

IN THIS EDITION OF PROBATION WORKS:

Message from the Director, Probation in Numbers, Irish Probation Journal, Learning Together Network Seminar, PPAG 10th Annual Seminar, Restorative Justice - Strategies for Change and more!

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Newsletter of the Probation Service (Ireland)

November 2019



Message from Director

We recently received the devastating disclosure that one of our former colleagues, now deceased, had been directly involved in the sexual abuse of children. This abuse was perpetrated by the individual in question in the course of his senior role in a national youth organisation, as well as in the context of his duties as a Probation Officer. It is of the utmost gravity that such offending against vulnerable children was perpetrated by a colleague with the standing, authority and power of a Probation Officer, and goes to the very core of our profession, as well as being totally contrary to the values and rights we hold dear. In addition to the individual questions arising, the knowledge now of what happened also calls into question how the Probation Service as an organisation protected children and how that child protection responsibility was failed in specific instances. I want to publicly acknowledge that we have failed, in the worst possible way, some children in the past. These children, and their families, have endured unspeakable hurts and for that I, as Director, apologise unreservedly. I also urge anyone who has been victimised by any Probation service staff member to notify and seek assistance from the appropriate authorities.



I believe we have progressed considerably, as an organisation, since the times when the crimes that have been brought to light recently were committed. We are now subject to the clear legal requirements of Children First; our staff – up to and including Director – are trained to know, understand and exercise their responsibilities in this regard. We have clear practice standards in place for working with children and young people. These, and other modern child protection provisions and our ethical and professional practice

standards, all serve to ensure that children in contact with the Probation Service are protected and that their welfare is paramount. Nevertheless, there is clearly no room for any complacency in this respect and we will continue to reflect on and learn the lessons of the past, so that we can and will do better in the present and future.

The next edition of *Probation works* will be published in January 2019.

Vivian Geiran

Director

Twitter: @VGeiran



Probation in Numbers



This month (November 2019) there are:

9,160 *Persons under Probation*

Service Supervision in the community;

1,616 *Prisoners receiving probation assistance in custody;*

2,320 *People on Community Service*

1,369 *Persons on various types of post-release probation supervision*

1,374 *Women on probation*

Irish Probation Journal 2019



Vivian Geiran, Gail McGurnaghan (PBNI), Lena Timoney and Cheryl Lamont (CEO, PBNI) at the IPJ launch in Stormont

The sixteenth edition of Irish Probation Journal was launched at the annual seminar of the North/South “Public Protection Advisory Group” in Stormont Castle on the 29th November 2019.

The Journal continues to provide an important forum for sharing theory and practice and increasing co-operation and learning between the two jurisdictions. There are a wide range of stimulating articles from authors in the field of criminology, in academia and in practice with

Supervision in the community, and

231 Persons under eighteen years of age under probation supervision in the community

The monthly Probation Service 'snapshot' statistical table for November 2019 is available at:

[Click Here](#)

Probation Service: Monthly Offender Population Report

| Caseload | Community Regions (Point in Time November 1 2019)** | | | | In Custody | Total (Persons) |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|---------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| | Eastern | Midlands and South East | South West | West and North West | | |
| Total | 4,616 | 1,917 | 1,534 | 1,693 | 1,616 | 10,776 |
| Of Whom: | | | | | | |
| Female | 952 | 286 | 273 | 263 | 72 | 1,448 |
| Male | 3,464 | 1,631 | 1,261 | 1,430 | 1,544 | 9,330 |
| Under 18 | 127 | 41 | 33 | 29 | 0 | 231 |
| 18 and over | 3,889 | 1,876 | 1,501 | 1,664 | 1,616 | 10,545 |
| Totals: | Total Caseload, in community: | | | | | 9,160 |
| | Total Caseload, in custody: | | | | | 1,616 |
| | Grand Total, national Probation Service caseload: | | | | | 10,776 |
| The following are the major community supervision categories. | | | | | | |
| | Probation Type Supervision***: | | | | | 3,622 |
| | Community Service: | | | | | 2,320 |
| | Supervision in the Community Post Release from Custody****: | | | | | 1,369 |
| | Community Return****: | | | | | 70 |
| | Life sentence prisoners on supervision in the community****: | | | | | 99 |
| | Sex offenders on supervision post release from custody****: | | | | | 176 |

