

## **PBNI Business Plan 2025-26**

### **(Year 3 of the Corporate Plan 2023-26)**

#### **Introduction**

PBNI's Corporate Plan for 2023-26 sets out four outcomes that we want to deliver to achieve our aim of: 'Changing Lives for Safer Communities'.

The outcomes are:

- Our people are supported through a positive and inclusive working environment to deliver an effective and stable probation service.
- We have a safer community through the delivery of an effective probation service.
- The Probation Service is sustainable, adaptable, and prepared for future challenges.
- We have developed partnerships to help make communities safer.

This Business Plan 2025-26 supports the delivery of Year 3 of the Corporate Plan 2023-26 across a 12- month period. It explains what we will do and what information we will use to evaluate if we have made progress towards achieving our outcomes. This plan has been developed following consultation with all managers at a Business Planning Event held in February 2025 and feedback from Board Members at the January 2025 Board meeting. It builds on what was achieved over the previous business year. Indicators of success against each of the 18 actions and underpinning measures outlined in the Plan will be used to help quantify the progress towards our outcomes. We will report progress on this Plan each quarter to the Board who in turn will be able to assess our impact using an evidence-based approach. This approach seeks to provide evidence to demonstrate that we are making a difference to people's lives and making communities safer.

#### **Values and Principles**

Our organisational values are key to our way of working and outline how members of the public, service users and staff can expect to be treated when engaging with PBNI. Our values are supported by guiding principles. Our values act as the foundation for our principles. Board members and staff also adhere to the 'Nolan principles of public life' which are the basis of the ethical standards Board members and those employed in probation are expected to adhere to. Social work staff also adhere to social work standards.

## VALUES

**Respect** - We will treat everyone with respect and dignity at all times and value diversity and differing viewpoints.

**Integrity** - We will act in a way that engenders trust with all. We will be honest in what we say and do.

**Openness** - We will encourage people to speak up and make suggestions about practice and we will be open about our decision making.

**Accountability** - We will be accountable for our decisions and actions.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

**Recognising and encouraging people's capacity to change** - We believe all people, given the right circumstances and support have the ability to change their lives.

**Partnership and Collaborative Working** - We value partnership and collaboration across statutory, community and voluntary sectors and where appropriate the private sector.

**Empowering and Innovating** - We are committed to empowering our staff to look for solutions and be innovative in developing policy and practice.

**Equality and Diversity** - We recognise, understand and respond to peoples unique needs.

**Professionalism of Staff** - We will carry out our role professionally adhering to professional standards and do our jobs effectively.

**Using Resources Effectively** - We will use our limited resources effectively and decisions on budget reductions will be tested against the need to maintain our practice standards, to mitigate the impact on our service users and the risk to public safety.

## PRINCIPLES OF TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICE

In light of the prevalence of adversity and trauma among our service users we wish to ensure there is proportionate support for both our service users and our staff therefore this Plan will also take account of the principles of trauma informed practice which are:

Safety; fostering psychological and physical safety in staff and service users.

Trustworthiness and transparency; across systems to promote a sense of fairness.

Peer support.

Collaboration and mutuality; a shared vision where everyone has a role to play.

Empowerment, voice and choice; service users as key stakeholders influence key decisions.

The recognition of the cultural, historical, and gender issues (including sectarianism) which impact on service users.

(adapted from SAMHSA [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Support Administration] 2014)

## **Operating Context**

Across the justice sector in Northern Ireland, all organisations are facing the challenge of how best to deliver services with finite resources, a range of competing demands and an increased complexity in respect of the individuals we work with.

Probation's caseload has increased, and service users have more complex needs. More people are presenting with poor mental health, addictions and trauma. In the context of legislative changes, we have seen an increase in our work specific to domestic abuse. This requires specific interventions, support for victims and multiagency working. Pressures on other public services, for example, mental health and housing are also impacting upon probation. This means that probation staff are having to dedicate more time and resources to assessing and managing risk and keeping people safe.

