

# Probation *works*

Newsletter of the Probation Service (Ireland)

September 2015

In this edition of **Probation works**: IASIO Biennial Report 2013/2014 published, Council of Europe Update, Offender Compliance on Supervision Seminar, 2016 Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellowship Scheme, Welcoming our retired colleagues from Northern Ireland, New appointments in the Probation Service, Victims' Rights Conference, CEP and EuroPris newsletters published.

## Message from Director

At the core of probation work is the professional relationship between worker and offender. Such relationships are the foundation for our interventions that foster positive change in people's lives. Three recent events, in consecutive weeks, in our Haymarket headquarters, underscore some of the critical relationships we create and which we build on in our work, and highlight how we are working to develop the effectiveness of those relationships.

The most recent was the launch last week of the Irish Association for the Social Integration of Offenders (IASIO) biennial report (2013-2014). Minister for Justice and Equality, Frances Fitzgerald TD, who attended the event, and other speakers on the day, emphasised the importance of interagency relationships and the contribution of the community sector in work with offenders. Earlier the same week (Monday 21st September), Dr. Beth Weaver of the University of Strathclyde, ran a workshop on cultivating offender compliance, particularly among high-risk offenders, with probation supervision. The issue of offender compliance is something on which we are currently developing our strategic and practice responses. A big part of that is how we can encourage positive engagement by offenders with supervision, rather than waiting until the relationship breaks down to take action. So Dr. Weaver's input will be particularly useful in helping us to do that.

One particularly unique event took place in Haymarket a week earlier, on Monday 14th September, when over twenty people currently on Community Service and Community Return programmes in the Dublin area attended a joint one-day workshop, run under the auspices of the Irish Red Cross, Probation Service, Irish Prison Service and City of Dublin Education and Training Board. What was unique about this event was that one of the two key workshop facilitators is currently serving a prison sentence, while the other is an ex-prisoner and former Community Return participant. The two facilitators did an excellent job and really demonstrated the power and effectiveness of investing in developing leadership among our client groups and the potential of peer-to-peer resources.

Encouraging compliance with probation supervision among offenders is multi-dimensional, and something in which we will be more successful to the extent that we situate our interventions in community-based resources, understand the dynamics of supervision and how it can foster desistance, and particularly how well we motivate and build positive engagement in our clients, through the quality of our professional relationships and evidence-based practice. The more we can harness and utilise our professional relationships with our colleagues, our partner agencies, and - crucially - with offenders themselves, the more effective we will be in offender rehabilitation, helping to create safer and fairer communities.

The next edition of Probation works will be published in November 2015.



## Council of Europe Update

Vivian Geiran attended the most recent meeting of the Council of Europe's (CoE) working group on penological co-operation, the PC-CP, of which he is a member, on 14 to 16 September 2015, in Strasbourg. Issues currently under consideration by the PC-CP include the role of probation and prison services in addressing radicalisation to violent extremism, revision of the European Rules on Community Sanctions and Measures, the collection of prison and probation statistics (SPACE I & II) in Europe and prison overcrowding. A summary meeting report will be available in due course on the [PC-CP webpage](#).

The next annual plenary meeting of the PC-CP, to which all forty-eight member states are invited to send representatives, will be held in Strasbourg in November.

## Minister Fitzgerald launches the Irish Association for the Social Integration of Offenders Biennial Report for 2013 and 2014.

The Minister for Justice and Ms. Frances Fitzgerald, recently launched the Biennial Report of the Irish Association for the Social Integration of Offenders (IASIO) for 2013 and 2014 at an event on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2015 in the Probation Service Headquarters, Smithfield, Dublin 7. The report sets out how IASIO, a community based organisation funded by the Probation Service and Irish Prison Service, has supported the rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders into the community in the years 2013 and 2014.



