

Probation *works*

Newsletter of the Probation Service (Ireland)

November 2014

In this edition of *Probation works*: North-South Co-operation: Public Protection Seminar, Community Return Evaluation Report published, Irish Probation Journal 2014 published, Probation Service in numbers, Upcoming conferences, CEP and EuroPris newsletters published, Probation in the Media, Council of Europe news, New Information Leaflet for Legal Professionals published, Meet the Numbers Man, Recent Appointments.

Message from Director

A number of review reports published in recently, have significant and cumulative relevance for all of us working in criminal justice in Ireland. The most recent of these, the Garda Síochána Inspectorate report on *Crime Investigation*, follows the publication in September of the *Strategic Review of Penal Policy*. Both of these reports, as well as the earlier (July) *Report of the Independent Group on the Department of Justice and Equality* (the 'Toland Report'), as well as other initiatives focused more generally on public service reform for example, will all have a deep and lasting impact on how we do our business. They will specifically inform the generation of our new strategic plan, currently nearing completion, as well as how we deliver services into the future. With renewed focus on improved governance, interagency co-operation and a focus on effective outcomes for citizens and customers, the reports referred to, and their findings and recommendations, are to be welcomed and embraced. They provide clarity on challenges that need to be addressed and standards to be attained, right across our system.



The seminar last week, jointly opened by Minister Frances Fitzgerald TD and Minister David Ford MLA, is clear evidence of the type of effective interagency co-operation in which the Probation Service is involved, not just within our own jurisdiction, but at a cross-border and inter-jurisdictional level. Crime is no respecter of borders and the type of close working collaboration evidenced at last week's seminar is an example of the direction and distance we need to go, to work better together. A number of the presentations at the seminar also pointed to the ongoing and future development of co-operation between organisations to achieve even more effective responses to offending and better outcomes for individual citizens and the wider community. I look forward to our continued close working, with our prison, police, probation and Justice Departmental, colleagues – North and South - in communities across this island, to reduce offending and future victimisation.

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

Vivian Geiran, Director

Sentencing Conference

Probation Service Director, Vivian Geiran will co-present a joint paper entitled – *Sent Down or Let Off?* – with Irish Prison Service Director General, Michael Donnellan at a conference – “Sentencing in Ireland: Stakeholders’ Perspectives,” in the University of Limerick this coming Saturday (29th of November 2014). The conference is organised by the Irish Criminal Bar Association and University of Limerick. Details are available [here](#)

Conference on Children Affected by Family Members' Imprisonment

Vivian Geiran will present a paper, entitled – *Whose Sanction is It Anyway: A Probation Perspective on Collateral Consequences of Punishment* – at an international conference being held in the School of Law, University College Cork, on Friday the 5th of December 2014.

The primary focus of the conference is on the extent to which the rights of children and young people are affected by parental imprisonment. The keynote address will be by Justice Albie Sachs, former Judge of the South African Constitutional Court. Additional details are available by clicking on the icon above.



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North-South Co-operation: Public Protection Seminar Held in Dublin

Minister for Justice and Equality, Ms. Frances Fitzgerald TD, and Northern Ireland Justice Minister, Mr. David Ford MLA, together attended and officially opened the fifth annual Public Protection Advisory Group (PPAG) seminar in Probation Service Headquarters at Haymarket, Dublin, last Friday the 21st of November 2014.



Pictured above: PBNI (Acting) Director, Cheryl Lamont, with Probation Service Director, Vivian Geiran, welcoming Minister Fitzgerald to the opening of the PPAG Seminar.

The seminar was attended by around seventy delegates, representing the police, prisons and probation organisations, as well as Justice Departments/Ministries, from Ireland North and South. The theme of the seminar was: *Working With and In Communities*, and featured presentations on Community Return, Reducing Offending in Partnership and the Joint Agency Response to Crime, Restorative Practice, working in communities and the Policing and Community Safety Partnerships.

COMMUNITY RETURN: A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY

A DESCRIPTIVE EVALUATION OF THE FIRST TWENTY SIX MONTHS (2011-2013)

Minister for Justice and Equality, Frances Fitzgerald TD, launched an evaluation report on the Joint Probation Service-Irish Prison Service Community Return programme at the Public Protection Advisory Group seminar, held in the Probation Service Headquarters, Haymarket, Dublin, on Friday 21st November 2014.