*Regions
 Eastern: Dublin, Meath, Louth, Wicklow
 Midlands and South East: Eilieve, Leitrim, Offaly, Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary, Waterford, Wexford
 South West: Cork, Clare, Limerick, Kerry
 West and North West: Galway, Mayo, Sligo, Leitrim, Longford, Roscommon, Cavan, Monaghan, Donegal, Westmeath
 **Probation Type Supervision includes Probation Orders, Fully Suspended Sentence Supervision Orders, and Supervision During Deferment of Penalty.
 *** Supervision in the community post release from custody includes Part Suspended Sentences, Temporary Release Supervision, Community Return, Life Sentence Prisoners on supervision in the community and Sex offenders on supervision in the community post release from custody.
 **** Already included in the total of supervision in community post release from custody.

“Exploring Victims’ Interactions with the Criminal Justice System: A Literature Review”

Launch of Research Report

both national and international perspectives. Subject areas in this year’s edition include Mental Health, Restorative Justice, Victim Services, Human Trafficking, Data Analytics, an exploration of Culture in the Criminal Justice sector and other themes that will promote reflection and stimulate debate.

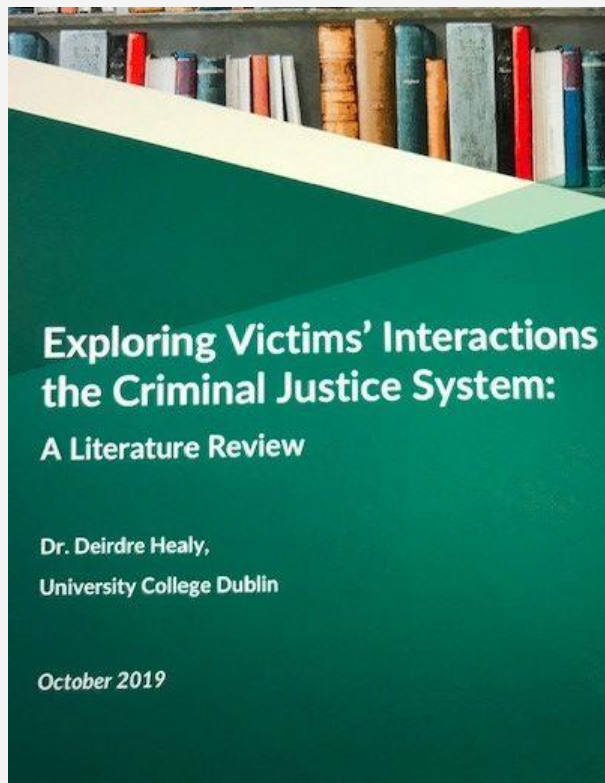
We hope that our growing readership and the increasing interest from a variety of prospective authors will continue in to 2020. Members of the editorial committee are delighted to respond to queries and support authors who wish to publish an article relating to criminal justice research or practice or those who wish to stimulate further reading by providing a timely book review.

The Journal is available on www.probation.ie and hard copies can be sourced from the editors.

Learning Together Network Seminar



On Friday 8th November, Dr Ruth Armstrong and Dr Amy Ludlow, founders and directors of the Learning Together Network in the UK led a seminar at the Sutherland School of Law UCD on their research and education project linking prisons and university education. Their award-winning Learning Together project enables



On 18th October 2019, the Department of Justice and Equality launched an important research report, *Exploring Victims' Interactions with the Criminal Justice System: A Literature Review*, by Dr. Deirdre Healy, Institute of Criminology, UCD.

This report is the first completed in a series of research projects commissioned by the Department of Justice and Equality Research and Data Analytics unit and builds on the Department's commitment, outlined in the 2018–2020 Data and Research Strategy, to support the development of more evidence-informed policy making.

In *Exploring Victims' Interactions with the Criminal Justice System: A Literature Review*, Dr. Healy conducted a strict and rigorous review process to summarise the most relevant, international, primary research studies conducted in the field. She has identified and reported on research studies published in English on best practices with victims in general, exploring victims' experiences at each stage of the criminal justice process, from the initial police contact, through investigation, prosecution, trial, sentencing and parole. The focus on studies conducted with victims with specialist needs such as victims of intimate partner violence, sexual violence victims is particularly welcome at this

people in prison and higher education institutions in the UK to study alongside each other in prisons in inclusive and transformative learning communities.

