

National Alcohol Awareness Week, Launch of the Probation Service and Irish Prison Service 2013 Annual Reports, General Scheme of Criminal Justice (community Sanctions) Bill, Armenian Study Visit, CEP newsletter, Eurovista Journal, Probation on the Radio.

Message from Director

The year is already well off to a flying start for the Probation Service. In the past week, we presented our Annual Report for 2013 to Minister for Justice and Equality, Alan Shatter TD. We also presented to the Minister and published - jointly with the Irish Prison Service - a joint strategy (2014 - 2016) entitled: *An Effective Response to Women Who Offend*. The women's strategy points up yet again that creating a safer and fairer Ireland is a task for all of civil society, not just the justice agencies. We will work collaboratively with our statutory and community and voluntary partners to progress the goals and objectives set out in the new strategy, specifically to provide more woman-centric and community-focused programmes for women who offend, to achieve better outcomes and safer communities.



In another significant development, Minister Shatter has published the general scheme for new probation legislation (the Criminal Justice [Community Sanctions] Bill, 2014), which will update our founding legislation and put our work on a modern statutory footing. One of the proposed provisions under the new legislation will provide for external inspection of the work of the Service. We have always striven to deliver our services and programmes to the highest professional standards. In some areas of our work (e.g. finance, HR, health and safety etc.) we, like all public bodies, are already subject to external accountability processes. That said, the proposed legislative changes will require us to 'up our game' even more in relation to the standards we apply and against which we are measured, particularly in our core work with offenders. We have already embarked on this improvement process, which will involve consolidating existing practice procedures and standards, identifying any gaps, and developing new standards where required. We will also put in place an improved internal monitoring and inspection system, which will help us prepare for eventual external inspection. I am confident that we have a sound and well-established professional and organisational foundation on which to base the developments required and look forward to the updated standards and all the benefits the new legislation will bring.

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

Vivian Geiran, Director

Management of Sex Offenders in Prison and the Community

In the Seanad Adjournment Debate on Tuesday the 11th of March 2014, Minister of State Mr. Fergus O'Dowd TD, on behalf of Minister for Justice and Equality, Mr. Alan Shatter TD, made a statement on structures in place to deal with sexual offenders in our prisons and in our communities and to what extent co-operation from the offender is mandatory.



The Minister of State's speech is available by clicking on the link icon to the right.

A Significant Day for Collaborative Working

March 6th 2014 marked a special day for both the Probation Service and the Irish Prison Service as Alan Shatter TD, Minister for Justice, Equality and Defence launched the Probation Service/Irish Prison Service Women's Strategy 2014-2016 and published both Service's respective 2013 annual reports.



Pictured above: Vivian Geiran (Director, Probation Service), Kerry Anthony MBE (Chief Executive Officer, DePaul Ireland), Alan Shatter TD (Minister for Justice, Equality and Defence), Michael Donellan (Director General, Irish Prison Service)

The joint Probation Service/Irish Prison Service Women's Strategy sets out how the two Services will work together, with other statutory, community and voluntary sector partners to provide more tailored women-centric interventions, to reduce offending and improve opportunities for reintegration as well as positive outcomes more generally.

Speaking about the Women's Strategy Minister Shatter commented **"It is recognised that most women who offend pose a low risk to society. However, they do, generally, have a high level of need. This high level of need can make the impact of imprisonment for a woman, her family and children disproportionately harsh. The intention behind this joint strategy is to tackle this by a dedicated and effective approach to working with women offenders."**

Many women offenders have complex needs such as alcohol or drug problems, serious mental health difficulties, social disadvantage and dysfunctional backgrounds, which impact on offending. On any day the Probation Service works with almost 1,300 women offenders in the community; either assessing or supervising them on a range of probation type orders, community service or post release supervision. Almost 14% or 1 in 7 new referrals to the Probation Service are for women offenders (1,206 new referrals in 2013). On any day there are around 150 women in custody. 2,151 women were committed to prison in 2012 which is almost 15% of all committals. In comparison 2,326 women were committed to prison in 2013 which accounted for 18% of all committals.