Our budget for 2025-26 provides an overall increased allocation which is welcome however given the operating context we need to carefully manage competing demands and ensure that the resources allocated are deployed effectively. We are committed to maintaining our overall funding to the voluntary and community sector who are experiencing similar budgetary pressures. We will do this while also ensuring that our funding is directed at those services that will maximise public safety and benefit PBNI's service users the most.

The increased allocation enables us to continue to stabilise the organisation and provides opportunities in some areas for us enhance our contribution to public safety.

The new Programme for Government (PfG) also provides new opportunities for probation. Importantly the role of probation is referenced, and the Plan acknowledges the need for capacity and resources to support our work. The PfG commits to strengthening the use of community sentencing. Over the last 12 months we have sought to raise awareness of the impact effective community sentencing can have in preventing further offending. Evidence shows that reoffending can be reduced through effective and rigorous sentences served in the community and with the right investment, community sentences are a more cost-effective alternative to short prison sentences.

It is therefore significant that this year the Department of Justice has provided PBNI with additional funding to further develop Enhanced Combination Orders (ECOs) which are an intensive and effective community alternative to short term prison sentences. This was an

area of work that was significantly curtailed because of budgetary pressures in previous years, and through this business plan we can now take forward the wider application of ECO, in another court area.

The PfG sets out several other areas that PBNl can positively influence, including the Executive's priority for Ending Violence Against Women and Girls. For example, earlier intervention and prevention work in relation to offending behaviour programmes and interventions for people with offences such as sexual offending and domestic abuse, to change thinking, attitudes and behaviours. There is good international evidence that these cognitive-behavioural techniques are effective in reducing reoffending and this is an area that we will continue to advocate for additional investment in the future.

The PfG highlights the importance of embedding a trauma informed approach across the justice system and Probation is committed to taking forward this approach to achieve effective, relationship-based practice, and build resilient, connected and productive people. The principles of a trauma informed approach underpin this business plan and its outworkings.

Throughout the last 12 months the senior team and Board have heard feedback from staff about workload pressures and structural issues, and therefore in this business year we will undertake work to understand current and future demand for services to support the efficient and effective allocation of resources. We are committed to carrying out this review in consultation with staff.

Finally, it is critical that we continue to develop our voice and influence within the justice sector and wider government. It is clear that we are having an impact, and our voice is being heard but we have a responsibility to continue to raise awareness with the public and our stakeholders about the contribution probation can make in helping to change lives for safer communities. Throughout the coming year we will continue to work in partnership to raise awareness and confidence in our work and demonstrate how good probation practice helps to keep communities safer and reduce reoffending.