The Community Return programme is a novel and unique initiative combining unpaid work for the benefit of the community with early release and resettlement support. The programme is an incentivised scheme for the supervised release of qualifying prisoners who complete unpaid community work as a condition of their early release.

The evaluation completed by the Probation Service and the Irish Prison Service is based on the experiences of all 761 Community Return Programme participants between October 2011 and December 2013; the first 26 months of the Community Return Programme in action. In its development no equivalent or similar initiative could be identified anywhere in the world and none had been reported in academic reviews or criminal justice literature.

Crunching Numbers A view through the stats

The Probation Service in Numbers:

761 prisoners released on Community Return scheme between October 2011 and 31st December 2013.

89% of all those on Community Return successfully complete the programme.

9% of Community Return participants were recommitted to prison on a new sentence.

201,056 hours unpaid work completed by Community Return participants up to the end of 2013, as part of their early release programme.

€1,739,135 the notional value (at minimum wage rate of €8.65 per hour) of that unpaid work for the community.



(Source: [Probation Service Research Report 5 - Community Return: A Unique Opportunity](#) published on

21st November 2014, and available in the Publications/Research Area of the Probation Service website or by clicking on the icon.

Confederation of European Probation (CEP) - Latest Newsletter

The most recent edition of the CEP newsletter, published in November, contains details of upcoming conferences on Electronic Monitoring in Europe, York Resilience Programme, as well as prison workshops and prisoner education. A copy of the newsletter is available by clicking on the icon above.



Accepting the report from Probation Service Director, Vivian Geiran, and Irish Prison Service Director, Michael Donnellan, Minister Fitzgerald said: "This study highlights the positive impact on re-offending and resettlement of the Community Return Programme in structured post-custody release." The Minister went on to say that: "The evaluation is further evidence that supervised community sanctions can help in reducing reoffending, make communities safer and, with proper supports, positively reintegrate offenders back into their communities."



Pictured above: M Donnellan, Director General Irish Prison Service, Geiran, Director of the Probation Service, Ms. Frances Fitzgerald TD, Minister for Justice and Equality, Mr. David Ford MLA, Northern Ireland Justice Minister.

In the study almost **89%** had either successfully completed their Community Return Programme or were still working on the Programme. Of those participants released during the first year of the programme, **91%** had not been committed to prison on a new custodial sentence in the period up to the end of 2013.

The full evaluation report is available on the Probation Service website at the following link: [Community Return: A Unique Opportunity Evaluation Report](#)

Irish Probation Journal 2014 launched

The eleventh edition of the Irish Probation Journal was also launched at the North-South Public Protection Seminar.



Pictured above: Minister Frances Fitzgerald TD and Minister David Ford MLA receiving the 2014 edition of the Irish Probation Journal from Cheryl Lamont, PBNI (Acting) Director and Vivian Geiran, Probation Service Director.

Probation Service Appointments

Following their success in recent promotion competitions, the Probation Service is delighted to announce the following appointments:

Ailish Glennon has been appointed to **Regional Manager, West, North West and Westmeath Region**. Ailish has worked in a number of posts across the Service, including Senior Probation Officer for YPP, North East Dublin City, and more recently Senior Probation Officer for the Dochas Centre (Women's Prison) and Shelton Abbey Open Centre, where she had responsibility for driving the joint IPS/ Probation Service Women's Strategy as well as progressing our targets in relation to the Community Return Scheme.

David Kenny has been appointed to **Regional Manager, South West Region**. Until taking his appointment David was the Senior Probation Officer assigned to the National co-located SORAM office, based in the National Bureau of Investigation, An Garda Síochána, Dublin, where he worked as part of a national team with An Garda Síochána and TUSLA. Prior to this, David was the Senior Probation Officer for the High Risk Offenders Team. In both roles, David worked in promoting and supporting the developments of joint agency practice in the management of high risk sex offenders.

Sarah Jane Kavanagh has been appointed to **Senior Probation Officer, Wheatfield Prison**. Sarah has worked in a range of Probation Officer posts, both community and in the prisons. Prior to taking up her appointment, Sarah worked for a number of years in the Midlands Prison/Portlaoise team, where she worked as part of the Probation Service team contributing to a multi-agency approach to the resettlement of offenders. Sarah is one of our Probation Officers who was instrumental in developing the 'Living with Life' Programme - a programme designed to support Life Sentence prisoners manage their sentence.

