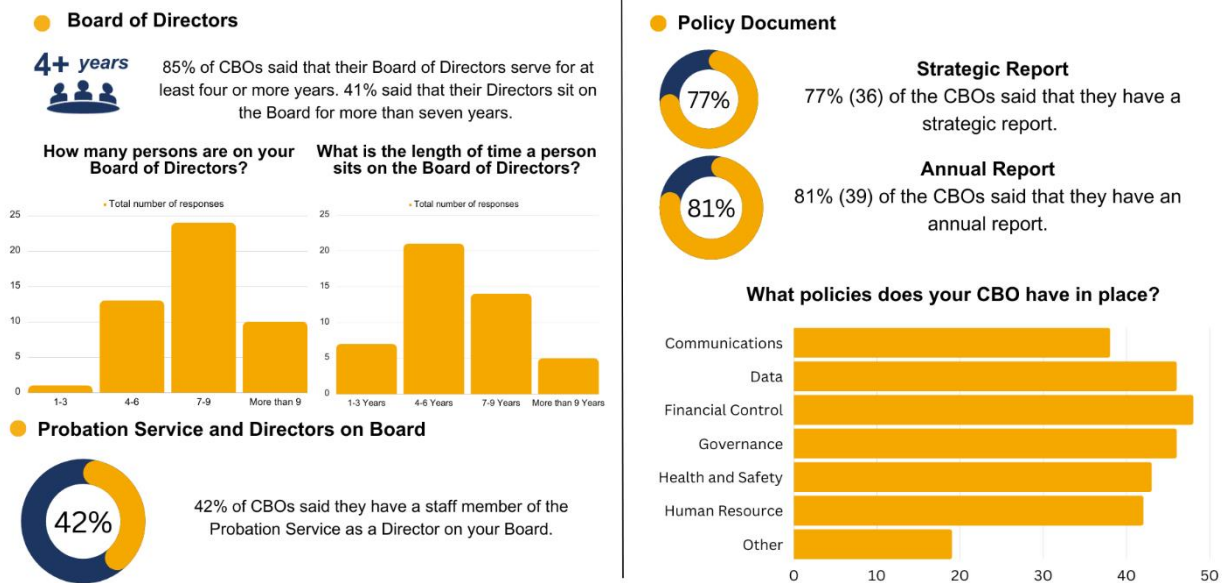


Diagram 2.3: Overview of the governance structure of CBOs including length of service of Board Directors, the number of Board Members, the Probation Service staff members as Directors of Boards, policies, and strategic and annual reports.

Source: Results of the survey of CBOs conducted by Crowe.

2.3.4 Need for Strategic Planning within CBOs

In the course of our evaluation, it became evident that not all CBOs have a strategic plan in place. The absence of a strategic plan can undermine the overall effectiveness and long-term sustainability of these organisations.

A strategic plan serves as a roadmap, guiding a CBO's activities, goals, and objectives. It outlines the organisation's mission, vision, and core values, while also establishing a clear direction for future growth and development. It provides a framework for decision-making, resource allocation, and performance evaluation, ensuring that the CBO operates in a focused and purposeful manner to best deliver value for money for the Probation Service. It is also important that CBOs are ensuring that their own strategic plans are aligned with that of the Probation Service's Strategy Statement and Action Plan.

2.3.5 Funding and Good Governance

Strong governance is crucial for maintaining transparency, accountability, and ethical conduct within organisations. By allocating funds to support good governance, CBOs can

invest in areas such as training for Board Members, governance audits, and the development of policies and procedures that uphold the highest standards of organisational integrity. It must be highlighted that the Probation Service has begun to implement governance audits and it would be suggested that this practice be continued. In terms of training and the development of policies and procedures, this should include guidance and recommendations on best practices in relation to the membership of Boards, the rotation of Board Members, and the maximum length of service on a Board.

Funding can be directed towards capacity-building initiatives that enhance the governance skills and knowledge of CBO senior management and Board Members. This may include training programmes and workshops that enable CBOs to cultivate strong governance structures and practices.

By prioritising funding for strategic planning and good governance, CBOs can establish a solid foundation for their operations, ensuring that their activities are purposeful, well-coordinated, and aligned with the mission of the Probation Service. This, in turn, enhances the CBOs' capacity to effectively address the needs of their communities and achieve meaningful outcomes.

Good governance structures are integral to the effective operation of the CBOs and the delivery of high-quality services for clients of the Probation Service. It is therefore imperative that the Probation Service prioritise that all appropriate governance structures are in place in each CBO and that they are in line with best practice from the Charities Regulator. A programme of audit should be put in place to undertake a number of reviews each year within CBOs, to ensure good governance.

2.4 Recommendations

Recommendation 1: It is recommended that the Probation Service, in line with best practice from the Charities Regulator and to avoid any potential conflict of interest as a funder, ensure that staff of the Probation Service are not members of the Boards of the CBOs.

Recommendation 2: It is recommended that the Probation Service ensure that both the Local Senior Probation Officers and the Regional Managers meet with the Project Managers of CBOs once a quarter and that there is a meeting between the Board of the CBO and representatives from the Probation Service on an annual basis.

Recommendation 3: It is recommended that the Probation Service provide external training for the CBOs to support good governance.

3 The Balance of Current Funding Allocation

3.1 Overview

From our analysis of the data available and that which was collected from our stakeholder engagements, a number of findings were determined. These findings were in relation to a number of gaps in the current funding allocation from the Probation Service. The findings address the following items in the terms of references:

- To assess the effectiveness of CBOs in supporting the work of the Probation Service and its clients; and
- To determine what resources and measures need to be put in place to ensure the effective funding of CBOs and the monitoring and governance of CBOs.

3.2 Geographical Allocation

It was noted that the geographical distribution of CBOs does not align with the patterns of reoffending under the jurisdiction of the Probation Service. This misalignment creates challenges in providing timely and accessible services to clients, particularly those situated in areas where the presence of CBOs is limited. The issue of access to services based on location poses a barrier that needs to be addressed in order to ensure equitable access to the necessary support and interventions for all clients, regardless of their geographic location.

Most CBOs are located in County Dublin and in Munster, as shown in the charts below. In contrast, there is no CBO coverage in County Sligo, which has one of the highest reoffending rates for clients of the Probation Service. It cannot be determined whether the high rate of reoffending in certain areas is directly related to access to the services provided by a CBO; however, the Probation Service could undertake further analysis to determine if there is a need for an intervention in the form of a CBO that could benefit areas such as Sligo.

It is worth noting that some CBOs function at a national or regional level, while others operate at a more local and community-specific level. In certain cases, CBOs at the local level have been established in response to the unique needs of their respective communities. This decentralised approach has resulted in numerous CBOs providing similar services with variations in delivery and costs across the country.

In order to move away from this disparate way of developing services, the Probation Service could look to having national CBOs provide a larger range of services, being developed nationally and delivered locally through partner organisations. These partner organisations may be existing CBOs or other community organisations that can support these programmes. For example, a national restorative justice CBO could develop approaches and material, which could then be used by a number of local CBOs, while also working to ensure consistent standards, quality assurance, staff training, and other features across the country.

This method of developing consistent national approaches will also help with comparing metrics and outcomes as there will be comparable services and programmes. This will also allow for easier identification of a need for a change in content, which will, in turn, ensure that the CBOs are more agile and responsive to client's needs, for example, by avoiding the continuation of the same services each year if clients' needs have changed.

The uneven distribution of CBOs nationally results in disparities both in the allocation of service funding and their geographical dispersion across counties. While recognising that establishing a CBO in each county might not be imperative, the absence of CBOs in certain regions curtails clients' access to invaluable services. This restriction limits the availability of services that would be advantageous to both clients and the communities they are a part of.

It is suggested that certain services, such as addiction treatment services, be managed at a more national or regional level. Doing so would ensure broader accessibility to these crucial services, regardless of a client's location. Additionally, standardising the service delivery across the Probation Service's client base would guarantee a consistent and uniform level of support and care for individuals in need.