The design and setting up of Learning Together was informed by educational, criminological and social psychological research findings. Learning Together has been evaluated from the outset to ensure best practice and seeks to develop understanding about when and how learning is a positive experience and transformative for all involved.

Ruth Armstrong and Amy Ludlow described the theoretical basis and practical realities of developing and implementing Learning Together in secure prisons with University students and teachers and prisoner students. Showcasing the early success of the project, they showed a short film, *Learning Together in practice*, made by a prisoner film team as part of the Learning Together project.

Their research findings confirm that interpersonal relations are at the core of positive individual transformation, including aspiration, behaviour and lifestyle change. Ruth Armstrong and Amy Ludlow believe that their approach has value and potential for criminal justice and higher education institutions to work together to be individually and socially transformative in custody and community settings.

Vivian Geiran, Director of Probation the Probation Service, and Kathleen Lynch, Professor in the UCD School of Education formally responded to the presentation and led a lively discussion on the contribution that a Learning Together project could make in criminal justice and higher education institutions in Ireland.

For more information on the Learning Together Network, do visit their website at <https://www.learningtogethernetwork.co.uk/>

Prisons–Probation MoU Signed

time.

Exploring Victims' Interactions with the Criminal Justice System: A Literature Review provides a strong foundation upon to inform and assist the Department of Justice and Equality, and others, to develop policies and practice with victims. It is also a valuable resource for practitioners and researchers, a driver for improved services and a springboard for future research in Ireland on best practice.

The full Exploring Victims' Interactions with the Criminal Justice System: A Literature Review can be accessed [here](#).

PACE Conference



Pictured: President Michael D Higgins speaking at the conference.



Pictured: Vivian Geiran and Caron McCaffrey, signing Prisons-Probation memorandum of understanding.

Probation Service Director, Vivian Geiran, and Irish Prison Service Director General, Caron McCaffrey, signed an interagency Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Wednesday 20th November. The MoU builds on the Prisons-Probation Joint Strategy, which sets out the shared objective of building “a multi-agency approach to offender management and rehabilitation, from pre- to post-imprisonment in order to reduce reoffending and improve prisoner outcomes.” The MoU specifically provides clarity on the actions to be taken to underpin the contribution of the two organisations to prisoner sentence management and reintegration in the community. This framework of supporting actions include information sharing, and access to prisoners, as well as how specific groups will be prioritised.

**Restorative Justice in the
Community –Celebrating 20
years of Service!**

PACE a community based organisation funded by the Probation Service celebrated 50 years by hosting a conference in City Hall, Dublin on the 6th November last. The conference included the launch of the PACE 2018 Annual report. Two pieces of very insightful research were also launched by Ms Lisa Cuthbert PACE CEO. The first relates to the experiences of Life Sentenced men called “That’s my story, I can’t change it...” Living on Licence – An exploration of the learning the experiences of life sentence prisoners and the second was a summary evaluation into the three PACE programmes that focus on the reintegration and the rehabilitation of people with convictions for harmful sexual behaviour.

President Michael D Higgins opened the conference. Tom Gash, Author of *CRIMINAL: The Truth about Why People do Bad Things*, gave a keynote speech. Tommy O’Neill and The Kavanagh Sisters gave insightful inputs related to their personal stories. The conference concluded by way of Panel Discussion with Dr Mary Rogan from TCD, Vivian Geiran Director of the Probation Service and Fergal Black Director of Care and Rehabilitation at the Irish Prison Service.

The conference highlighted the valuable work carried out by PACE with regard to the re-integration of life sentenced prisoners and those with convictions related to harmful sexual behaviour. The conference outlined the challenges faced by the organisation in the delivery of these services and those of client group due to economic, social and housing issues. The Assisted Desistance approach was highlighted as an effective way to approach desistance by looking at the interface between criminal justice controls, social and individual factors to reduce risk of re-offending and future harm.