Published on the week of International Women's Day, (8th March), the theme of which was "Inspiring Change", the Strategy is an acknowledgement by the Probation Service and the Irish Prison Service that together, they are changing the way they address the particular needs of female offenders.



Above: Minister Shatter speaking at the launch event

The Probation Service in Numbers

Some key figures from our 2013 Annual Report included:

15,994 - offenders with whom the Probation Service worked, in the community, in 2013.

7,578 - offenders referred by the Courts to the Probation Service last year.

978 - women supervised in the community by the Probation Service in 2013.

8 - the percentage of all new referrals by the Courts to the Service, who were under 18 years of age.

The 2013 Annual Report is available on the Probation Service website or by clicking [here](#).



National Alcohol Awareness Week

National Alcohol Awareness Week takes place from 31st March to 4th April 2014. The aim of this week is to get people thinking and talking about alcohol and the impact it has on all of us. The Probation Service are hosting an event to mark this week by bringing together the Probation Service representatives from all the Regional and Local Drug and Alcohol Task Forces. The purpose of the meeting is to update all our representatives on Task Forces on the current situation regarding the roll out of the National Drugs Rehabilitation Framework. Aoife Davey, Chair of the National Drug Rehabilitation Implementation Committee (NDRIC) will give a presentation to the group. The event will also be an opportunity for Probation Service representatives on DTFs to explore further interagency opportunities to address local and regional drug related issues, so as to reduce offending.

Information on Alcohol Awareness Week 2014 is available by clicking the icon above.

Launching the Probation Service annual report the Minister outlined the lead role the Service plays in reducing the level of crime in our communities. This is being achieved through the provision of offender assessment to the courts, the supervision and management of offenders in the community, and working with those in custody to help their reintegration into society.

In 2013, there were 8,705 court referrals to the Probation Service, and Probation Officers supervised a total of 15,984 offenders in the community.

Speaking at the event the Minister went on to recognise the close working relationship between the Probation Service and the Irish Prison Service commenting **"While the Prison Service and Probation Service are separate entities, the work they do is closely linked and has the same ultimate goal – to reduce re-offending leading to safer communities. Co-operation and working together is integral to achieving this common goal."**

The Minister also launched the Irish Prison Service 2013 annual report saying, **"I am encouraged to note that the figures contained in the report, show the first significant decrease in committals to prison since 2007 with 15,735 committals, a decrease of 7.6% on the 2012 total (of 17,026). This reduction in committals to prison and the resulting number in custody is welcomed."**

13,055 persons were sent to prison in 2013 compared to 13,860 in 2012, which represents a decrease of 5.8%. The daily average number of prisoners in custody in 2013 has also reduced from 4,318 in 2012 to 4,158 last year.

At the launch Minister Shatter was also presented with the Annual Report, 2013 for Tús Nua, a residential project for women offenders, operated by DePaul Ireland and funded by the Probation Service.

The Minister acknowledged that the support of the community and voluntary sector will be crucial to implementing the new interagency women's strategy saying **"Tús Nua is a residential project for women offenders, managed by DePaul Ireland, and funded by my Department through the Probation Service. Tús Nua works closely with the Irish Prison Service and the Probation Service to support women offenders to reintegrate into the community on their release from custody. I am pleased to receive the Tús Nua annual report for 2013 and to congratulate them on their achievement of supporting the reintegration of so many women by the provision of accommodation and other support services in a low threshold, female orientated environment."**

Copies of the Women's Strategy and Annual Reports are available by clicking on the appropriate link below:



Probation Service Annual Report 2013



Joint PS/IPS Women's Strategy 2014-2016



Irish Prison Service Annual Report 2013



DePaul Ireland Tús Nua Annual Review 2013



Minister Shatter publishes the General Scheme of Criminal Justice (Community Sanctions) Bill

The Minister for Justice, Equality and Defence, Alan Shatter TD, recently published the General Scheme of the Criminal Justice (Community Sanctions) Bill 2014. The General Scheme will be submitted to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice, Defence and Equality for consideration.