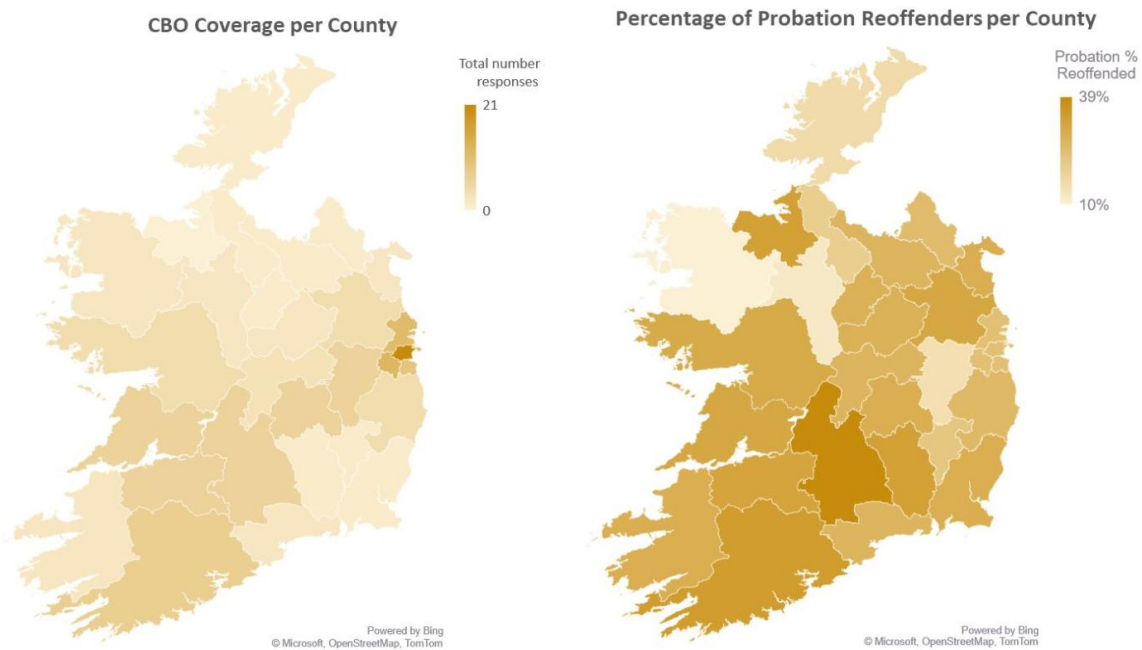


Diagram 3.2: Comparison of CBO coverage per county and the percentage of probation reoffending per county.

Source: Data provided by the Probation Service and the Central Statistics Office.

3.3 Diversity

Regarding the distribution of funding among various CBOs with respect to diversity, several observations have been identified. It must be noted that 24 CBOs currently offer a range of services targeted towards clients who are women and who require specific support and interventions. These services and programmes include initiatives such as Accredited Hair and Beauty Skills Training Courses and a women’s-only café. However, it must also be highlighted that currently, CBOs exclusively dedicated to addressing the unique needs of women are only situated in Dublin. Although women constitute a smaller proportion of those involved in criminal activities, their distinct requirements necessitate tailored assistance.

In 2021, approximately 9.4% of prison admissions were females, while the remaining 90.6% were males. Despite the vast disparity in these figures, one cannot underestimate the importance of providing tailored gender-specific services to address the distinct challenges that women face within the criminal justice system, in particular when they are referred to the Probation Service post-release from prison.

In the area of ethnic minority support, the available services are notably sparse. There are 12 CBOs offering targeted services and programmes for those from the Traveller community.

These services include literacy, numeracy, and culinary programmes, among others. However, there is only a single CBO that specifically and primarily caters to the needs of the Traveller community. This limited access to services fails to adequately meet the diverse requirements of other ethnic minorities present in the country. It is pertinent to highlight the overrepresentation of the Traveller community within the criminal justice sector, as evidenced by the data indicating that Irish Travellers accounted for 7.3% of the prison population in 2021, while constituting only 0.7% of the general population. This disproportionate representation emphasises the urgency of addressing the specific challenges faced by the Traveller community.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that no specialised services currently exist for individuals from other ethnic minorities or those with disabilities. This lack of comprehensive support further underscores the need for an inclusive and holistic approach to address the varied requirements of these marginalised populations within the criminal justice system.

In terms of disability, there is potential for the Probation Service to gather more data in relation to this to aid the CBOs in offering specific and tailored services for clients who may be in need. This data will strengthen disability inclusion and help the CBOs in understanding and responding to the experience of people with disabilities who may be clients of the Probation Service. This encompasses a collection of specific data on disability, including:

- Disability prevalences;
- Impairment types;
- Participation restrictions;
- Accessibility to and into CBOs; and
- Barriers to inclusion faced by people with disabilities.

This also includes broader information-gathering processes within programmes and services, which need to be implemented in an inclusive way to ensure that the voices of people with disabilities are heard. It is important to highlight that disability inclusion practice and the development of services and programmes is a process of continuous improvement and involves an ongoing loop of consultation, learning, and action.

Therefore, while some efforts have been made to provide women-specific services and support for the Traveller community, the current landscape reveals significant gaps in tailored resources across the country for women, ethnic minorities, and individuals with disabilities. To ensure a fair and equitable criminal justice system, it is imperative that more comprehensive and accessible services are developed and implemented to address the diverse needs of all individuals within these communities.

3.4 Offence Type

By examining the number of referrals made to the Probation Service, categorised by the nature of the offence, it was seen that the highest levels of referrals are for Drug Offences, Assault Offences, and Theft.

Delving deeper into the funding of services by CBOs, it becomes evident that the cost per service varies significantly based on the nature of the assistance provided. Notably, the services associated with the highest average cost of delivery revolve around accommodation services, followed closely by addiction treatment and education and training programmes. This highlights the disparity in resource allocation, shedding light on the distinct priorities and challenges inherent in the rehabilitation process.

The juxtaposition of the funding levels within these findings draws attention to a distinction between the prevalent offences that prompt referrals to the Probation Service and the allocation of funding resources to different types of assistance. While Drug Offences, Assault Offences, and Theft emerge as the most frequent offences referred to the Probation Service, the funding of services offered by CBOs is mostly concentrated on accommodation services, addiction treatment, and education and training initiatives. While these services may not align directly with the highest number of offence referrals, it could be argued that these services address the underlying issues that cause these offences, such as addiction and lack of education and training opportunities.

This argument would suggest that, while it may appear that the funding from the Probation Service is not strategy-aligned to address the most prevalent offences being referred, it is in fact being used to address the behaviours causing offending.

3.5 Young People Services

As discussed earlier in this report, the Probation Service allocated €18,532,000 to CBOs nationwide, of which €5,155,000 was allocated to YPP service. This highlights that services tailored for young individuals constitute only 27.8% of the annual budget. Notably, individuals under the age of 24 make up nearly 20% of the total client base referred to the Probation Service.

Although these figures could suggest a reasonable funding level for services catering to young people, the Probation Service needs to contemplate the potential strategic value of allocating more resources to these specific programmes. Such a consideration becomes crucial in the context of facilitating early interventions among individuals during their formative years, ultimately aiding in preventing their engagement in criminal activities as they mature.

In essence, while the current budget allocation might seem proportional to the representation of young individuals within the Probation Service's clientele, it is imperative for the service to evaluate whether a heightened investment in these specialised services would yield strategic benefits. By directing additional resources towards early intervention for young people, the Probation Service could play a pivotal role in supporting these individuals in refraining from criminal behaviours and embarking on a positive life trajectory.

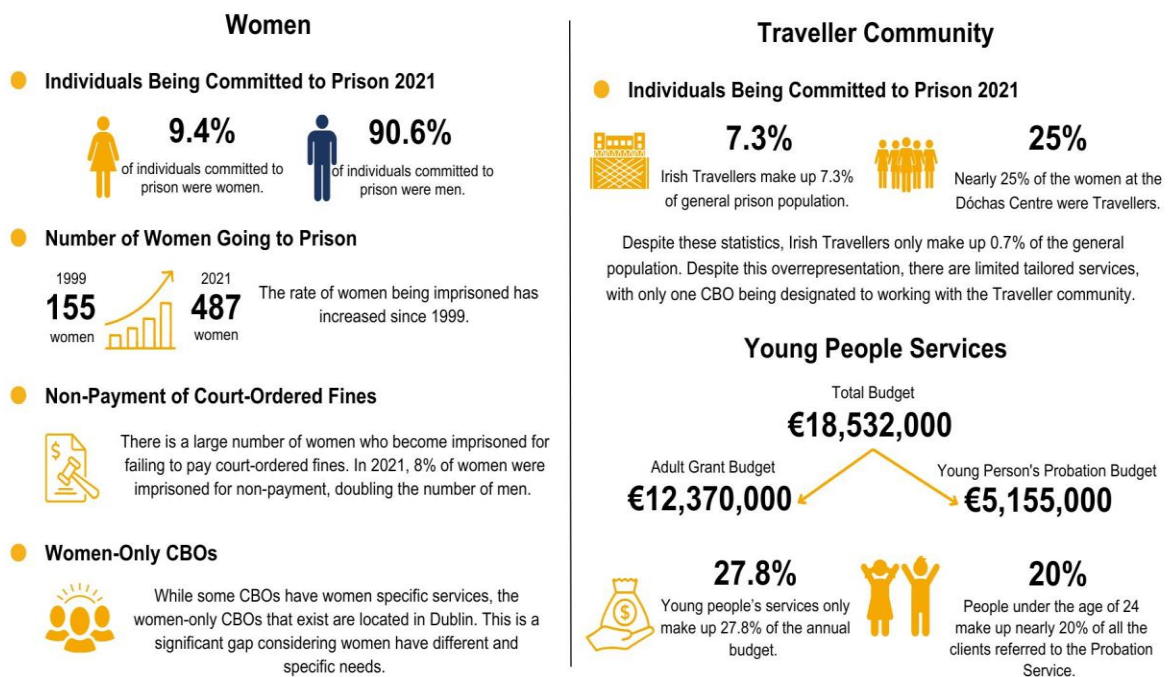


Diagram 3.5: Overview of statistics relating to offending by women, members of the Traveller community, and young people.