PPAG 10th Annual Seminar

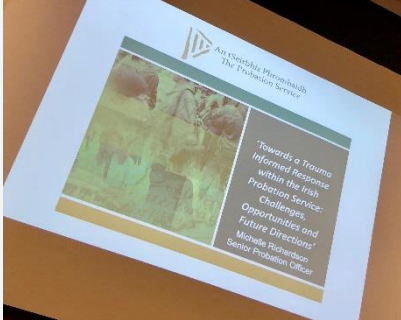


Pictured: Vivian Geiran (Director of The Probation Service), Alice Brislane (Chairperson of Board of Management of RJC), Emily Sheary (Project Manager) and Sarah Treacy (Senior Caseworker)

The Director of the Probation Service paid tribute to the role played by “Restorative Justice in the Community” as one of the earliest dedicated Community Based Organisation to engage in Restorative Justice interventions. First established in Nenagh and working with modest numbers, the project has now extended from Tipperary in to Laois and Offaly, working with up to 150 court based referrals annually.

The main aims of the project are (i) empowering victims, offenders and communities to come together to consider how to repair the harm caused by criminal offending through a process of restorative dialogue and reparation and (ii) minimising repeat offending by addressing the factors leading to the offence to aid the rehabilitation of the offender within the community.

Congratulations and appreciation was extended to Alice Brislane for her vision and commitment as Chairperson of the Board of Management over a number of years and to Emily Sheary for her role in the development and oversight of services. It was fitting that this tribute was made at the Second National Symposium of the cross European project to promote and support the wider implementation of Restorative Justice in Ireland and was warmly welcomed by colleagues and partners from across a range of agencies.



Michelle Richardson SPO presenting at the PPPAG Seminar in Stormont.

The 10th annual PPAG annual seminar was held on November 29th in the beautiful surroundings of Parliament Buildings on the Stormont estate, Belfast. The event was hosted jointly by the Probation Board for Northern Ireland and the Irish Probation Service in the Long Gallery. Speakers from all the justice agencies shared best practice on how to reduce re-offending by adopting a trauma informed approach. The presentations were excellent in content with plenty of opportunity for thought provoking discussion and debate about the issues through the Q & A and panel sessions as well as throughout the day's informal networking.

The 16th Edition of the co-produced Irish Probation Journal was also launched at the event by Cheryl Lamont, Chief Executive PBNI and Vivian Geiran, Director. This year the journal was nominated under the research category of the Confederation of European Probation (CEP) 2019 probation awards. Both organisations are delighted that the journal was highly commended in this category. The recognition and validation demonstrates IPJ's respected position in the wider criminology community.

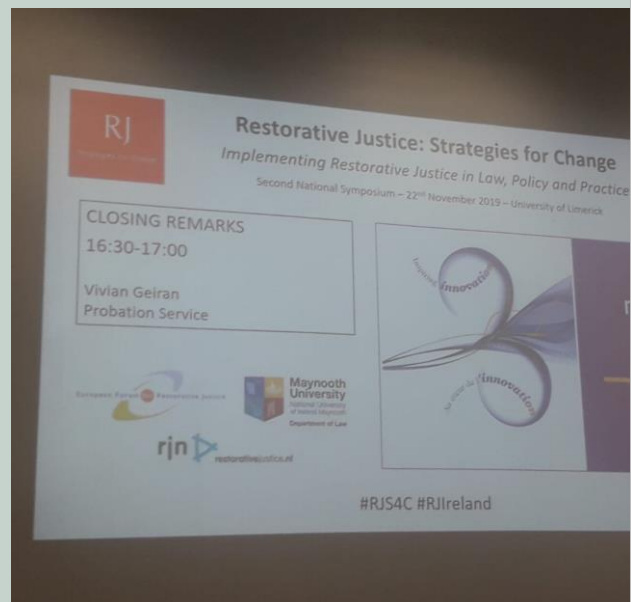
Themes in this year's journal include mental health, drug misuse, restorative justice and victims, mentoring, the challenges faced by the travelling community in custody and an examination of culture within criminal justice

Human Resources



HR in Probation are busy recruiting locum Probation Officers for vacancies in Dublin, Limerick and Clare, these interviews are taking place in November. We expect a permanent competition for Probation Officers to be advertised in the coming weeks to fill a number of vacancies primarily in Dublin. These vacancies will be advertised on our website so keep an eye out.