This new legislation, replacing the Probation of Offenders Act 1907, will modernise the legislative foundation of the Probation Service's work and facilitate the effective and efficient use of community sanctions by the Courts. Specific measures included will also ensure that the courts have a wide range of appropriate options for dealing with persons who have committed minor offences.

The legislation will also take full account of the interests of victims of crime by making it a statutory requirement for the courts to have regard to the interests of victims when making decisions about community sanctions. It will also provide for external inspection of the work of the Probation Service thereby increasing transparency and accountability and further developing professional standards in the Service.

A copy of the new scheme is available by clicking the icon above.



Eurovista Probation Journal Publication

The latest edition of Euro Vista journal, the journal of European probation, has also just been published by the CEP. Articles include comparative examination of sentence transfer, induction to probation supervision, project report, and community sanctions in Jordan. The Journal is available by clicking on the Euro Vista icon above.

Study visit by Armenian Delegation to the Probation Service

In February 2014, the Probation Service hosted a five day study visit for a delegation from Armenia under the Council of Europe Project "Reducing the use of custodial sentences in line with European standards". The purpose of the study visit was to provide the delegation with an overview of the work of the Probation Service in Ireland and, in doing so, assist with the development of probation practice in Armenia. Not only were we delighted to facilitate our Armenian colleagues by hosting the visit, but also by the fact that Ireland was identified as an example and in many respects a leader in the development of contemporary practice.



The study visit took the form of formal presentations, discussions and site visits across the range of Probation Service activities. This included an overview of the structure and organisation of a national service, strategic alliances and partnerships, financial management and governance, recruitment, staff training and support. The delegation also received very comprehensive inputs on offender assessment and supervision in the community, community service/community return, work in prisons, work with young persons and programme development.

The delegation comprised representatives of the Judiciary, the Ministry of Justice, the NGO sector, as well as from the Council of Europe. Throughout the week the delegation commented on the range and excellence of our work and staff commitment and engagement with the work of the Service, as well as the evidence of effective interagency collaboration in achieving Service objectives and better outcomes for offenders.

Overall the visit was a very positive experience for all those who participated and we hope it will facilitate and contribute positively to our Armenian colleagues endeavours.

Drug Treatment Court

The role the Probation Service is playing at the Drug Treatment Court was recently highlighted in a report on RTÉ Radio One's Today with Sean O'Rourke programme.

The advantages of giving people the opportunity to change through a multidisciplinary approach were examined on the show, which has over 300,000 listeners. The perspectives of people participating in the Drug were heard and there was an interview with the Drug Treatment Court Coordinator, Hilda McDermott.

Described as both a "very good idea" and a "tough and demanding regime" the overwhelming view of contributions to the piece was that this service works for participants. The importance of the input to the programme by the Probation Service was evident throughout. The approach adopted, incorporating both compassion and clear consequences of failing to follow the Court's requirements were presented in a balanced way.

To listen to the report click on the icon opposite.



Council of Europe (CoE) news

Vivian Geiran attended his first meeting as a newly-elected member of the nine-person PC-CP, the CoE expert working group on penological co-operation, last month (February). A documentary summary of the PC-CP proceedings is available [here](#)

Recommendations on the operation of Electronic Monitoring (EM), and on Dangerous Offenders, were adopted by the CoE Committee of Ministers on 19th of February and are available at the following link

More information about the work of the PC-CP can be found on the CoE website: www.coe.int

Confederation of European Probation Newsletter



The CEP published its latest newsletter last month (February 2014). It contains news on a range of projects and updates items from probation around Europe, including practice and policy developments, and trans-national co-operation projects in probation and other areas of offender management.

The newsletter is available by clicking on the image above.

For information leaflets that explain the Dublin Drug Treatment Court's three programme phases - Bronze, Silver & Gold are available by clicking on the icons below.