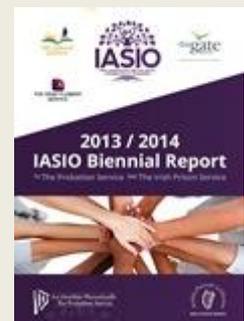
IASIO provides three specific programmes to support the integration of offenders, the Linkage Programme, which is funded by the Probation Service, the Gate and the Resettlement Service both of which are funded by the Irish Prison Service.

Launching the report Minister Fitzgerald emphasised the important role the community plays in working with offenders, supporting their rehabilitation, reintegration and engagement in a positive lifestyle saying ***“It is recognised that many offenders come from difficult backgrounds and have complex needs such as alcohol or drug problems, literacy skills, and social skills. These people require a broad range of support and assistance in the community if they are to make better choices. I totally endorse this “rehabilitation and reintegration” approach, which was identified by the Penal Policy Review Group as a core principal and significant factor in reducing crime.”***



The Report outlines how IASIO have provided support to over 8,800 clients in the last 3 years. This included placing 1,239 persons in training, providing 997 clients in further education, and placing 1,278 clients in employment.

Vivian Geiran, Director of the Probation Service welcomed the publication of the report which outlined the important contribution that IASIO make in the re-integration of offenders into the community. Commenting on the report Mr. Geiran said, ***“I believe that the reintegration and rehabilitation of offenders is at the core of creating a safer society for all. As Minister Fitzgerald outlined, the best way to reduce the number of victims of crime is to reduce the instances of crime. The successful reintegration of offenders has a direct impact on reducing reoffending and it plays an integral part in breaking the cycle of recidivism into which many offenders have drifted. Helping offenders make better choices has a measurable impact on the lives of all citizens and, I believe, the work of organisations like IASIO and the Probation Service makes a real and positive contribution to our society.”***



A copy of the IASIO Biennial Report is available on the IASIO website [www.iasio.ie](http://www.iasio.ie), or by clicking on the report icon above. Also following on from the launch of the Report there were a number of interesting articles examining the areas of re-integration and rehabilitation. These included pieces on RTE Radio's Drivetime programme with Mary Wilson (including an interview with Una Doyle, Assistant Principal Probation Officer) and a piece by Marése O'Sullivan and Sarah O'Conner for UTV Ireland. Links to the pieces are available below:

[RTE Radio 1 Drivetime, Friday 25 Sept](#) (piece starts at 2:07:15)

[UTV Ireland 'Second chance' jobs for released prisoners](#)

## Offender Compliance on Supervision Seminar

The second of three workshops in a series exploring the theme of offender compliance on community supervision was held in Probation Service Headquarters, Haymarket on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2015.

In this workshop, Dr Beth Weaver, Senior Lecturer from the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow focused on compliance in the context of supervising high risk service users in the community. Her paper, 'Cultivating compliance and cooperation with high risk service users on community supervision', proved to be very informative, from which some very interesting discussion followed.



**Pictured above:** Gerry McNally, Dr Beth Weaver, Una Doyle, Mairead Seymour, Vivian Geiran



The Seminar was a huge success, with a large crowd in attendance at Haymarket who were joined by colleagues who participated from our Cork Office via video link. The event is funded by the Irish Research Council under the New Foundations Scheme and is organised by the School of Languages, Law and Social Sciences, Dublin Institute of Technology in conjunction with the Probation Service.

The third seminar in the series will again take place in Haymarket on Thursday 22nd October 2015. Those interested in attending please forward your names to [mariaboland@probation.ie](mailto:mariaboland@probation.ie)

### Pre-Call Notice: Launching soon! The 2016 Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellowship Scheme

Please be advised that the Research Council is currently finalising details for the 2016 Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellowship Scheme. Further information and supporting documentation will be available on the Irish Research Council website once the final dates have been confirmed. In the meantime, the Council wishes to advise interested parties of the indicative Funding Call timings as follows:

**IRC Scheme:** *Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellowship Scheme*

**Proposed Call:** Early October 2015

**Deadline:** End of November 2015

The timings provided here are purely indicative, are the earliest likely open and closing dates, and may be subject to change by the Council <http://www.research.ie/scheme/2016-government-ireland-postdoctoral-fellowship>



## Service represented at second World Congress on Community Sanctions

Following on from the very successful first World Congress on Probation in London in 2013, the American Probation and Parole Association (APPA) and the International Community Corrections Association (ICCA) hosted the Second World Congress on Community Corrections between 14th-16th July 2015, in Los Angeles, USA.