Restorative Justice – Strategies for Change



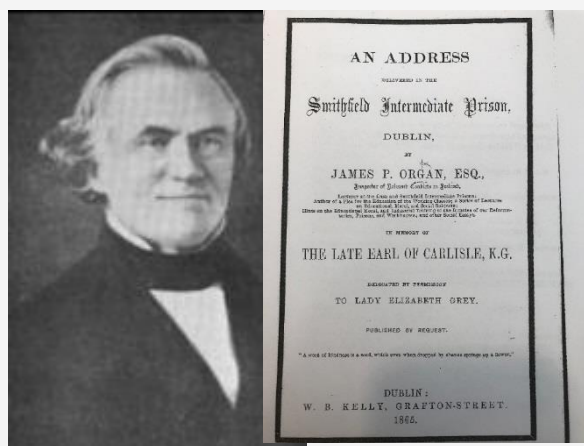
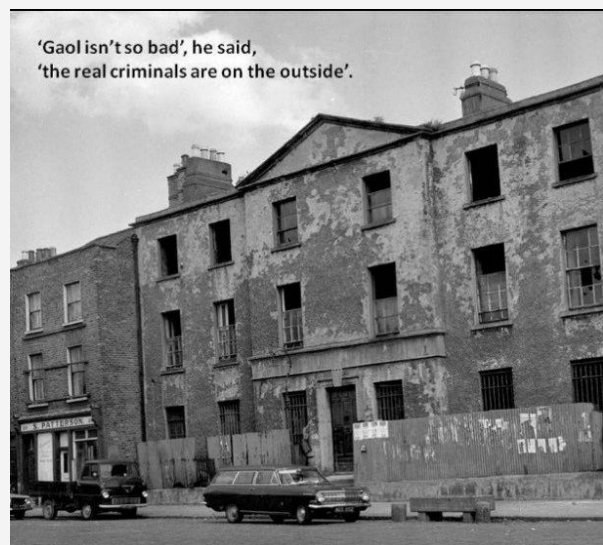
As part of the ongoing work of this cross European project to promote and support the wider and deeper implementation of Restorative Justice, a second National Symposium entitled "Implementing Restorative Justice in Law, Policy

systems.

Finally, a sincere and warm acknowledgement was expressed by Cheryl Lamont about the very important partnership she and colleagues in PBNI have had over the years with Director of Probation, Vivian Geiran.

Mirroring the cross border partnership and collaborative approach shared across both organisations, his support and friendship have been greatly appreciated. Vivian was thanked for his contribution to the cross border PPAG and wished the very best in the new chapter of his life post retirement.

James Organ



and Practice”, was convened in the University of Limerick on the 22nd November 2019. In collaboration with the Centre for Crime, Justice and Victim Studies at UL, the core members of the project brought together a range of International and National speakers to develop and expand on some of the key challenges that had been identified in the ["Collective Strategy for Ireland 2019–2023"](#) published earlier this year.

Following a warm welcome from Dr. Susan Leahy (CCJVS) there was an opportunity to hear the “story so far” from Dr. Ian Marder who outlined recent developments and possibilities in the pipeline for 2020.

Dr. Petra Masopust Sachova described the operation of Probation and Mediation operating under one roof in the Czech Republic. Dr. Aarne Kinnunen outlined the legislation of victim-offender mediation in Finland. Following coffee and lively conversations delegates heard from Clifford Grimason from HMPPS and Henrik Elonhimo of National Institute for Health & Welfare in Finland about the need for clear and coherent policies and the cultural and cross sectoral challenges for policy makers and for those managing operations. Moving on to Models of Service in the afternoon Karen Paus from Norway described the National Mediation Service with its emphasis on “Volunteers” and Becky Beard from the UK outlined the partnership arrangements and protocols that underpin Restorative Gloucestershire.

The day culminated in a “Roundtable” chaired by Ben Ryan, Assistant Secretary in the Department of Justice, joined by Michele Puckhaber (Crime Victims Helpline), Emily Sheary (RJC), Irene Gilmore (PS) and Caitlin Lewis (UL). Contributions from all the speakers provided a stimulating basis for further comments and discussion with the audience. In his closing speech Vivian Geiran reiterated a number of messages from the day, including “Get in Touch – Stay Connected– Consider what you can do and do it – Be the change you want to see!”

Pictured: Smithfield Prison, Dublin in the 1960s (top), Sir Walter Crofton (1815–97) (bottom left) and Smithfield Intermediate Prison certificate (bottom right).

Who was James Organ and why is there a room named for him in the Probation Service in Smithfield?

James Organ is a major figure in the history of penology, prisons and parole but is now largely unknown in Ireland though he still features prominently in American and international accounts of the origins of parole and post-custody resettlement.