	Induction/bronze phase
	Silver Phase
	Gold Phase

Update report on Joint Irish Prison Service-Probation Service Strategy published

The Irish Prison Service and the Probation Service have worked closely together, over many years, to help prisoners reduce their risk of reoffending and to make a positive contribution to their communities, through proactive sentence management and the provision of prisoner resettlement programmes.



In May 2013, a joint strategy document was developed setting out for how the two organisations will continue to develop and co-ordinate our joint working, in conjunction with statutory and community and voluntary sector partners.

Progress on this strategy is outlined in the recently published progress report available by clicking on the icon above.

European treatment & transition management of high risk offenders project 2012-2014 Justice Co-operation Network (JCN)

Final Conference - Advance Notice

Estonia, Finland, Ireland and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania (Germany), with the University of Greifswald as advisers, are partners in an EU funded project to examine and develop best practice in the transition management and supervision of high risk offenders leaving custody as well as developing a body of knowledge and creating an EU network of expertise. The project began in November 2012 and will be concluded in October 2014.

The final conference of the European treatment and transition management of high risk offenders project will be held in the Yachting & Spa Resort Hohe Düne in Rostock-Warnemünde (<http://www.hohe-duene.de>) from 3rd to 5th September 2014.

The Conference will feature important presentations on the findings from the project, valuable contributions from experts and lively workshop discussions. It will be an excellent opportunity for networking, to meet with experienced colleagues and experts in prisoner transition management and to exchange knowledge and develop partnerships.

There will be special conference travel, attendance and conference arrangements in place for participants. As places will be limited please contact the German JCN team for further information as early as possible by e-mail at: jcn.conference@jm.mv-regierung.de

Probation in the media



RTE Radio 1's Morning Ireland programme recently featured an item on the particular

challenges facing offenders in accessing employment, and how important this is to the process of offender rehabilitation and reintegration. The piece included an interview with Vivian Geiran, Director, as well as with Paddy Richardson, CEO of IASIO, an NGO funded by the Probation and Prison services, a Training and Employment Officer and a former service user.

The item is accessible on www.rte.ie or by clicking on the icon above. A podcast of the show is available by clicking on the icon below.



Minister praises the Probation Service

At a recent session of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Justice, Defence and Equality, Minister Alan Shatter TD had some very complimentary words to say about the Probation Service, including that the Probation Service "...is doing extraordinary work... and is engaging in innovative projects."

The Minister went on to comment positively in particular on the Community Service and Community Return programmes, and praised the Probation Service-Prison Service Joint Strategy.

The text of the Minister's specific comments about the Probation Service and the full text of the Joint Committee's debate, which dealt with community courts are both available by clicking the relevant icon below.

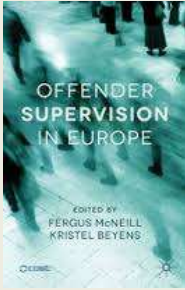


Community Courts Discussion



Minister's comments about the Probation Service

Book Publication



Offender Supervision in Europe, a book which describes and debates the growth of 'mass supervision' of offenders across Europe, from a comparative perspective, was published towards the end of 2013. Edited by Fergus McNeill (Professor of Criminology and Social Work at the University of Glasgow) and Kristel Beyens (Professor of Penology and Criminology at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium), this publication sets out the findings from

the early phases of the work of an important European research network, under a European Union COST (Co-operation in Science and Technology) grant.

The collection of chapters, from a range of eminent contributors, on various aspects of the practice and lived experience of offender supervision (including input from Ireland), is very readable and accessible, as well as being an excellent addition to this field of literature.

The book is published by **Palgrave and Macmillan**.

Dates for your Diary



April 2014 - ACJRD (Association for Criminal Justice Research and Development) plan to hold this year's Annual Martin Tansey Memorial Lecture on Tuesday 29th of April 2014. Arrangements have yet to be finalised. Just save the date for now, and check **www.acjrd.ie** for confirmation and further details.

June 2014 - Restorative Justice and Desistance International Conference

Dates: 11-14 June, 2014

Location: Queen's University, Belfast, Northern Ireland.

Further details on the conference can be found by clicking on the icon below.

