

# Probation *works*

Newsletter of the Probation Service (Ireland)

November 2013

In this edition: Restorative Justice, Probation Service Research Published, Parole Conference, Public Protection Advisory Group Seminar, Probation in the Press, CJINI Report on Approved Premises Inspection, Anchor programme for women in Tallaght, CEP General Assembly, World Congress on Probation, Job Spot, Circles4EU.

## Message from Director

This is Restorative Justice week, and in recognition of this we have just launched our new Restorative Justice Strategy. The strategy, entitled: *Repairing the Harm: A Victim-Sensitive Response to Offending*, sets out our vision and objectives in incorporating restorative practice further into our work, and extending the availability of our Restorative Justice programmes, and specifically those delivered in collaboration with our community and voluntary sector partners in Tallaght and Nenagh.



As we come towards the end of 2013, we begin to reflect on another year of working to help reduce reoffending and the harm caused by crime. While progress has been made on a range of fronts, I recognise that there is no room for complacency. Research on drugs and alcohol misuse among young people supervised by the Service points to the persisting scale and spread of these problems, and how they impact on crime levels. The Probation Service continues to further develop our range of interventions and programmes for delivery in our work with all the offenders we supervise, including those impacted by substance misuse.

Interagency working, and particularly cross-border co-operation, continues to be high on our list of priorities. This co-operation, specifically in the North-South, cross-border context, was showcased through the annual Public Protection Advisory Group (PPAG) seminar, held in Hillsborough Castle on 15th November. This event, which was attended by Minister for Justice and Equality, Mr. Alan Shatter TD and Northern Ireland's Minister for Justice, Mr. David Ford MLA, was an excellent platform for celebrating and developing collaborative practice, and included inputs from police, prisons, probation and health service professionals, North and South. The theme of the seminar - *Partnership Working for Public Protection* - is one that we will continue to work towards in everything we do, as we approach a New Year of further challenges and opportunities.

The next edition of *Probation works* will be published in January 2014.

**Vivian Geiran, Director**

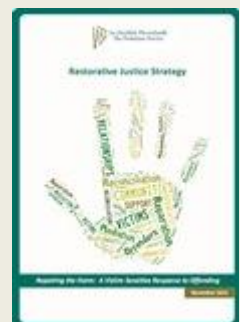
## Public Protection Advisory Group (PPAG) Seminar

The fourth North-South PPAG Seminar was hosted by the Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI) on Friday 15th November in the splendid surroundings of Hillsborough in County Antrim. The event was attended by our Minister for Justice, Alan Shatter TD, and by Northern Ireland Minister for Justice, David Ford MLA. The seminar, which was attended by police, prisons and probation practitioners from North and South, included contributions from a wide range of speakers, representing police, probation, prisons, health services and beyond, whose excellent presentations were both stimulating and challenging. Those presentations covered a range of our areas of operation, including mental health, work with children and young adult offenders, accommodation, and victim issues. The presentations will be available soon on our website. The fifth PPAG seminar will be hosted by the Probation Service in 2014.



## Restorative Justice

To mark Restorative Justice week (17-24 November), an occasion to celebrate Restorative Justice practice, projects, practitioners and volunteers, the Probation Service's new Restorative Justice Strategy, has been published and is available in the publications/general information area of our website by clicking the report icon above.



The Probation Service, Headquarters, Haymarket, Smithfield, Dublin 7. Tel: (01) 817 3600

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## Probation in the Press



Article 1

On the day of the (North-South) Public Protection Advisory Group Seminar in Hillsborough Castle on Friday 15th November, the *Belfast Telegraph* newspaper published two interesting articles; *Article 1* by Director, Vivian Geiran and Probation Board for Northern

Ireland Director, Cheryl Lamont and *Article 2* which centres on the theme of mental health problems experienced by prisoners across Ireland.



Article 2

## Anchor programme for women in Tallaght

The Anchor is a gender specific Programme working with female offenders which has recently started in Tallaght, Dublin. The programme is delivered by an inter-agency team drawn from three locally based organisations, the Tallaght Probation Project, WRENS, and CARP. The primary aim is to engage women and enhance their life skills. The network was set up to support the Probation Service in developing a dedicated approach to working with female offenders and, draws together prison and community based probation officers, community based organisations and services to look at how best to meet the needs of this group.

Referrals have come from a number of prison and community based Probation teams in the greater Dublin area.

## Confederation of European Probation (CEP) General Assembly



Pictured Gerry McNally of the Probation Service the newly elected Board Member with CEP President Marc Cerón

The CEP held its general assembly in London last month (October). At this meeting, Suzanne Vella, Probation Service Deputy Director stepped down from the CEP Board, having spent the past six years as a board member, the last three as Vice-President. Gerry McNally, Probation Service Assistant Director was elected to the CEP board thus maintaining an unbroken involvement by the Probation Service in the CEP, since its foundation over thirty years ago, when Martin Tansey, then Probation Service head, was a founder member.

## The Probation Service in Numbers

The Probation Service recently published a research report on drug and alcohol misuse by clients under twenty-one years of age. Key findings included:

Almost **9 in every 10** misused drugs and/or alcohol at some stage.

**Of every ten, six** had misused both alcohol and drugs.

**Between 12 and 15 years of age** was when they generally started misusing.

Substance misuse was linked to current/most recent offence in **8 of every 10 cases**.

**Over half** of those surveyed had attended some form of substance misuse treatment programme.

Further information in relation to the research study is outlined in the article below.