## ‘Plan on a Page’



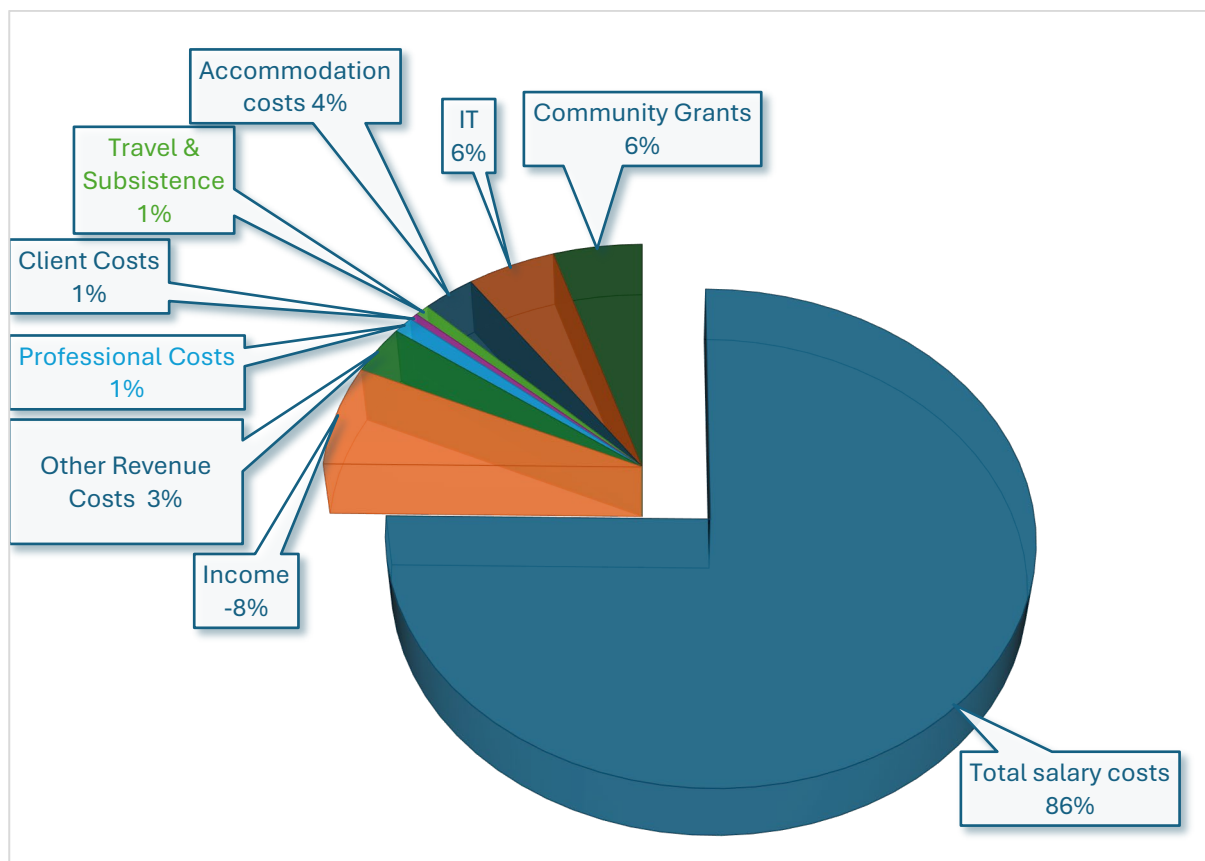


## PBNI Budget 2025-26

As part of the Budget allocation PBNI Resource DEL budget for 2025-26 is £24.3m, including £1.7m of funding for the PBNI ASPIRE and ENGAGE workstreams as part of the Executive Programme on Paramilitarism and Organised Crime. The breakdown of PBNI opening resource budget is set out below.

PBNI has also received Capital DEL budget of 1.0m for the year. The Capital Budget is primarily focused on IT enhancements, and expenditure in relation to the increased sustainability of PBNI buildings ensuring they are fit for purpose in both for flexible working environment and in terms of reduced carbon footprint.

### PBNI 2025-26 opening Budget by Expenditure Heading



Staffing costs account for the majority of the PBNI budgeted spend. PBNI staff are key to the delivery of core services. There is an additional draft allocation of £0.5m in year to allow PBNI to increase staffing and renew and roll out the Enhanced Combination Order option to a new court area.

There is £2.3m budget allocated to maintain PBNI IT provision and accommodation to assist with the efficient delivery of probation practice, working towards development of a trauma informed approach. There is also £1.2m of funding for community & voluntary sector to provide additional services and enhance partnership working to support service users achieve better outcomes and support their rehabilitation.

## BUSINESS PLAN 2025-26

<b>Outcome 1: Our people are supported through a positive and inclusive working environment to deliver an effective and stable probation service.</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Indicator and Underpinning Measures</b>	<b>Lead</b>
We will implement a management development programme that further supports the development of succession planning, and compassionate leadership.	Indicator: Our people feel valued and supported. Measures: Staff attrition rate; evaluation of management development programme; feedback from staff/managers.	<b>Head of Human Resources</b>
We will undertake work to understand current and future demand for services to support the efficient and effective allocation of resources.	Indicator: Increased efficiency/ Our people feel valued and supported. Measure: Staff attrition rate. Refreshed approach to management of workload.	<b>Directors of Operations</b>
We will develop and promote a strong attendance culture to support a reduction in sickness absence and further build organisational stability.	Indicator: Our people feel valued and supported. Measure: Reduction in staff sickness rates in comparison to 2023-24	<b>Head of Human Resources</b>

