

# THE PROBATION PRESS

Newsletter of The Probation Service

JUNE 2008

## Putting Health & Safety at the centre of our work within Probation

Did you know that we have ...

**Set up a National Health & Safety Steering Committee chaired by the Director:** The National Health & Safety Steering Committee met for the first time on 11th March 2008. Minutes of the meeting are available on the portal.

The Committee's Working Terms of Reference are:

- Oversee implementation of our Health & Safety Strategy
- Ensure that safety statements are in place and up to date
- Scheduling & follow up of Health & Safety audits
- Oversee Health & Safety strategy in relation to Community Service
- Management of Health & Safety risks in relation to offenders
- Development of Health & Safety Guidelines

**Updated our National Safety Statement to include Community Service:** The Service commissioned Olive Safety to review our Service Safety Statement to fully integrate Community Service, this involved auditing a number of Community Service sites.

**Begun Health & Safety Risk Assessments on all our 50 Probation Offices:** We have begun the process of conducting risk assessments for all our offices. A template for conducting risk assessments was circulated to all Regional Managers.

**Launched a special site on our Portal Page for all Health & Safety matters:** A dedicated area on the Service intranet portal has been assigned to Health & Safety. All policies and relevant material are available in this area by following the link which is prominently displayed on the portal.



**Launched a special e-mail address - hands@probation.ie - for all Health & Safety communications:** In order to facilitate communication in relation to Health & Safety we have set up a dedicated e-mail address. It is envisaged that this will be the central point of contact for all Health & Safety matters and will help to increase our response times to incidents.

**Circulated specially designed Health & Safety folders to each office**

A specially designed Health & Safety folder has been circulated to each office. The folder aims to be a working resource immediately available to all staff containing up to date, relevant Health & Safety information, such as:

- Our National Service Safety Statement
- An Office Specific Safety Statement
- Risk Assessments & Risk Assessment Template Forms
- Various Health & Safety guidelines on different aspects of Service work
- Incident reporting forms
- Material Safety Data Sheets

providing information on commonly used chemical products.

- Fire Safety

**Commenced work on prioritising Health & Safety within our Community Service and have set up a small group to advance a detailed Workplan for 2008:** Community Service Health & Safety will receive priority in 2008 with a dedicated working group established to progress the agreed workplan.

**Drafted Policy/Guidance notes on a range of matters to do with Probation work:** Guidance notes are currently being drafted to assist staff carrying out various aspects of Probation Service work. These guidance notes will be available in the Safety folders in each office.

Remember to visit the Portal Page - Health & Safety - to keep yourself updated.

*Michael Donnellan  
Director*

## MARTIN TANSEY LECTURE



*Martin Tansey*

The Association for Criminal Justice Research and Development (ACJRD) has established the Annual Martin Tansey Lecture in honour of the memory of Martin Tansey as their founding member, former chair, long-serving head of the Probation Service and important figure in criminal justice policy in Ireland.

The Annual Martin Tansey Lecture is intended to host presentations and facilitate lively discussion on topics of interest in the area of criminal justice policy and development.

The Inaugural Annual Martin Tansey Lecture was held at Buswell's Hotel, Molesworth Street, Dublin 2 on Wednesday 21st May 2008 with many Probation Service personnel, retired and current, among the full house attendance which included the DPP, members of the Parole Board, the Crime Council, the Judiciary, An Garda Síochána, the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, academics and many others interested in Criminal Justice policy. Guest of honour was Mrs. Sheila Tansey, widow of Martin Tansey.

The Inaugural Lecture was delivered by Sean Aylward, Secretary-General of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform on Diversity in the Criminal Justice System and replied to by Judge Michael Moriarty of the High Court.

In the course of his paper Sean /cont.

## MARTIN TANSEY LECTURE

*/continued*

Aylward acknowledged Martin Tansey's immense contribution to Irish life and most especially to the criminal justice family remembering him as a valued friend, colleague and a most committed public servant.

Martin, Sean Aylward said, believed that the rehabilitation of offenders was a supremely rational social objective and his life's work. His legacy is the Probation Service as a vibrant organisation at the centre of the Criminal Justice System and is a tribute to the humanity, courage and common sense which he possessed in abundance. It is also a tribute to his power to positively influence significant decision makers in public administration over many years. Sean Aylward also acknowledged the attendance of Kay Kinsella, who retired as Senior Probation Officer in 1979 and is the longest retired member of the Service.

On the theme of diversity in the criminal justice system Sean Aylward reflected on the fact that Ireland seems to have moved at "warp speed" from being the poorest, most homogenous and most crime-free society in Western Europe to being the most heterogeneous, diverse, and successful economy in Europe with all the crime problems and concerns that emerge in such a context.

It is a fundamental duty of the State and every public servant, in his view, to vindicate people's rights, not to be subject to attack by others and to have peaceable enjoyment of their property. There is goodwill of the vast majority of our people towards law and order and respect for the criminal justice system.

A new challenge for Ireland is the integration of our new communities through dialogue and learning. We have to grapple with the balance between recognising the legitimate attachment of those new to our shores to the culture whence they came, and ensuring that they have a real allegiance to Ireland, the country in which they now wish to make their new home.

Quoting the Council of Europe White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue 'Living Together as Equals in Dignity', Sean Aylward said "Intercultural dialogue is a mechanism to constantly achieve a new identity balance, responding to new openings and experiences and adding new layers to identify without relinquishing one's roots."