Sir Walter Crofton, following his appointment as Director of the Irish Convict Prisons in 1854 introduced what has become known as the **Irish System** in the governance of Convict Prisons in Ireland the and management of convict serving penal servitude sentences. Following the effective ending of transportation to Australia as a sentence in the early 1850s there were serious concerns regarding how to manage the previously transported convicts as numbers grew rapidly.

Based on experimental and innovative work in sentence management on Norfolk Island Prison Colony and innovative systems in France, Germany and Spain as well as the United Kingdom, Crofton devised a system of staged sentence management, intermediate prisons and supervision after release in Ireland, now known as the **Irish System**.

In the later stages of their sentences convicts who had met behaviour standards in their sentence were transferred to Intermediate prisons at **Smithfield** and **Lusk** where they underwent further education and training for release, were tested on short releases or tasks outside of the prison and finally, could be allowed full release to employment under supervision.

James Patrick Organ, a Dublin adult education teacher, was appointed as lecturer at Smithfield and Lusk Prisons with responsibility for preparation for release and supervision of the released convicts. He was appointed as Inspector of Released Convicts in 1855, providing work placements as well as individual support and

Contemporary Issues in Criminal Justice Social Work



Pictured: Kim Mc Donnell (IASW Probation SIG Vice-Chairperson), Sarragh Mc Garrigle (IASW Probation SIG Chairperson), Aine Mc Guirk (IASW Chairperson) and Claire Mc Namara (IASW Probation SIG Secretary).

On Monday 18th November, the Irish Association of Social Workers (I.A.S.W.) Probation Special Interest Group (SIG) held their AGM and Conference entitled 'Contemporary Issues in Criminal Justice Social Work'. The conference, held in Probation Service HQ, focused on three primary themes; acquired brain injury, dual diagnosis and child-to-parent violence. Aine Mc Guirk, Chairperson, I.A.S.W. opened the day reminding the attendees of the social work principles and values which we work under as well as highlighting the support the I.A.S.W. can offer.

Aidan Trant, former Probation Officer presented his newly gained knowledge and experience from his new role as Medical Social Worker at National Rehabilitation Hospital. He focused on the area of acquired brain injury and utilised his experience of the Probation Service to offer practical advice when working with individuals with an acquired brain injury in a criminal justice setting. The second presentation, from C.A.R.M.H.A (Connect And Recover from Mental Health & Addiction problems), provided an invaluable service-user insight into dual diagnosis and the services offered by C.A.R.M.H.A. Liam O'Meara and Yvonne Moroney shared their personal experiences whilst Dr. Marie Oppeboen and Donal Ryan provided their account of establishing C.A.R.M.H.A., a community driven dual diagnosis service in Co. Tipperary.

supervision in the Dublin area. **The Irish System**, especially the Intermediate Prison, preparation for release and post-custody supervision elements, was extremely successful and lauded internationally. It was a major influence in the development of parole systems in Europe and in America.

James Organ published his lectures in 1858, wrote copious reports on his activities and, with Walter Crofton, published papers for meetings and international conferences. As the first Inspector of Discharged Convicts James Patrick Organ is recognised as the world's first official Parole Officer (and possibly Probation Officer) and 'father' of the parole systems based on his practice. James Patrick Organ continued very successfully as lecturer at Smithfield and Lusk Prisons and as Inspector of Discharged Convicts until his early death in 1869.

During the 1860's there was also a significant focus shift in criminal justice policy and practice in the UK and Ireland from reform to punishment. While the Irish System flourished internationally, it withered and died in Ireland following the retirement of Sir Walter Crofton in 1862 and the death of James Organ in 1869; its champions and leaders. Smithfield Prison, the first Intermediate prison closed in 1871.

2019 is the 150th anniversary of the death of James Patrick Organ.

An article titled *James P. Organ, the 'Irish System' and the Origins of Parole* by Gerry McNally will feature in **Irish Probation Journal 2019** to be published on November 29th 2019. The article will be available to read and download, for free, on the Irish Probation Service and PBNI (Probation Board for Northern Ireland) websites at www.probation.ie and www.pbni.org.uk from November 29th.