Source: Data provided by the Probation Service and the Central Statistics Office.

3.6 Other Data

The Probation Service collects data pertaining to the age and gender demographics of clients engaged with CBOs. While this data is collected in the CBO Unit of the Probation Service, there is potential for greater use of this data to gain a better understanding of the profile of

individuals seeking and benefitting from their services. This data should be used to inform and tailor interventions and support systems that are attuned to the unique needs and circumstances of various demographic groups. This would greatly assist the efficacy of CBO initiatives and contribute to a more nuanced approach to addressing societal challenges.

The Probation Service also collects data pertaining to the age and gender of those referred to the Probation Service as a whole. This data subset offers insights into the characteristics of individuals at this point in the criminal justice system and engaging with the Probation Service. This information is valuable in shaping probation-related strategies and programmes, and it underscores the potential benefits of similar data collection within the broader spectrum of CBO activities.

3.7 Data Limitations and Gaps

Throughout the assignment we gathered and generated a significant amount of data relating to the CBOs. This data came from a survey of the 59 CBOs, site visits to a selection of the CBOs across the country, consultation meetings with staff within the Probation Service, as well as reviewing data that was provided to us from the CBO Unit within the Probation Service. As with any research undertaken, limitations and gaps arise. Some of these limitations include:

- **Survey Response Bias** – As part of our engagement with CBOs, we initially surveyed all 59 CBOs to gain a better insight into the types of work they do, the number of clients they work with, the management of the services, and the measurement of outcomes. The data we gathered came directly from the CBOs, which might have led to biased information. To counteract this, we conducted in-depth visits to a selected group of CBOs to delve deeper into their responses. However, as agreed with the Probation Service, it was not feasible within our project budget to visit every CBO during our site visits, which may also impact on the quality of the data gathered.
- **Limited Previous Literature** – The Probation Service’s most recent review of funded projects took place almost 15 years ago when the (then) Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, with the assistance of external consultants, carried out a value-for-money and policy review. Therefore, there was limited previous literature to compare and contrast our findings against, other than data that had been generated in-house within the Probation Service.
- **Limited Data Provided** – The information supplied by the Probation Service contained several gaps. While it included much of the required data, there were limitations in the outcome measurement information provided by the CBOs. Additionally, inconsistencies and limitations were observed in the data concerning the number of referrals recorded in the CBO database, owing to the way it was collected.

3.8 Reporting and IT Systems

There are inconsistencies in the reporting of the number of active clients among the CBOs. It has been observed that some CBOs capture more comprehensive outcomes than what is explicitly requested by the Probation Service in their reporting.

The current reporting system does not adequately capture the progress and changes that clients undergo during their engagement with CBOs. In order to address this, and the inconsistencies in the reporting, there is a need for an improved reporting system that captures the entire journey and level of change experienced by clients. Enhancing the reporting system will enable a more accurate and holistic representation of the impact and effectiveness of the services that CBOs provide. Implementing a system that captures a more detailed data overview of the clients will ensure that the Probation Service and the CBOs can accurately track the complex needs of the clients as well as their life cycle in the programmes. This would allow the CBOs to clearly show their value for money in terms of tailoring services to their clients' needs but also in clearly demonstrating the positive changes in their clients' lives.

It is noted that only approximate numbers of referrals are being inputted into the CBO database. This then leads to problems with accurate and reliable statistics for the Probation Service.

The current IT system has several limitations. The system does not support real-time and accurate reporting of client numbers since these figures are only reported monthly. Additionally, it lacks the capability to effectively capture and track the progress and level of change experienced by clients during their engagement with services. Moreover, the system fails to gather sufficient information about client demographics, such as ethnicity and gender, which is crucial for a better understanding of clients' needs.

To address these issues and improve the effectiveness of the Probation Service, it is recommended that funding and adequate resources be allocated for the development of an IT system specifically designed to meet the requirements and goals of the service. This additional funding may require the Probation Service to make a business case to the Department of Justice in order to meet the changing needs of the organisation.

In terms of the resourcing required to support enhanced IT Systems, the CBO Unit should ensure that it works across the Probation Service to ensure that the CBO reporting requirements are integrated across the relevant systems. This is to ensure that any new or additional systems developed support the reporting and access requirements of the CBO Unit and the CBOs. By developing the appropriate data reporting and access requirements

for CBOs to allow for real-time data access, it will be possible for the Probation Service to fully understand the clients that are actively engaged with CBOs across the country. Enhancing and integrating systems that are already in use in the Probation Service will also ensure that future updates will require a lower level of funding.

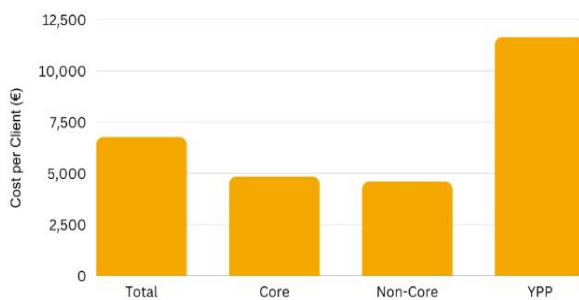
With regard to the future staffing of the CBO Unit, much of this will depend on the impact of the recommendations in this report on the workload of various members in the CBO Unit. The staff level of the CBO Unit should be kept under review and may also be impacted by any regional support to both CBOs and the CBO Unit.

● Cost per Client



Youth programmes had the highest average cost per client with an average of **€11,642**.

Cost per Client per Type of Service



NB: This was calculated based on Probation Service Grant amounts that CBOs were granted in 2021 and based on their SLA target number of probation clients. Where this data was missing it was substituted by numbers provided by the survey.

● Service Offered

€27,349

The widest range in cost per client was among the Youth Organisations, which was **€27,349**.

€11,299

The highest average cost per client were among the Women's Organisations, which was **€11,299**.

Range in Cost per Client per Service

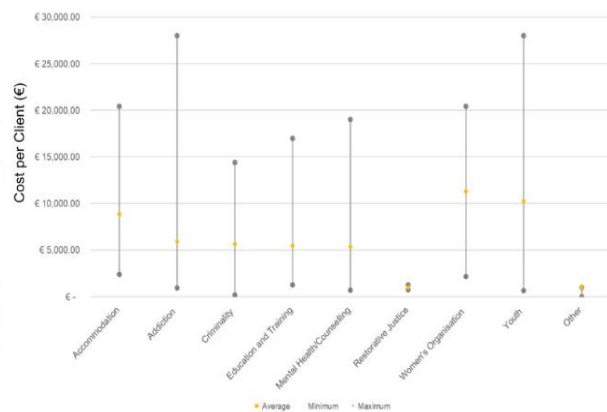


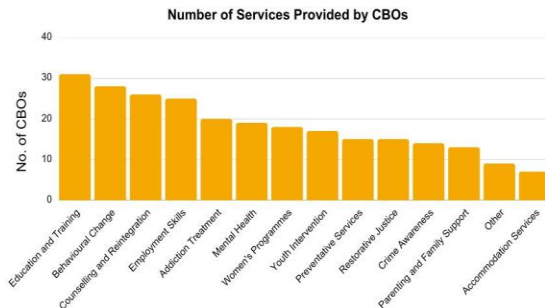
Diagram 3.7a: Overview of the cost per client per service.

Source: Results of the survey of CBOs conducted by Crowe.

Types of Services



Education and Training services are provided by 31 CBOs making it the most common type of service. This is closely followed by Behavioural Change (28) and Counselling and Reintegration (26) services.



Wrap-around Service

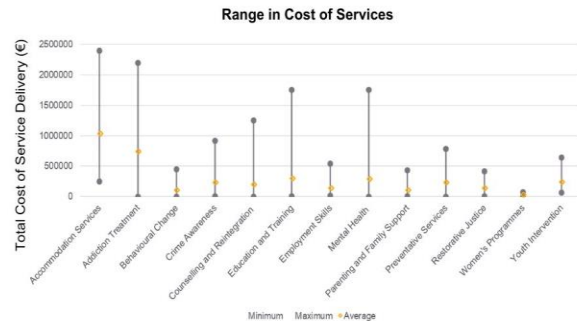


74% (39) of CBOs provide more than one type of service (ranging from 2 to 19) to their Probation Service clients, showing the wrap-around service that they provide.

Cost of Services

€2.2m

The highest average cost of service delivery was **€1,033,333.33** for accommodation services.