Since 2004 the Irish Probation Journal has been jointly published by the Probation Service and the Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI). It is an authoritative and respected forum for those interested in Probation policy, research and practice, related criminal justice publishing articles and contributions by established academics, expert authors, post-graduate students, probation officers from Ireland and internationally.



Irish Probation Journal 2014 is the largest edition yet with many valuable and readable policy, research and practice articles on important topics that are important and relevant to practitioners, policymakers, researchers, academics and students in Ireland and across Europe. This year's IPJ has contributions, among others, on Integrated Offender Management; how it can work and what the challenges are, Probation practice in working with travellers, Irish prisoners in English prisons with a special focus on Irish travellers there, pre-sentence reports in the Children Courts, gender differences in needs identified in risk assessment, meeting the housing needs of offenders, practice teaching in student training and working in local communities; among a total of 15 articles.

There are times when we think the problems and challenges in criminal justice are new. This year's IPJ includes a memorandum written in 1941 by Evelyn Carroll, Probation Officer, outlining her analysis and proposals regarding the treatment, supervision and resettlement of female offenders. Many of the issues and concerns she outlines are still relevant and challenging for us today.

Irish Probation Journal has an important role to play in stimulating innovative thinking, providing a forum for debate and dialogue and promoting the sharing of good practice. The Journal provides a valuable opportunity for academics, researchers and practitioners to present their knowledge, research findings and examples of better practice. It offers a forum for continuous learning and development not only for authors and readers within the two services but also for the wider criminal justice readership and international colleagues.

Irish Probation Journal 2014, as well as all previous editions and individual articles, is available online on the publications page of the Probation Service website at www.probation.ie and the Probation Board for Northern Ireland at www.pbni.org.uk and on EBSCO host in colleges and libraries across the world.

Additional paper copies of Irish Probation Journal 2014 and most Irish Probation Journal issues are available on request by e mail to mcboland@probation.ie

Information Brochure for Judges, Lawyers and Court Staff

As part of our ongoing communications strategy, we have recently produced an information brochure on the work of the Probation Service, specifically for Judges, Lawyers and Courts Service Staff.



The document, which is intended as a resource for legal practitioners on the work of the Service, is available by clicking here: [Information Brochure for Judges, Lawyers and Court Staff](#)



Council of Europe - Council for Penological Co-operation (PC-CP)

The Council for Penological Co-operation (PC-CP) held its annual plenary meeting in Strasbourg On 5-7th November 2014. Matters considered included violence in juvenile institutions, prison overcrowding, children's rights, restorative justice in prisons, programmes that offer alternatives to imprisonment, and radicalisation in prisons and on probation. The meeting also discussed the SPACE I and II statistical reports on prison and probation populations in Europe – report in respect of 2013 due next month. A [summary report on the proceedings of the PC-CP meeting](#) is available [here](#).

The nine-member PC-CP, of which Probation Service Director, Vivian Geiran is a member, will hold its next meeting in February 2015.

Probation in the Media

Inside Probation, an 'over-the-shoulder' documentary on the work of the Service, aired on RTE 1 television to almost 500,000 viewers on the 6th and 13th October. The Midas Productions documentary, filmed over the last year, followed the work of a number of officers and clients and has helped to increase public awareness about the important work of the Service. As part of the promotional run-in to the airing of the documentary, the Service featured in a number of programmes and articles across a wide array of media platforms. These included:

Pat Kenny Radio Show (Newstalk 106-108 FM) - Interview with Majella Hickey (PO), Dorothy O'Reilly (PO). Broadcast on Monday 13th October.