CEP Ceremony and Awards

On 23rd and 24th October 2019, the Probation Service with the Confederation of European Probation (CEP) hosted the **13th CEP General Assembly** at the Richmond Centre,

Last but no means least, Dr. Declan Coogan, Psychotherapist and Lecturer at NUIG gave a relevant and interesting presentation on 'Child-To-Parent Violence: Non-Violent Resistance'. Dr. Coogan is a champion of this approach in Ireland and he gave an overview of two of the eight session programme to address familial difficulty. Vivian Geiran, Director of the Probation Service opened the A.G.M. He outlined the value of social work within probation practice and encouraged attendees to continue to meaningfully engage in C.P.D. The three IASW Probation SIG committee members, Saragh Mc Garrigle (Chairperson), Kim Mc Donnell (Vice-Chairperson) and Claire Mc Namara (Secretary) gave an overview of their work over the last twelve months as well as future endeavours.

For any additional information regarding the conference or IASW Probation SIG, please contact Claire Mc Namara, Secretary – cxmcmamara@probation.ie,

We Make Good Pop-Up Shop



On October 24th We Make Good launched their pop up shop on 16 Fade Street, Dublin. The shop is now open and running up to Christmas, selling unique items and Christmas presents that support employment opportunities and upskilling for people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

North Brunswick Street, Dublin.

The Confederation of European Probation (CEP) is the established European organisation for probation and the voice and leader for probation in Europe.

CEP members come from the 47 Member States of the Council of Europe, and comprise organisations working in the field of probation, research and education bodies, researchers and interested individuals. Together they represent a unique network of knowledge and expertise about positive ways of working with offenders in the community to promote rehabilitation, reduce re-offending and make communities safer.

The CEP General Assembly meets every three years. It focuses on the policy direction and governance of CEP and is the venue for making important decisions for CEP. This year, CEP was honoured to welcome, as patrons, two founding members of CEP, Breidge Gadd from Northern Ireland and Jurgen Mutz from Germany. Jurgen and Breidge were members of the first CEP Board in 1981.

The CEP General Assembly elected the CEP Board and officers for the coming three-year period. Gerry McNally, Assistant Director in the Probation Service, was re-elected as President of CEP for the next three years with Annie Devos (Belgium) and Jana Špero (Croatia) as Vice-Presidents. Peter Palsma, Treasurer, (Netherlands), Iuliana Carbutaru (Romania), Lennart Palmgren (Sweden), Sonia Crozier (England and Wales), Maret Miljan (Estonia), Marta Ferrer (Catalunya), Lucia Castellano (Italy), Fergus McNeill (Scotland) and Pia Anderson (Finland) are Board members.



Pictured: CEP Board 2019-2022.

A highlight of the CEP General Assembly and Conference of Directors General of Probation was the presentation, of the CEP awards at the Conference dinner hosted by the Probation Service at the Law Society Blackhall Place on Wednesday 23rd October.

The CEP awards recognise celebrate outstanding contributions to probation in Europe and are presented each three years at the CEP General Assembly. Awards, this

We Make Good exists to develop the Social Enterprise manufacturing sector in Ireland. Their products are designed by some of Ireland's best emerging designers and made by people facing social challenges who have been supported to develop valuable skills and gain employment in their craft. Becoming a skilled maker means people can change the trajectory of their life and that of their families and communities. For some people in Ireland coming from a disadvantaged background, due to ethnicity, disability or time in prison for example, having a job is the goal, but not one that feels achievable.

Social Enterprise is business with a heart – greater employment through social businesses means a fairer, more inclusive society. We Make Good was born out of our desire to grow the social enterprise sector in our country, to create many more job opportunities for people from disadvantaged backgrounds, to acknowledge their determination and to embark on a journey together towards a better future.

Women's Aid

year, were made in five categories; Social Inclusion, Rehabilitation, Public Protection, Development of National Probation Services and Research.

Two projects submitted by the Probation Service achieved awards; the CEP Social Inclusion Award was won by the Social Enterprise project team and the CEP Public Protection Award was won by the STRIVE project, Ballymun. CEP Rehabilitation in the Community Award was won by the Probation Board for Northern Ireland for their Enhanced Combination Order project.

Full details of the CEP Awards and winners are available on the CEP website at <https://www.cep-probation.org/cep-presents-five-winners-of-awards/>. Features on the CEP Award Winners and highly commended projects will be included in CEP newsletters and on the CEP website in coming months.