Exiting of Services



Seventeen CBOs said that once clients complete their programmes they signpost and provide information to other programmes. Fifteen said they provide referral to other services or aftercare check-ups.

Diagram 3.7b: Overview of types of services, cost of services, and exiting of services for CBOs. **Source:** Results of the survey of CBOs conducted by Crowe.

3.9 Outcome Measurement

It is worth noting that measuring outcomes and success is a complex task not limited to the Probation Service or CBOs alone. Difficulty in measuring outcomes and determining success is prevalent across various sectors and government departments. Therefore, it is crucial to acknowledge the broader challenge in measuring and assessing outcomes, which often arises from the multifaceted nature of individual progress and the diverse factors influencing success.

From discussions with the Department of Justice, the Department's requirement would be the Probation Service ensuring it is satisfied that it is getting good returns from the CBOs that demonstrate some of, but not limited to, the following metrics:

- Courses completed that lead to QQI qualifications;
- Successful completion of drug or alcohol programmes;
- Successful completion of crime-reducing programmes;
- Successful placements in rehabilitation facilities/accommodation;
- Successful employment placements following the completion of their Probation Order; and
- Number of clients engaged.

Additionally, the following metrics need to be collected by the CBOs and the Probation Service in order to ensure that the CBOs are providing adequate value for money. These metrics include:

- The number of programmes a client is engaging with at any one time;
- The number of CBOs a client has previously engaged with;
- The number of clients engaging with a CBO on a weekly basis;
- Client satisfaction with the service;
- Non-completion rate of clients; and
- Reason for client's non-completion.

The use of these metrics will be integral to the ongoing and future success of both the CBOs and the Probation Service. Organisations such as the CBOs need to establish their key performance metrics and focus on these areas because these metrics will guide and gauge the CBO's success. Furthermore, these metrics will only be useful for the CBOs if they are acknowledged by CBOs and the Probation Service and tracked effectively. These metrics will aid both the Probation Service and CBOs in ensuring the ongoing monitoring of the quality of services being delivered to clients and will in turn ensure the best value for money.

Furthermore, from our research, it was noted that Pobal and the Department of Rural and Community Development have developed a validated tool that measures soft skills relevant to employment, education and training, and personal development. This tool is known as the "Distance Travelled Tool" and it is being used to support the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) when working with their clients to identify priority areas for their personal and professional development, and to improve the recording of soft outcomes. This tool measures development across five soft skill areas. These include:

- Literacy and numeracy confidence;
- Confidence, goal setting, and self-efficacy;
- Communication skills;
- Connection with others; and
- General work readiness.

This tool measures similar outcomes and metrics that are currently being measured by many CBOs using tools such as Outcome STAR. Furthermore, there would be a large overlap between the clients of SICAP and those of the Probation Service. This tool may be of interest to the Probation Service as it would allow for common measurements to be collected.

In addition, the Department of Justice has emphasised the importance of initiating efforts towards Equality Budgeting. This approach entails providing comprehensive information about the potential impacts of budgetary measures in various areas, including income, health, and education, while also considering differences across gender, age, ethnicity, and other factors. By adopting Equality Budgeting, policymakers can better anticipate the effects of budgetary decisions, thereby improving the government's decision-making process.

Considering that a significant portion of the Probation Service's clients come from lower socio-economic backgrounds, aligning the Probation Service's metrics with the principles of Equality Budgeting becomes essential. To achieve this, close collaboration with the Department of Justice and the Central Statistics Office is necessary to develop indicators and high-level key metrics. These metrics should then be used to develop the outcomes that the Probation Service is requesting from the CBOs.

Notably, other agencies within the Department of Justice have already taken steps towards Equality Budgeting. For instance, the Irish Prison Service has been working on improving access to education for women in Dóchas, while the Legal Aid Board has been supporting the Traveller community by enhancing access to information and legal aid. These examples highlight the areas in which the Probation Service can begin to focus its efforts in relation to Equality Budgeting.

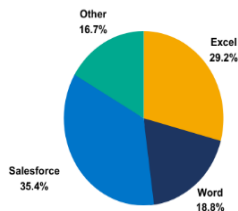
The Department of Justice also highlighted that the Probation Service should look to ensure that it continues to collect similar metrics to that of the Irish Prison Service to allow comparability across the sector.

● **Active Probation Client**



There is no set definition used by CBOs to classify an "active" client. 21 CBOs classify clients active if they are engaging with the programme, in contrast to nine CBOs that classify clients as "active" as long as they have been referred by probation.

● **Database Used**



Among the CBOs that said "Other", four use an in-house database, two used all of the above, one used One Touch and one CBO does not collect information on clients.

● **Improvements**



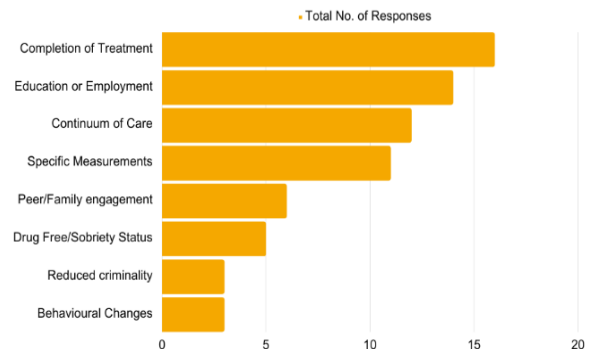
81%

81% of CBOs said that they would like better measurements for tracking progression and outcomes in the database. 17% of CBOs mentioned user-friendly issues.

● **How do you measure successful outcomes?**



The majority of CBOs said that either completion of treatment or evidence of continuum of care was seen as a successful outcome.



Specific measurement tools CBOs use include: HRB Outcomes, Outcomes STAR, Care Plan, Happiness Scale, AUDIT, DUDIT, Core 10 Assessment Tool, Victim Empathy Scale, Criminogenic Risk Assessment, Quality of Life Scales, and COAIM System.

Chart 3.8: Overview of Reporting Structures of CBOs including the databases used, improvements, defining of active probation clients, and the measurement of successful outcomes.

Source: Results of the survey of CBOs conducted by Crowe.

As mentioned earlier, some of the CBOs are currently gathering more comprehensive outcomes than what the Probation Service requires. The outcomes that the Probation Services currently measures are broad and general and are applied across all CBOs. While it is encouraging to see that certain CBOs have voluntarily chosen to capture these additional outcomes and metrics, this has resulted in discrepancies, as they may be measuring similar outcomes differently or not at all. Consequently, comparing a client's progress through various CBO services becomes challenging.

It is suggested that the Probation Service agrees upon a set baseline of outcomes to measure in the service-level agreement with the CBOs. These agreed-upon outcomes should be tailored to each type of service offering and should measure the appropriate results based on the client's engagement type. The identified outcomes should include quantitative data to enable measurable changes and should also incorporate a certain level of qualitative data to capture the richness of each individual's story. This approach would yield more comprehensive and detailed information about the changes experienced by clients during their involvement with CBOs.

It was noted from our site visits and survey that some of the CBOs are already using different tools and metrics to measure their clients' outcomes. The most common tool to do so was the Outcomes STAR measurement tool, which is used in collaboration with the clients to monitor the clients' level of change throughout their engagement with the services. This tool is useful for the area of work that many of the CBOs are operating in as it is completely

collaborative between the clients and the staff, but it also captures the client's full journey, which offers a richer picture of change. The Outcomes STAR system offers a holistic approach that creates a more meaningful overview than typical outcome measures that are very narrow, for example just focusing on housing, or producing an overall score for well-being.

3.10 CBO Network

There is a need for greater and stronger collaboration between CBOs in order to address social issues and provide support to marginalised communities. Collaborative efforts allow CBOs to pool resources, share expertise, and leverage networks for more effective outcomes.

To facilitate seamless collaboration, a dedicated information-sharing portal is required for CBOs. This portal would serve as a central platform for CBOs to exchange information, including policies and guidelines. It would provide easy access to relevant and up-to-date resources, reducing the time and effort required for searching.

We note the success of the return of the annual CBO conference, which took place in April 2023 at Croke Park. Many of the CBOs felt that this event offered them the opportunity to meet up with other organisations to exchange ideas and discuss issues they are experiencing. It is recommended to continue this type of event as well as introduce more thematic forums, for example, based on regions or the types of services that CBOs deliver.

The adoption of an approach similar to the Irish Local Development Network (ILDN) model could be beneficial for the CBOs. This model emphasises empowering local communities and promoting sustainable development through a bottom-up approach. By building strong relationships with the communities they serve, and working in partnership with local stakeholders, CBOs will then be able to tailor interventions to meet specific needs.

Enhanced data collection methods are crucial for obtaining accurate and real-time information on clients. This data enables CBOs to better understand client needs and measure the impact of their interventions. Utilising modern technology and data management systems streamlines the data collection process and allows for better-informed decision-making.