In conclusion, Sean Aylward said that today, for all its modernity, Ireland is a place where community life is still vibrant; where the stranger is still welcomed and where we do continue to show tolerance for difference. The challenge facing us is to maintain, at a time of enormous pressure and change, that level of community spirit and strength.

## TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT NEWS

### Part time Masters Degree Programme

Further to Service discussions with the universities, agreement has been reached with University College Dublin for the provision, organisation and funding of a 4 year part-time Masters degree leading to the National Qualification in Social Work.

The course is equivalent in content and methodology to the full-time programme and has been accredited by the National Social Work Qualification Board.

Internal surveys undertaken by the Service in 2006/2007 demonstrated a high level of interest from Probation Officers throughout the country. There has been an enthusiastic response in relation to applications for intakes in 2008, 2010 and it is likely that there will be a further intake in 2012.

The Probation Service is pleased to have had a pioneering role in developing the first part-time professional social work training course in Ireland. The interest and commitment of all staff to this new venture should be acknowledged. We look forward to the roll out of the programme for the first intake of students in September 2008.

### Student Placements

With the expansion of social work training programmes in the last decade the task of sourcing agency placements has become all the more demanding for colleges. The availability of a high quality workforce for the future is greatly dependent on an effective partnership between Universities and Social Work Employers. The Probation Service has a long and well regarded tradition of working with Students.

The steady commitment of our Practice Teachers over the years has ensured a regular flow of

placements for the various colleges and we need to build on this. There are benefits for all parties concerned. Supervisors report that the experience enhances their practice, affording opportunities for greater integration of theory with practice. This benefit also extends to the team who invariably enjoy the presence of "new" energy. And then there is the added value that many of these students, having clearly enjoyed their experience, return to work with the Probation Service. Promoting, co-ordinating and supporting student placements is a key priority within the Research, Training and Development Unit. Ursula Fernee, Assistant Principal, has recently taken over responsibility for this role. Ursula will be happy to hear from you in relation to any queries, comments or observations which you may have on the role of students in the organisation.

### Management Training

- 58 managers completed the Leadership Development Programme with Penna during 2007. The programme has been evaluated using the Balanced Scorecard format which looks at impact under 4 measures: cost, customer, people and process. This report will be available in the coming weeks. Building on the credits obtained from this customized event, 23 managers are now working to complete either an introductory or full diploma in management which will be awarded from the "Institute of Leadership and Management".
- 5 days "Learning for Leadership" training have been completed by newly appointed managers. Further events are currently being planned for the autumn.



### Farewell to LSI-R Trainer and Champion

In April, Peter Davis, Managing Director of the Cognitive Centre Foundation in Wales completed his last training event with the Service. The Cognitive Centre Foundation has an association with the Probation Service which dates back to the 90s. In 2004 the service decided to introduce a structured risk assessment instrument. A strong partnership was formed between Peter Davis and the Staff Training and Development Section in order to ensure the delivery of high quality, timely training and ongoing support to assimilate this process into the organisational culture. We trust that this partnership will continue with his successor in the Cognitive Centre Foundation. The last three training events which Peter conducted were for newly appointed staff who as always welcomed his enthusiasm and expert knowledge. It is with sincere appreciation that we mark his retirement from this key aspect of the training function.



### Eleven staff awarded IPA Diploma in Justice Studies at ceremony in Dublin Castle

The course in Justice Studies was introduced by Sean Aylward, Secretary General to give staff the opportunity for further studies and to get an overview of the working of the Department and its associated offices. I am very pleased to acknowledge the achievement of 11 of our staff who successfully completed this programme. All 11 were awarded their diplomas at a ceremony in Dublin Castle on 6th March 2008. The diplomas were awarded by the IPA and the ceremony was attended by Sean Aylward, (Secretary General), Noel Waters (Assistant Secretary) and John Cullen (Director General of the IPA). Congratulations to

- Leona Cawley
- Patricia Commins
- Maria Doyle
- Carmel Grimes
- Carol Long
- Darren Lynch
- Amanda Lyons
- Martina McHugh
- Moyra O'Sullivan
- Gerard Quigley
- Bill Sweeney

### Strengthening Families - an exciting interagency initiative

Young Person' Probation is leading the way for the Probation Service in this new Strengthening Families initiative. A number of programmes have been held to date with Cork soon to have its second programme. Programmes to be held in Tallaght and Portlaoise are also at an advanced stage in their planning. Staff are co-facilitating in Ballymun.

The Strengthening Families Programme is a 14 session family skills training programme designed to allow parents and their children build new parenting/communication skills that build up positive healthy relationships within families. These new skills assist and reduce high risk behaviours that may lead to substance misuse, depression, violence and aggression, involvement in crime and school failure in 12-17 year old children.

The course actively improves family relationships, parenting skills and teens/ younger children social and life skills. The curriculum includes three courses Parent skills training, Teens/children skills training and Family life skills training.

All the groups are run by facilitators who have trained in "The Strengthening Families Programme". Each leader has completed 13 hours of the Programme and has experience working with children and families in the community.

The programmes are being implemented in Ireland by the Regional Drugs Task Force, the HSE and the Probation Service on an inter agency basis. This is creating new strengths for best practice and inter agency links/communication.