## Probation Service Research Published

The Report of our National Survey on Drug and Alcohol Misuse among Young Offenders on Probation was published recently. Findings include



information on high levels of substance misuse (see The Probation Service in Numbers above). Probation Service Research Report No. 3 builds on previous research undertaken in the past two years and delivers on our goal to enhance organisational capability in delivering excellence and innovation, and is available on our website by clicking the report icon above.

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### Circles4EU

Circles Of Support & Accountability (COSA, or Circles) is a unique and innovative community justice initiative for post-release monitoring of medium- and high-risk sex offenders in and by the community. Founded on the principles of restorative justice in Canada in 1994, the method entails that a sex offender (the 'core member') after release is regularly visited by three to six volunteers (the 'inner circle'), preferably from the local community. The inner circle assists the core member resettling in the community by stimulating pro-social behaviour and by providing support and practical help. However, the inner circles volunteers are also trained to recognize behaviour indicating increased risk with the core member. In that case they will alert members of the so called 'outer circle' that consists of professionals, such as probation officer, therapist or police officer, who can take whatever steps necessary to prevent further offending. Evaluations to date have shown that the recidivism rate of Circles participants is considerably less than expected for the level of risk presented.



In 2002, COSA was first introduced in Europe, in the United Kingdom, where similar good results were obtained. COSA was introduced to the Netherlands in 2008. In a project funded by the European Commission (called Circles Europe: Together for Safety), the elements for a successful transfer of COSA from one national context to another were identified. This formed the basis for a new project Circles4EU, in which COSA is further implemented in Europe with pilots in Bulgaria, Latvia and Catalonia. Ireland, France and Hungary have a 'looking over the shoulder' role in the project. Circles4EU is funded from the Daphne Programme. The First European Circles Conference was held in late October and was attended by Brian Dack, Assistant Director.

### Jobs Spot

Extern Ireland have recently advertised for two new posts Director of Business Development and Director of Safer Communities and Homelessness.



Extern Ireland is a charity providing services in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland in partnership with commissioners to a range of vulnerable and marginalised people including children, young people, adults and families.

These services are available in three of the four Health Service Executive regions – Dublin North-East, West and Dublin Mid-Leinster. Extern also provides programmes to the Traveller Community in the North-East and border regions.

Further details about the posts are available on the Extern Ireland website ([www.extern.org](http://www.extern.org)) or by clicking on the icon above.

### U- Casadh

U-Casadh is a community based offender programme, established in Waterford in 2008, offering support and assistance to offenders enabling them to make positive life choices to help their reintegration. Offending behaviour is addressed through a phased process, starting with key working to address priority issues, before moving on to education/training and then into enterprise and progression routes.

The Project engages with up to 200 individuals and families each year with access to appropriate education, training and employment a key to helping avoid re-offending. Employment skill and experience may be gained through U-Casadh's craft social enterprise



and a new Special CE scheme catering for up to 25 participants. Progression of service users is a high priority and opportunities are aplenty. U- Casadh are currently in the early stages of converting a building into a Progression Enterprise Centre through assistance from European Rural Development funding.

U-Casadh through continuous support and funding from the Probation Service, St. Stephens Green Trust, Waterford and Kilkenny Area Partnerships is a project that is developing rapidly. It can be proud of its many achievements, which received recognition in 2011, when they were the recipients of the prestigious Arthur Guinness Fund award.

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## Probation Service contributes to EU Project on the treatment and transition of High Risk Offenders

(Helsinki, Finland 28th October -2nd November 2013)

Representatives from the Probation Service and the Irish Prison Service recently attended the third workshop of the EU Project (JUST2011-2012 JPENAG2943) on European treatment and transition management of High Risk Offenders.

The workshop in Helsinki focused on identifying best practice strategies and initiatives for working with high risk offenders and how to achieve best outcomes for all in their return and resettlement in the community.

The final conference of the project on the treatment and transition of High Risk Offenders will present the findings from the project and will feature presentations and papers by wide range of experts and practitioners. It will be held in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (on the Baltic coast) at the beginning of September 2014.

To be included on the mailing list for this important conference please send a brief mail to the conference organisers; Tanja Klee at [tanja.klee@jm.mv-regierung.de](mailto:tanja.klee@jm.mv-regierung.de) or Barbara Hansen at [BarbaraH.Hansen@jm.mv-regierung.de](mailto:BarbaraH.Hansen@jm.mv-regierung.de)

For further information on the high risk offenders transition project please visit the project website at <http://jcn.pixel-online.org/>

## CJINI Report on Approved Premises Inspection

The Criminal Justice Inspectorate Northern Ireland published a report on the use of Approved Premises (premises used by offenders under supervision, to help in their resettlement and contributing to measures to help increase public protection) on 14th November.

The report is available on the [Criminal Justice Inspectorate Northern Ireland website](#) or by clicking on the report icon.



## Parole Conference



The Association for Criminal Justice Research and Development (ACJRD), with the Parole Board, held a conference entitled Parole in Ireland - The Way Forward: Experiences from Other Jurisdictions on Friday 25th of October in the Law Society, Blackhall Place, Dublin.

The papers from the conference are available on the ACJRD website at [www.acjrd.ie](http://www.acjrd.ie)

## Volume 10 of the Irish Probation Journal published

The tenth issue of the Irish Probation Journal was formally launched at the seminar by Professor Shadd Maruna of Queen's University Belfast. Shadd praised the journal and the important role it has carved out in contributing to the development of practice and research in the criminal justice field, on this island and beyond.



The Journal is available in the publications area of the Probation Service website <http://www.probation.ie> or by clicking on the icon above.