By focusing on aspects such as collaboration and information sharing, CBOs can strengthen their collective impact and better support and empower communities. It is noted that CBOs are already working on committees of the Probation Service, and it is further noted that

enhancing additional collaboration activities like this will empower CBOs to have a greater influence on the Probation Service and criminal justice policies. By doing so, CBOs, which interact directly with clients, can contribute their valuable experiences and insights to shape strategic decision-making, not only at the local level but also on a national scale.

It is imperative for the Probation Service to allocate annual funding to ensure that it can effectively coordinate and achieve enhanced collaboration and networking among CBOs using the annual conference and forums. Furthermore, this coordination of networking of CBOs could be assisted by the introduction of a number of regional support staff to oversee and facilitate the collaboration of CBOs in a specific area. As mentioned before, it must be noted that this may require additional funding, necessitating the Probation Service to make a new business case to the Department of Justice in order to introduce and maintain this initiative.

3.11 Recommendations

Recommendation 4: It is recommended that the Probation Service conduct a thorough analysis of the gaps in funding for CBOs. This analysis aims to pinpoint areas of priority for the Probation Service. Subsequently, the Probation Service should then implement an Expressions of Interest process for funding allocation, aligning with these priority areas.

Recommendation 5: It is recommended that the Probation Service enhance its IT system for live reporting of CBO client numbers, which will allow for the more accurate capturing of the journey and level of change of clients while engaging with services. This IT system should also capture more information in relation to the clients' demographics, including ethnicity and gender, details regarding the programmes that clients are engaging with, and whether clients are engaging on a full-time or part-time basis.

Recommendation 6: It is recommended that the Probation Service ensure that all CBOs are collecting sufficient client outcomes and metrics, which are agreed with the Department of Justice as suitable measurements.

Recommendation 7: It is recommended that the Probation Service encourage more collaboration and networking opportunities for CBOs. This should include regional forums, thematic forums for CBOs that deliver similar services, and the continuation of the annual CBO conference.

4 Rationale for the Probation Service Providing Funding across Sectors

4.1 Overview

In order to consider the underpinning policy rationale for the Probation Service providing funding across sectors, and how such allocation is aligned with funding provided by the relevant departments, we examined the overlapping of services between the Probation Service and other organisations in the community. Our findings and recommendations under this consideration relate to the following item of the terms of reference:

- To assess the synergies and overlaps between the funding provided by the Probation Service to CBOs and funding provided by other agencies.

4.2 Overlapping of Services

During our analysis of the funding of the CBOs, it was noted that there was a significant overlap of services, whereby multiple agencies were funding the same CBO. A notable instance of this dynamic can be witnessed in a single CBO being financially supported by as many as 18 distinct funding streams. This intricate funding arrangement necessitates a proactive approach from the Probation Service, aimed at establishing efficient coordination and communication with these other funding agencies to ensure effective management and operation of the CBOs for clients of the Probation Service.

Such collaborative efforts must be of paramount importance, serving as a pivotal mechanism to ensure that individuals referred to the Probation Service can access essential services without undue delays. By ensuring communication and facilitating information sharing between these other funding agencies and the Probation Service, the impact of potential waiting lists for clients is mitigated. This means that clients can access the vital services they need at the appropriate time, ensuring a reduction in criminal behaviour while also supporting the individual.

It is imperative to acknowledge that a number of clients transitioning from imprisonment to being under a Probation Order may find themselves in need of interim assistance with certain services, such as temporary accommodation. It has been previously noted that these types of services require a high level of funding from the Probation Service to remain operational. However, it is crucial to note that the nature of such temporary aid is intentionally designed to be both limited and short-term.

In order to best utilise the resources available to the Probation Service, there should be a focus on ensuring that the appropriate long-term service provider is engaged at an early stage. For instance, if a client is going to require ongoing healthcare or accommodation support, the Probation Service should work with the appropriate agencies to develop long-term support pathways for those who need it. In other instances, there may be opportunities to work in collaboration with other agencies, for example, working with Education and Training Boards (ETBs) to provide an appropriate range of educational opportunities through the CBOs. We are aware that there are CBOs that work closely with their local ETBs and in some instances, the ETB provides educational staff to the CBO to support their service provision.

The goal of such short-term services is to transition these individuals promptly to more appropriate agencies that operate outside the remit of the Department of Justice. By facilitating this smooth handover to agencies better equipped to provide ongoing assistance, a comprehensive support network is established. This approach ensures that individuals receive the tailored help they need to rebuild their lives and reintegrate into society, while also ensuring appropriate utilisation of resources within the broader criminal justice and support system.

In order for the Probation Service to be in line with the Department of Justice's funding policy, where multiple sources of funding are available to an organisation, the Probation Service must ensure that funding provided by the Department is used for the purposes intended and is separately identifiable from other sources of funding, in order to minimise the risk of overfunding or double funding.

4.3 Analysis/Commentary

The issues we have noted regarding the overlapping of services and their funding by several State agencies are by no means unique to the Probation Service: we have seen previous examples in our work of community- and voluntary-based organisations (typically charities) being funded by multiple different statutory bodies. This has often arisen for good reasons: a charity may get most of its funding from one source (e.g., the HSE), reflecting the primary focus of its work, but may then receive additional funding from another source as a response to a specific situation or Government initiative. This additional funding may be time-limited, or open-ended.

In our experience, the issues likely to arise from such situations include:

- **Potential for duplication:** several public sources funding the same service, in full or in part;

- **Lack of coordination** between funders, commissioners, and service providers, with competing requests for reports in different formats, covering different time periods, etc.;
- **Potential for lack of clear accountability**, with service providers having to meet what might be competing needs; and
- **Difficulties in assessing the impact** of funding (including establishing whether funding was used as intended), and in **measuring both outputs and outcomes** of the work funded.

Of course, many charities provide a wide range of services, which map on to the funding and requirements of multiple statutory agencies. The challenge for the Probation Service, and other bodies, is to ensure that there is:

- Clarity on what is required (as expressed in service agreements, contracts, etc.);
- Effective monitoring to ensure that what is required gets delivered;
- Traceability with regard to how funding is used;
- Clear accountability for service delivery and the use of funds; and
- An effective and straightforward mechanism for reporting, impact measurement, and outcome assessment.

4.4 Recommendations

Recommendation 8: It is recommended that for the services that are currently duplicated by other agencies, including those funded through mixed funding streams, systems are established with these agencies to enhance synergies and ensure collaborations are maintained. These systems should include regular meetings with these agencies to ensure clarity on service requirements, effective arrangements for monitoring/reporting/impact assessment/outcome measurement, and traceability of funding, within a structure of clear accountability.

5 The Department of Justice Policy for Funded Organisations

5.1 Overview

The Department of Justice's *Policy for the Management of Grant Funding Programmes to Non-Governmental Bodies* was published in 2022. The purpose of this policy is to outline the public financial management principles, procedures, and additional reporting requirements to be followed in the management of grant funding provided from public money and to provide the Department and the Irish Prison Service with a common framework for the management of funded programmes to Grantees. Our analysis of this policy highlights the gaps between the Probation Service's current business planning process and those required in the new policy. Our analysis addresses the following item in the terms of reference:

- To assess the steps needed to implement the new Department of Justice policy for funded CBOs.

5.2 Current Funding Arrangement

Historically, the majority of CBOs in Ireland were established under the direction of the Probation Service, particularly in areas where essential services were lacking, often focusing on rural communities. These CBOs play a pivotal role in the clients' journey by offering a diverse array of dedicated services to individuals who have been found guilty of a criminal offence. These services are designed to provide robust support to the clients of the Probation Service and encompass a spectrum ranging from training, education, and offender management programmes to comprehensive drug and alcohol treatment initiatives. It is worth noting that these services offered by CBOs hold a critical position in bolstering the efforts of the Probation Service, as they address offenders' behaviour and facilitate the crucial process of reintegrating individuals back into their communities. This approach also grants the flexibility necessary to tailor services to the specific needs of different regions and situations.

The foundation of the existing system and prevailing practices can be traced back to the recommendations of a comprehensive value-for-money review conducted on probation projects in 2008. The insights from this review paved the way for key recommendations aimed at achieving better governance, enriched management information, and an overarching objective of cost-effectiveness with regards to CBOs.

Presently, the Probation Service's CBO Unit takes on the responsibility of overseeing the annual business planning process and the administration of CBO reporting systems. It must be noted that some of the CBOs have been receiving funds from the Probation Service for almost five decades.

On an annual basis, voluntary organisations seeking financial support must submit funding applications to the Probation Service. These organisations are required to commit to achieving an array of measurable outputs that align with the overarching Strategy Statement and Work Plans of the Probation Service. The provision of funding is contingent upon the organisation's endorsement of a funding agreement, a document that outlines the expected outcomes and outputs to be accomplished. Additionally, this agreement outlines the stipulated requirements concerning the submission of statistical data, financial reports, and requisite documentation, including audited annual accounts.