**Outcome 2: We have a safer community through the delivery of high-quality, effective probation services.**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Indicators and Underpinning Measures</b>	<b>Lead</b>
We will support the work to develop an Adult Reoffending and Desistance Strategy for Northern Ireland.	Indicator: Enhanced effectiveness in probation practice Measure: Involvement in departmental strategy documents	<b>Directors of Operations</b>
We will review how we deliver probation services, our structures and staffing to optimise the best use of available resources and build greater organisational resilience to address the current and future needs of the people we work with.	Indicator: Enhanced organisational resilience. Measure: Reduction in staff sickness rates; low staff attrition levels.	<b>Directors of Operations</b>
We will develop a PBNi strategy for delivering services to Women and Girls and deliver the associated year 1 action plan.	Indicator: Enhanced effectiveness in probation practice Measure: Approved strategy document; and implementation of agreed actions.	<b>Directors of Operations</b>
We will expand the availability of Enhanced Combination Orders to a further court area.	Indicator: Enhanced effectiveness in probation practice Measure: Expansion of ECO availability. Uptake from judiciary.	<b>Directors of Operations</b>
We will review our approach of the delivery of offending behaviour programmes (OBPs) in	Indicator: Enhanced effectiveness in probation practice Measure: Agreed position on OBPs: content, training and management arrangements	<b>Directors of Operations</b>



PBNI to include delivery models and the suite of programmes.		
We will refresh and further develop our service user strategy recognising the importance of service user voice, both victim and perpetrator.	Indicator: Increased service user involvement Measure: Evidence of the service user voice in all areas of work	<b>Directors of Operations</b>

<b>Outcome 3: The Probation Service is sustainable, adaptable and prepared for future challenges.</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Indicators and Underpinning Measures</b>	<b>Lead</b>
We will develop a priority-based budget exercise to support the upcoming Spending Review process to support a stable probation service.	Indicator: Increased efficiency of PBNI Measure: Delivery of priority-based budget	<b>Head of Finance</b>
We will implement findings of phase 1 Belfast Estate Review informed by our work to support a trauma informed environment for service users and our staff.	Indicator: Increased efficiency of PBNI Measure: Delivery of actions from the Estates Review	<b>Head of Finance</b>
We will develop a Sustainability Plan and Publication of a Carbon Reduction Plan.	Indicator: Increased efficiency of PBNI Measure: Publication of both plans	<b>Head of Finance</b>
We will onboard to Causeway (Phase 1).	Indicator: Increased efficiency of PBNI Measure: Successful onboarding achieved	<b>Head of IT</b>

Outcome 4: We have developed partnerships to help make communities safer		
Action	Indicators and Underpinning Measures	Lead
We will implement year 3 of the Communications and Engagement Strategy and bring a focus to engagement with Universities and Further Education Colleges to help raise awareness amongst students of the work probation does as well as providing communications to support recruitment.	Indicator: Year 3 of the communications and engagement strategy is implemented Measure: Rates of awareness measured.	Head of Communications
We will develop a new Corporate Plan for the organisation.	Indicator: Corporate Plan is developed. Measure: High number of Staff and Partners consulted on development of Corporate Plan.	Head of Communications
We will further develop partnerships with PCSPs, the CVS and others to support service delivery, in identified areas such as housing support.	Indicator: Development of partnerships Measure: Partnerships to support service delivery in place.	Directors of Operations
We will work in partnership to support implementation of the <a href="#">Strategic Framework</a> to End Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG).	Indicator: Contribution to EVAWG strategy Measure: Delivery of agreed actions	Directors of Operations

We will implement the PBNI Restorative Justice Strategy and play a key role in supporting delivery of the DoJ Adult Restorative Justice Strategy.	Indicator: Implementation of PBNI RJ strategy Measure: Examples and evidence of restorative practice in PBNI core work.	<b>Directors of Operations</b>
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