Programme Link: [Click Here](#)

Time: Start: 16:00 **Ends:** 26:56

Irish Times Newspaper Article (Ruadhán Mac Cormaic, Legal Affairs columnist) - Interview with Majella Hickey, (PO). Published on Monday 06/10/2014

Published Article: [Click Here](#)

Journal.ie Webpaper Article (Dan MacGuill) - Interview with Nick Clarke, (PO). Published on Monday 06/10/2014

Published Article: [Click Here](#)

Evening Herald Newspaper Article (Clodagh Sheehy) - Interview with Nick Clarke, (PO) and Alan Hughes (PO). Published on Monday 06/10/2014

Published Article: [Click Here](#)

The Last Word Matt Cooper (Matt Cooper) **Today FM (100-102 FM)** - Interview with Alan Hughes, (PO) and Judy Kelly, (Programme Director from Midas Productions). Published on Monday 06/10/2014

Programme Link: [Click Here](#)

RTE Radio, Today with Sean O'Rourke (Sean O'Rourke) - Interview with David Williamson, (SPO) and Judy Kelly, (Programme Director from Midas Productions). Broadcast on Monday 06/10/2014.

Programme Link: [Click Here](#)

REPORT, Current Affairs Programme, Rai 3 Italian Television: Sinéad O'Connell (Senior Probation Officer), Terry Fox, Paul Cruise and Gerry Condon (Community Service Supervisors) recently participated in a programme examining the use of Community Service as an alternative to custody in a number of different jurisdictions, including Ireland. The programme was made for a leading Italian current affairs programme 'Report', and is due to air on Rai 3 in the coming months.



Follow-Up to TV Documentary on Probation

Following the recent airing on RTE TV of the *Inside Probation* observational documentary, the production company that made the programme – Midas Productions – undertook to donate €2,250 to a charity of our choice. We asked staff to come up with ideas of where this money should go, suggesting that it be given to an organisation working with victims of crime. The Dublin Rape Crisis Centre was the organisation that came through that process as the destination for the donation.



Pictured above: Brian Dack, Probation Service Assistant Director, presenting the cheque from Midas to Colette Schuz from the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre.

The Rape Crisis Centre said that they were “very pleased to have been chosen by staff to benefit from *Inside Probation*,” and that “this money will be used towards frontline services and help the many men and women who seek our help.” We commend Dublin Rape Crisis Centre, and all rape crisis centres and organisations providing services to crime victims around the country, for the invaluable work they do in helping to heal the trauma of sexual abuse and other violence.

Meet the Numbers Man

Aidan Gormley, Statistician

How did you come to be a Statistician?

After secondary school, I studied science with maths and computers in University College Dublin before starting work in the private sector as a quality engineer with Penn Racquet Sports in Mullingar. This job involved managing a complex manufacturing process which produced over 100,000 tennis balls daily. Use of statistics and experimental and research work was crucial in maintaining quality and cost efficiencies.

Over the next twenty years I went on to work for a number of large scale manufacturing plants before joining the Central Statistics Office in 2008.



Above: Aidan Gormley, CSO Statistician with the Probation Service

Where were you before you came to the Probation Service?

Before I started with the Probation Service, I was based in the Central Statistics Office in Rathmines, Dublin where I was primarily engaged with Balance of Payments statistics. I am always eager to broaden my knowledge base so when the opportunity for secondment to the Probation Service was advertised I decided to apply.

I knew very little about the whole probation process other than it involved working with offenders. In fact, if I'm to be completely honest, I probably would have thought that it was not all that interesting before I started working with the Service. However, I have found the contrary to be true, being involved in research and working on the statistics has proven to be very interesting. You get to see the people behind the numbers and gain a real appreciation for the way analysis informs policy, and by extension impacts on the lives of people in a positive way.

Tell us about your current role and your typical day

In my current role I am in charge of statistical reporting within the Probation Service. This extends from an involvement with the processes for recording information through to working with IT developers on the databases and development of final reports. My typical day is varied as I could be preparing a report or developing a new one. I could also be working on a last minute PQ or working with a researcher or intern.

Where would you like to see the Probation Service in 5 years?

I think the Service has made great strides in the last number of years and that the value of the work of the Service has become more fixed in the mind of policy makers and the general public. In the next five years, I would like to see probation firmly established as a real alternative to custody, because all the evidence indicates that this is the most effective way to reduce re-offending.

Tell us something surprising about Aidan Gormley?

A Meath native, I optimistically support Meath GAA, although I haven't had much to cheer about since the mid 1990's. I am also an avid Bruce Springsteen fan and have gone to many concerts throughout Europe in recent years. On the professional front I recently became a student again and began a distance e-learning course in Data Analytics in UCD.

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