The current funding process has separate applications for existing CBOs and for new applications, and the Probation Service provides guidelines for both processes. The funding application for new CBOs asks for the following criteria:

- Aims and objectives of the organisation;
- Details of Directors, Board Members, company members, and other staff;
- Details on governance controls in the organisation;
- Financial management controls;
- Outline of the organisation's property ownership or lease agreement;
- How the organisation plans to use the Probation Service funding to further the Probation Service Strategic Statement Action Plan;
- Details of any collaboration between the organisation and other organisations funded by the Probation Service or third parties in the Criminal Justice sector;
- Details on the participation group;
- Outline of the type of activity, service, or programme the organisation proposes to provide to clients of the Probation Service;
- Details of any funding that has been lost by the organisation in the past five years; and
- The total amount of funding sought from the Probation Service.

Furthermore, for existing CBOs, additional criteria are also examined. These criteria include:

- Outputs and outcomes in the previous year including the number of clients of the Probation Service, the number of Criminal Justice sector clients and the number of non-Probation Service clients active from 1 January to 30 June;
- Outline the attendance and completion rates for the programmes, activities, or services;

- Planned outcomes/outputs for clients over the next year;
- The total number of places reserved for clients of the Probation Service;
- Details on any new services planned for the next year; and
- Details and rationale if any additional funding is being requested.

5.3 Policy Analysis

The Department of Justice's *Policy for the Management of Grant Funding Programmes to Non-Governmental Bodies* lays out a comprehensive framework that articulates the fundamental principles guiding public financial management, procedural protocols, and reporting obligations that are important for both the Probation Service and CBOs to follow.

Underpinning this policy is a set of guiding principles that CBOs and the Probation Service must adhere to when awarding funding. Among these principles, one key facet is the imperative for CBOs to use tangible evidence to demonstrate their achievement of optimal outcomes. This requirement underscores the necessity for all CBOs to employ a standardised outcome measurement tool, such as Outcome STAR, which enables the robust assessment of their impact.

Furthermore, the awarding principles encompass the meticulous evaluation of applications in accordance with the parameters of the Public Spending Code. This evaluation process spans a spectrum, from swift appraisals for projects involving less than €500,000, which can be completed within a matter of days, to more intricate assessments for complex initiatives involving expenditures exceeding €20 million. The latter scenario necessitates an in-depth cost-benefit analysis that might extend over several months.

In its broader scope, the policy not only sets forth criteria for new funding programmes but also mandates comprehensive details that these programmes must incorporate within their business case. This encompasses a clear alignment with the Department's Statement of Strategy and Programme for Government, as well as a comprehensive elucidation of all funding sources underpinning the proposed initiative.

The policy extends its purview to encompass the funding of existing programmes, stratified into those with funding below and above the €500,000 threshold. A notable innovation introduced by the policy is the provision for the potential implementation of a multi-annual funding arrangement with CBOs. If a CBO seeks to adopt such a model, the total funding quantum takes precedence over individual annual contributions, thereby ensuring a more holistic consideration. It is stipulated that selection criteria in the policy, in such cases, must

be adhered to, particularly if the total funding over the course of a multi-annual arrangement surpasses the €500,000 benchmark.

Central to the policy's essence is the vigilant safeguarding of the funding's designated purpose. A robust onus lies with CBOs to provide compelling substantiation, facilitated by meticulous records encompassing various formats, such as hardcopy and digital, and the establishment of agreed-upon control mechanisms with the Probation Service.

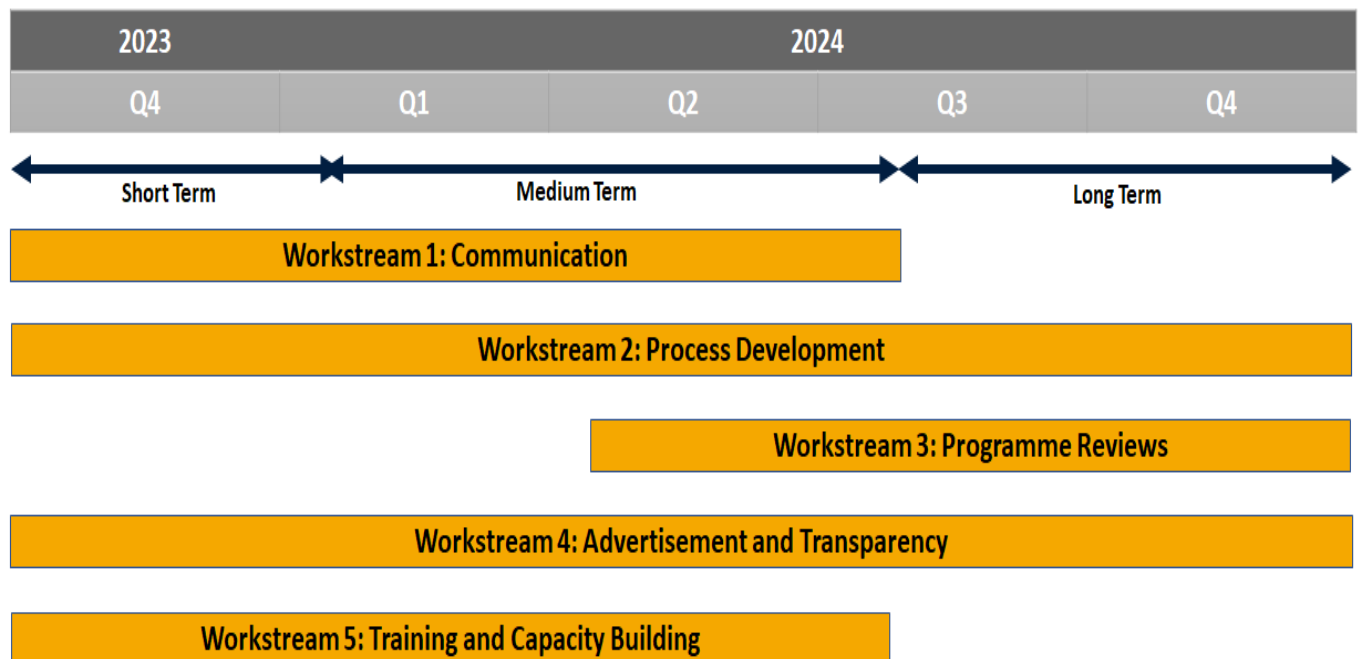
The new policy does not fundamentally change the funding of CBOs by the Probation Service. However, it does allow for both parties to explore the potential of multi-annual funding and also introduces criteria for better outcome measurement and monitoring.

5.4 Roadmap to Compliance

It must be noted that the Probation Service's current funding application process is not overly distant from full compliance with the new policy. However, there are changes that will need to be made to the process to ensure that the Probation Service is fully compliant with the new policy changes.

Furthermore, this new policy allows for organisations to submit an Expression of Interest funding request. There are many benefits in developing an Expression of Interest process of funding, including an increase in proposals from organisations that have not previously been funded through the Probation Service, as well as allowing for additional creativity in the types of proposals being received. This process may also result in some disadvantages, including the potential for losing links with the local community and funding tending to go predominantly to bigger organisations that have more resources for completing funding applications. It is important to include provisions to ensure that there is a mix of organisations funded through the Probation Service and that links with the community are maintained.

The following roadmap sets out the steps involved for the Probation Service to ensure that it is fully compliant with the new policy and that there are processes in place that work for the Probation Service and the CBOs. It must be noted that some of the criteria required in the funding applications will be the same or similar to those already required in the current funding applications, but all necessary criteria are provided for the purposes of this roadmap. The following is the roadmap for the Probation Service to ensure compliance with the new policy for funded organisations.



5.4.1 *Workstream 1: Communication*

Short Term:

- Notify CBOs about changes, provide reasoning for process changes, and reassure all CBOs about future funding applications.

Medium Term:

- Follow up with communication to address queries from CBOs.
- Evaluate feedback and refine communication strategy for use in communicating any additional changes.

5.4.2 *Workstream 2: Process Development*

Short Term:

- Define and disseminate evaluation criteria using policy guidelines for funded organisations. These criteria should be applicable for organisations applying above and below the threshold of €500,000 but allow for flexibility in deviations below the threshold, based on the funding risk levels.

Medium Term:

- Pilot the application process with a small number of CBOs and gather their feedback for review.

Long Term:

- Finalise and publish official criteria documentation.
- Implement the full role of the new application process and monitor any deviations from the criteria.
- Adjust guidelines based on effectiveness and fairness.

5.4.3 Workstream 3: Programme Reviews

Medium Term:

- Conduct mid-term reviews of funded CBOs to ensure policy requirements align with organisational strategy and business plans.

Long Term:

- Perform comprehensive final reviews of funded CBOs every five years to determine the need for continuing funding for the programme.