**Pictured above:** Japanese Delegates with Willem van der Brugge, CEP at the World Congress on Probation in Los Angeles, USA.

The combination of events provided a week long packed programme of expert presentations and workshops presented as the Pretrial, Probation and Parole Supervision Week: A Worldwide Force for Change 12th-18th July 2015 by APPA and ICCA. The purpose of the World Congress is to bring together community corrections leadership professionals from all corners of the world to share effective practices, promising initiatives and challenges faced in providing services to those being supervised by justice systems.

Further details on the congress are available on the [CEP website](#) or by clicking [here](#)

### CEP newsletter September 2015 edition published

The September edition of the CEP newsletter has been published and is available by clicking on the icon.



## Victims' Rights Conference

The Centre for Criminal Justice and School of Law at the University of Limerick hosted a conference entitled 'Victims' Rights: An Agenda for Change' on the 11th September 2015.

The subject of the role, rights and needs of victims within the Criminal Justice landscape has been a focus for discussion over the past decade and this year will mark an important milestone in the recognition of victims of crime with the publication of the Criminal Justice (Victims of Crime) Bill 2015.

This timely Conference brought together a range of speakers who delivered stimulating and informative papers from legal, victim advocacy, justice and academic perspectives. These papers were complemented by a number of parallel smaller group sessions which provided the opportunity not just for wider discussion but to forge networks for greater cooperation in to the future.

The Probation Service was pleased to contribute to the parallel sessions with a presentation from Ursula Fernée, Victim Services Co-ordinator, which was entitled "Victim Perspectives in Probation Practice: The Change, the Choices and the Challenges". The presentation tracked the development of victim awareness/engagement in our work with offenders and the measures which are currently in place to support the Service commitment to a victim sensitive response in all our work with offenders.

At the close of the day there was an official launch of the newly named Centre for Criminal Justice and Victim Studies.

Papers from the Conference will be available in due course.



Pictured above with Ita Burke, Deputy Director Probation Service and Ursula Fernée, Regional Manager are Professor Shane Kilcommins from the School of Law, UL and Dr. Luke Moffett from the School of Law, Queens University Belfast

## Welcoming our retired colleagues from Northern Ireland



**Pictured Above:** Members of the Retired Association of Probation Officers Northern Ireland visiting friends and colleagues in the Probation Service.

The Probation Service was delighted to host our retired colleagues from Northern Ireland, the Retired Association of Probation Officers, last Friday in our Haymarket office. The group of 20 retired staff accompanied by Paul Doran, Deputy Director and Gillian Robinson, HR Manager, with the Probation Board Northern Ireland, were welcomed by Vivian Geiran, our Director. The Director provided the group with an update on the Probation Service in Ireland. This was followed by two presentations delivered by our staff on some of the Service's unique and innovative developments, including the very successful community return scheme.

## EuroPris newsletter published

The September edition of the EuroPris newsletter has been published and is available by clicking on the icon.



## New appointments in the Probation Service

The Probation Service has had a number of significant appointments in recent weeks. Mark Wilson, Probation Service Regional Manager, Dublin North/North East has recently taken up post, as Deputy Director of Operations, with the Irish Prison Service. We would like to thank Mark for his significant contribution to the Probation Service and to wish him well in his new post.

Senior Probation Officers Maeve Brett and Carmel Donnelly, have been appointed as Regional Managers with responsibility for the Midlands/South East and Dublin North/North East regions respectively.

Probation Officers Neil Mc Fadden and Anne Duke will take up posts as Senior Probation Officers for the Limerick City/County Supervision Team and the Sligo/ Mayo team respectively. They will all be taking up their assignments over the coming weeks.