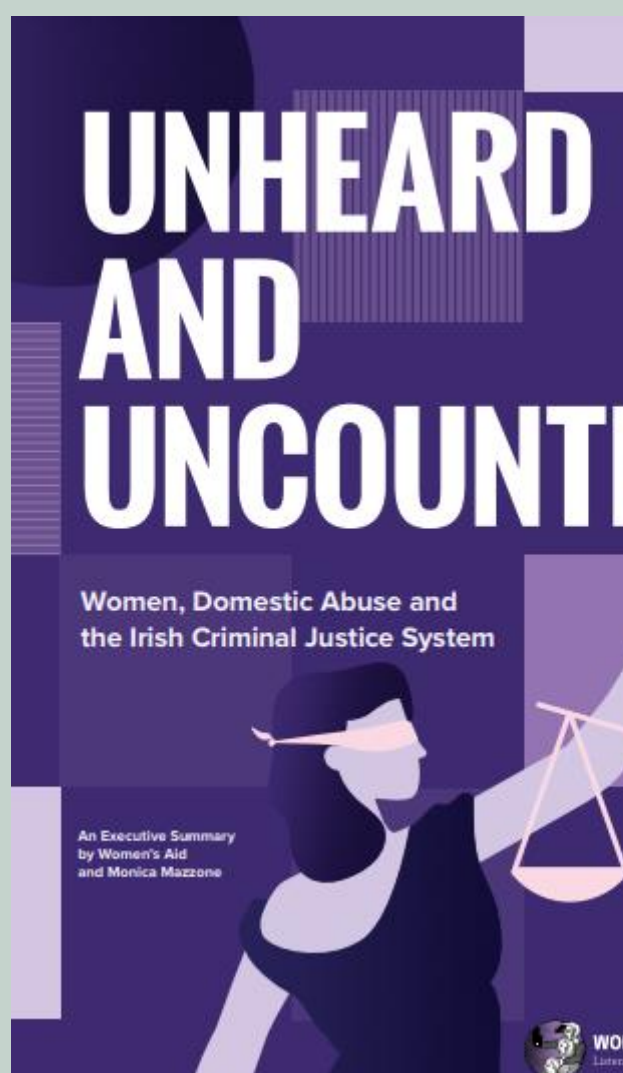


Pictured: CEP Awards recipients on behalf of the Probation Service, with Director, Vivian Geiran and CEP President, Gerry McNally, at last week's event in the Law Society, Dublin.

Also on the 23rd and 24th October 2019, the Probation Service with the Confederation of European Probation (CEP) hosted the **8th CEP Conference of Directors General of Probation** following after the **13th CEP General Assembly**.

The Directors General Conference is a bi-annual high-level event at which the leaders of probation across Europe to come together share experience, expertise and knowledge and to plan together for future developments. The theme of this year's Directors General Conference, was the "*The Purpose of Probation*".

The Conference featured stimulating and thought-provoking keynote presentations by **Professor Fergus McNeill** (*Purposeful probation: Resisting pervasive punishment*), **Annie Devos** (*What about ethics in digitalising probation?*) and **Professor Ioan Durnescu** (*From mass to deep supervision: transformations in the offender supervision*).



Recent Women's Aid published a research document *Unheard and Uncounted; Women, Domestic Abuse and Irish Criminal Justice System*. They sought consultation from women who were already in touch with Women's Aid through their Direct Services or Communications Department. The women who participated brought their experiences from their encounter with the criminal justice system. The consultation highlighted issues women faced when accessing the criminal justice system. When women were asked what gave them a sense of safety one answer was that the Probation Service was supervising the perpetrator increase their feeling of safety. More information can be found [here](#).

A special feature of the Directors General Conference was a round table discussion featuring **CEP honorary members, Professor Anton van Kalmthout, Emeritus Professor Mike Nellis, Professor Rob Canton and Mr. Leo Tigges** on the purpose of probation. The presentations and the round table generated a very lively and insightful discussion and valuable exchange of ideas and reflections.

In addition, there were excellent workshops on the selection and training of probation staff, Social Enterprise as a new way forward and the development of restorative justice in practice. Our colleague, Siobhan Cafferty discussed Social Enterprise in the Irish Criminal Justice Sector in a workshop.

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Safer communities and fewer victims through offender rehabilitation

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