5.4.4 Workstream 4: Advertisement and Transparency

Short Term:

- The Probation Service must ensure that it publishes and advertises the call for funding in an open and transparent manner to encourage potential new CBOs to apply.

Medium Term:

- Monitor application response rates to determine the number of new responses, the number of successful responses, and the level of need the CBOs are fulfilling.

Long Term:

- Analyse the effectiveness of advertising strategies and update when necessary.

5.4.5 Workstream 5: Training and Capacity Building

Short Term:

- Plan and provide training to all CBOs to ensure that they all understand and are comfortable with the new application process. This training should take the form of a seminar where CBOs are informed on the process that they will be applying through and the additional criteria that will be required that weren't previously asked of them.

Medium Term:

- Collect feedback from the CBOs after the training sessions to ensure that all current CBOs are fully aware of all changes and rationale.
- Enhance training materials based on CBO feedback and run additional training seminars on an ad hoc basis if necessary.

The above roadmap provides a guide on the steps the Probation Service should take to implement the *Policy for the Management of Grant Funding Programmes to Non-Governmental Bodies*. This roadmap ensures that the Probation Service will be fully compliant with the policy while also ensuring that it takes the necessary steps to make the funding application process accessible and understandable to all CBOs. This roadmap also ensures that provisions are made to maintain the Probation Service's connection with local communities through the CBOs.

5.5 Recommendations

Recommendation 9: It is recommended that the Probation Service develop minimum funding criteria across a range of services to ensure consistency and value for money. In developing the funding criteria, consideration must be given to how any proposed Government policy may impact the running of the CBOs.

Recommendation 10: It is recommended that the Probation Service move towards the introduction of a multi-annual funding model for CBOs. This requires the Probation Service to make changes in terms of the advertisement of funding, evaluation of funded projects, and reporting and review of programmes in order to be in line with the Department of Justice's Policy for the Management of Grant Funding Programmes to Non-Governmental Bodies.

6 Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Overview

Throughout our review we engaged with a number of stakeholders, including staff of the Probation Service, representatives from other organisations, and staff from a selection of CBOs. This involved a series of site visits and surveys to inform our understanding of the operation of the CBOs as well as the current funding programme in place.

With the publication of the *Review of Policy Options for Prison and Penal Reform 2022–2024*, it is anticipated that there will be an increase in the number of clients referred to the Probation Service. Therefore, it is expected that there will also be an increase in the number of clients using the services of the CBOs. Our recommendations range from “quick wins” to longer-term strategic thinking about how the current funding model and resourcing of CBOs can be enhanced to ensure their work is strategically aligned with the mission of the Probation Service.

Our principal finding is that the CBOs offer added benefits to the Probation Service to achieve the objectives and deliver the mission of its Strategy Statement and Work Plan. However, there are significant challenges in how the CBOs are governed, operate, and are funded, which reduces the overall impact they could have.

6.2 Review of Recommendations

The following is a list of the recommendations that have been identified throughout this report, which we have developed to assist the Probation Service with enhancing the current funding model while subsequently increasing the effectiveness of the operation of the CBOs.

1. It is recommended that the Probation Service, in line with **best practice from the Charities Regulator** and to avoid any potential conflict of interest as a funder, ensure that **staff of the Probation Service are not members of the Boards** of the CBOs.
2. It is recommended that the Probation Service ensure that both the **Local Senior Probation Officers and the Regional Managers** meet with the Project Managers of CBOs **once a quarter** and that there is a meeting between the **Board of the CBO** and representatives from the Probation Service on an **annual basis**.
3. It is recommended that the Probation Service **provide external training** for the CBOs to support **good governance**.
4. It is recommended that the Probation Service conduct a thorough **analysis of the gaps** in funding for CBOs. This analysis aims to pinpoint areas of priority for the Probation

Service. Subsequently, the Probation Service should then implement an **Expressions of Interest** process for funding allocation, aligning with these priority areas.

5. It is recommended that the Probation Service **enhance its IT system** for live reporting of CBO client numbers, which will allow for the more accurate capturing of the journey and **level of change of clients** while engaging with services. This IT system should also **capture more information** in relation to the clients' demographics, including ethnicity and gender, details regarding the programmes that clients are engaging with, and whether clients are engaging on a full-time or part-time basis.
6. It is recommended that the Probation Service ensure that all CBOs are **collecting sufficient client outcomes** and metrics, which are agreed with the **Department of Justice** as suitable measurements.
7. It is recommended that the Probation Service encourage more **collaboration and networking opportunities for CBOs**. This should include regional forums, thematic forums for CBOs that deliver similar services, and the continuation of the annual CBO conference.
8. It is recommended that for the services that are currently **duplicated by other agencies**, including those funded through **mixed funding streams**, systems are established with these agencies to enhance synergies and ensure collaborations are maintained. These systems should include **regular meetings** with these agencies to ensure clarity on service requirements, effective arrangements for monitoring/reporting/impact assessment/outcome measurement, and traceability of funding, within a structure of clear accountability.
9. It is recommended that the Probation Service develop **minimum funding criteria** across a range of services to ensure consistency and value for money. In developing the funding criteria, consideration must be given to how any proposed Government policy may **impact the running** of the CBOs.
10. It is recommended that the Probation Service move towards the introduction of a **multi-annual funding model for CBOs**. This requires the Probation Service to make changes in terms of the advertisement of funding, evaluation of funded projects, and reporting and review of programmes in order to be **in line with the Department of Justice's Policy for the Management of Grant Funding Programmes to Non-Governmental Bodies**.

6.3 Implementation Plans

6.3.1 Overview

The following includes the implementation plans involved in ensuring that the Probation Service can implement in full the recommendations laid out in this report.

These implementation plans offer a comprehensive view of the work that needs to be done across various aspects of the funding model for CBOs and consider all recommendations that have been made thus far. Within each of the identified roadmaps, the recommendations are categorised into short-, medium-, and long-term objectives to help with prioritisation. The categories are defined by the following:

- Short term: 3–6 months;
- Medium term: 6–18 months; and
- Long term: anything longer than 18 months.

For each of the recommendations and the subsequent implementation plans, it is important that the Probation Service ensures that it establishes a continuous monitoring and evaluation framework while also frequently reviewing progress and identifying challenges. Furthermore, as part of this evaluation framework, it will be important that the Probation Service endeavours to collect feedback from all stakeholders including CBOs, internal staff of the Probation Service, and external stakeholders such as the Department of Justice.

Finally, it is encouraged that the Probation Service ensures that it also communicates the progress and outcomes of the implementation of these recommendations to parties involved in the work of the CBOs.

6.3.2 Recommendation 1

Recommendation	Activities	Timeline
<p><i>It is recommended that the Probation Service, in line with best practice from the Charities Regulator and to avoid any potential conflict of interest as a funder, ensure that staff of the Probation Service are not members of the Boards of the CBOs.</i></p>	<p>Update internal policies and guidelines in line with best practice from the Charities Regulator.</p>	<p>Short term</p>
	<p>Communicate policy updates, rationale, and alternative arrangements to CBOs and staff of the Probation Service.</p>	<p>Medium term</p>
	<p>Monitor implementation and assist CBOs with the change to Board structures and with compliance.</p>	<p>Long term</p>

It is important to acknowledge that not all CBOs may willingly embrace the implementation of this recommendation, given the positive relationships they currently have with the Probation Service staff member serving as a Director on the Board. As a result, it is crucial to effectively communicate the rationale behind this recommendation to all CBOs and staff of the Probation Service. This will ensure that everyone involved understands that the proposed change aligns with the best practices outlined by the Charities Regulator.

6.3.3 Recommendation 2

Recommendation	Activities	Timeline
<i>It is recommended that the Probation Service ensure that both the Local Senior Probation Officers and the Regional Managers meet with the Project Managers of CBOs once a quarter and that there is a meeting between the Board of the CBO and representatives from the Probation Service on an annual basis.</i>	Coordinate individual quarterly meetings between the CBO Project Managers and Local Senior Probation Officer and the Regional Manager.	Short/medium term
	Establish meeting schedule and guidelines to discuss progress with targets.	Medium term
	Encourage open dialogue and opportunities for the Probation Service to provide input to the CBO business plan.	Medium term
	Address challenges and share best practices.	Long term

Upon the withdrawal of staff of the Probation Service from their roles as Directors on the Boards of the CBOs, it becomes crucial to establish a robust framework that facilitates more regular meetings and effective communications between the CBOs and Local Senior Probation Officers and Regional Managers. This enhanced level of interaction will foster better collaboration, promote a deeper understanding of each organisation's goals and challenges, and enable the exchange of valuable insights and expertise. Through these closer ties, CBOs can continue to receive support and guidance from the Probation Service while maintaining their autonomy and adhering to the best practices advocated by the Charities Regulator.

6.3.4 Recommendation 3

Recommendation	Activities	Timeline
<i>It is recommended that the Probation Service provide external training for the CBOs to support good governance.</i>	Identify suitable and qualified external training providers while ensuring no crossover with training already provided.	Short term
	Organise training sessions to be delivered both online and in person to ensure access for the CBOs.	Medium term
	Monitor implementation of the training and effectiveness on governance in the CBOs.	Long term

To guarantee that all CBOs are well prepared to uphold and adhere to good governance procedures in the future, it is of utmost importance for the Probation Service to offer external training on governance for these organisations. This particular recommendation should be put into action after the completion of **Recommendations 1 and 2**, ensuring a strategic and coordinated approach to strengthening governance practices within the CBOs. By providing such training, the Probation Service can contribute significantly to the overall effectiveness and sustainability of the CBOs, fostering a culture of transparency, accountability, and responsible leadership.

6.3.5 Recommendation 4

Recommendation	Activities	Timeline
<p><i>It is recommended that the Probation Service conduct a thorough analysis of the gaps in funding for CBOs. This analysis aims to pinpoint areas of priority for the Probation Service. Subsequently, the Probation Service should then implement an Expressions of Interest process for funding allocation, aligning with these priority areas.</i></p>	Further identification of service gaps and client needs in different areas of the country.	Short/medium term
	Prepare guidelines for Expressions of Interest.	Medium term
	Advertise funding opportunities on social media and with local community groups.	Medium term
	Allocate funding based on the service need.	Medium term
	Allocate funding to selected organisations and review and evaluate Expressions of Interest over time.	Long term

Once put into action, this recommendation will significantly impact the existing funding model. Consequently, it is crucial to align the completion of this recommendation with that of **Recommendations 8 and 9**, as they also entail additional modifications to the current funding model for the CBOs.

6.3.6 Recommendation 5

Recommendation	Activities	Timeline
<i>It is recommended that the Probation Service enhance its IT system for live reporting of CBO client numbers, which will allow for the more accurate capturing of the journey and level of change of clients while engaging with services. This IT system should also capture more information in relation to the clients' demographics, including ethnicity and gender, details regarding the programmes that clients are engaging with, and whether clients are engaging on a full-time or part-time basis.</i>	Identify necessary system upgrades in relation to the reporting of CBO data.	Short term
	Collaborate with other units of the Probation Service to identify needs across the organisations.	Medium term
	Develop and test enhanced IT system with a selection of CBOs.	Long term
	Train staff members both internally in the Probation Service and in the CBOs if necessary.	Long term

We acknowledge that ongoing efforts are underway within the Probation Service to enhance the IT system. Additionally, a similar proposal aimed at enhancing the current data collection through the IT system was mentioned in a report by Crowe for the Probation Service's *Operational Review of Community Service*.

Successfully implementing this recommendation will require collaborative input from all units of the Probation Service.

6.3.7 Recommendation 6

Recommendation	Activities	Timeline
<i>It is recommended that the Probation Service ensure that all CBOs are collecting sufficient client outcomes and metrics, which are agreed with the Department of Justice as suitable measurements.</i>	Agree minimum outcomes and metrics to be collected with the Department of Justice.	Short term
	Develop reporting templates and guidelines with CBOs and staff of the Probation Service.	Medium term
	Provide training and support to the CBOs.	Medium/long term

The Department of Justice has expressed interest in specific areas that they want the Probation Service to focus on, to ensure that CBOs are collecting relevant metrics and outcomes. It is suggested that the Probation Service collaborates with the Department in more detailed talks to establish a clear and minimum set of agreed-upon outcomes and

metrics. This suggestion should be aligned with **Recommendation 5** to ensure the IT system is able to facilitate the effective collection of the agreed outcomes.

6.3.8 Recommendation 7

Recommendation	Activities	Timeline
<p><i>It is recommended that the Probation Service encourage more collaboration and networking opportunities for CBOs. This should include regional forums, thematic forums for CBOs that deliver similar services, and the continuation of the annual CBO conference.</i></p>	<p>Determine the funding allocation for this recommendation and establish regional and thematic forums.</p>	<p>Short term</p>
	<p>Facilitate regular meetings of CBOs to ensure networking and collaboration.</p>	<p>Medium term</p>
	<p>Continue developing the annual CBO conference with further input from CBOs to its structure.</p>	<p>Medium term</p>
	<p>Collect feedback from CBOs on forums and the conference.</p>	<p>Medium term</p>
	<p>Evaluate feedback and improve future iterations of the forums and the conference.</p>	<p>Long term</p>

The Probation Service should allocate sufficient funding to allow for increased activities such as more regular forums and for the continuation of the annual conference. This is a relatively straightforward recommendation to implement that would have long-lasting and impactful benefits in terms of knowledge sharing between CBOs.

6.3.9 Recommendation 8

Recommendation	Activities	Timeline
<p><i>It is recommended that for the services that are currently duplicated by other agencies, including those funded through mixed funding streams, systems are established with these agencies to enhance synergies and ensure collaborations are maintained. These systems should include regular meetings with these agencies to ensure clarity on service requirements, effective arrangements for monitoring/reporting/impact assessment/outcome measurement, and traceability of funding, within a structure of clear accountability.</i></p>	Map all relevant services that are co-funded with other agencies and the Probation Service.	Short term
	Review existing arrangements where the Probation Service funds charities supported by other public agencies, to ensure that there is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Clarity on what is required (as expressed in service agreements, contracts, etc.); ■ Effective monitoring to ensure that what is required gets delivered; ■ Traceability with regard to how funding is used; ■ Clear accountability for service delivery and the use of funds; and ■ An effective and straightforward mechanism for reporting, impact measurement, and outcome assessment. 	Medium term
	Establish communication channels between the Probation Service and other agencies and develop agreements for access arrangements.	Medium term
	Provide guidance to CBOs that are currently engaged in mixed funding streams of any changes that may impact their operations as a result.	Long term

It is noted that there is a limited amount of funding available to the Probation Service annually from the Department of Justice. This determines the amount of funding that can be provided to the CBOs, which in some cases may not cover their total running costs. Therefore, some CBOs have entered into mixed funding streams with other agencies. Furthermore, there is a noted duplication of services in the community, including services that are not appropriate for the Probation Service to be funding as they are provided by other agencies. Therefore, the Probation Service must make arrangements with these agencies to ensure that clients of the Probation Services can be fast-tracked for services, when necessary, to ensure they are benefitting from the programmes at the correct time and to avoid duplicating services.

6.3.10 Recommendation 9

Recommendation	Activities	Timeline
<p><i>It is recommended that the Probation Service develop minimum funding criteria across a range of services to ensure consistency and value for money. In developing the funding criteria, consideration must be given to how any proposed Government policy may impact the running of the CBOs.</i></p>	<p>Identify key performance indicators necessary for various types of services.</p>	<p>Short/medium term</p>
	<p>Establish minimum funding criteria for each of these different services offered by CBOs.</p>	<p>Short/medium term</p>
	<p>Review and update criteria as necessary in relation to inflation and other external factors.</p>	<p>Long term</p>

This recommendation is expected to have a significant impact on the funding level allocated to certain services, potentially leading to adjustments in the financial resources provided to individual programmes. However, its primary objective is to ensure a consistent minimum level of funding across all services.

Since this recommendation directly relates to funding matters, it is suggested to implement it alongside **Recommendations 4 and 8**. Combining the implementation of these recommendations will reinforce the overall effectiveness of the funding system, creating a well-rounded approach that addresses key funding considerations and maximises their positive impact on the services provided.

6.3.11 Recommendation 10

Recommendation	Activities	Timeline
<p><i>It is recommended that the Probation Service move towards the introduction of a multi-annual funding model for CBOs. This requires the Probation Service to make changes in terms of the advertisement of funding, evaluation of funded projects, and reporting and review of programmes in order to be in line with the Department of Justice's Policy for the Management of Grant Funding Programmes to Non-Governmental Bodies.</i></p>	<p>Begin discussions with the Department of Justice and begin preparing a business case for multi-annual funding and aligning this to the Department's strategy.</p>	Short term
	<p>Advertising and communicating the funding programme.</p>	Medium term
	<p>Put in place a formal evaluation and selection process to select the projects.</p>	Medium term
	<p>Ensure that a formal funding arrangement procedure is in place before a payment can be issued to a project.</p>	Medium term
	<p>Define clear reporting and monitoring of progress for the lifetime of the project including interim reviews.</p>	Medium term
	<p>Review and monitor successes and challenges arising from the funding programme changes.</p>	Long term

This recommendation will result in an overall change to the CBO funding model that the Probation Service currently has in place. The process involved in following the Department of Justice's *Policy for the Management of Grant Funding Programmes to Non-Governmental Bodies* differs slightly from the current process used by the Probation Service. However, the processes are clearly outlined in the policy, and it would be recommended that they are followed appropriately, as the benefit of introducing multi-annual funding will offer greater stability to CBOs.