

CORPORATE PLAN 2026-29

CONSULTATION

FOREWORD FROM BOARD CHAIR

I am delighted to present the Probation Board for Northern Ireland's (PBNI) Draft Corporate Plan 2026-29 for public consultation.

The current Board was appointed in March 2025 and is tasked with setting the strategic direction for the organisation for the next three years.

This draft plan has been developed following a workshop attended by board members, the senior leadership team, and some of our key partners, including the Director General of the Northern Ireland Prison Service, the Criminal Justice Inspector for Northern Ireland, Director of Safer Communities in the Department of Justice and a representative from the Victims of Crime Commission. It was also important that we had representation from our trade union colleagues to provide reflections from their staff membership. The workshop, facilitated by Professor Duncan Morrow from Ulster University, provided a valuable opportunity for us to collectively consider our operating environment, including the risks we face and the opportunities to grow our services as we plan for the future.



The four strategic priorities we have identified are:

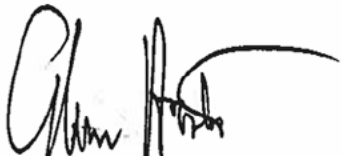
- 1.** Develop the quality of our practice and delivery of core statutory functions, taking account of best practice.
- 2.** Develop our practice, systems and processes in response to emerging needs and priorities.
- 3.** Empower our people, develop our organisational culture and lead a trauma informed approach.
- 4.** Enhance external relationships and partnerships.

Since taking up post I have had the opportunity to meet with a range of staff and key partners. I am incredibly impressed by the professionalism, dedication and commitment of all who work for and with Probation. The environment in which our staff operate is not an easy one. Working directly with people who have committed crimes, including those that have caused harm to individuals and communities, is a difficult and demanding job. Supporting people to make positive choices and holding them to account when they don't, takes a particular set of skills and values. This relies on our staff believing that people have the capacity to change but recognising that some people will struggle to do so.

We must always look for the positives in every situation and do the best we can even in the most difficult circumstances.

The consultation will be open for 12 weeks and during that time we hope to hear from partners, interested parties, staff, trade union representatives, and service users about whether the strategic priorities adequately reflect the future direction of the organisation.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read this consultation document and I hope that you will be inspired to provide feedback in respect of our future strategic direction.



GLENN HOUSTON
BOARD CHAIR

INTRODUCTION FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Since PBNI's last Corporate Plan the operating environment has changed. The Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly are in place, and we have a Programme for Government (PfG) that sets out the Executive's priorities for the remainder of this mandate. Many of the themes within the PfG relate directly and indirectly to the services we deliver.

However, for Probation to be able to deliver on the commitments in the PfG and this Corporate Plan it is essential we have the resources in place and that the organisation is structured to deliver its services effectively.



A focus of the new Corporate Plan will be on developing the quality of our practice and delivery of core statutory functions, taking account of best practice. In 2024 Criminal Justice Inspection carried out a Follow-Up review of an inspection on Probation Practice and found improvements had been made to develop and improve the quality of its work to assess and manage the risk of harm presented by men and women under probation supervision to others in the community. This is an area that requires continued focus to sustain improvements.

A further priority is to develop our practice, systems and processes in response to emerging needs and priorities. We know that staff are dealing with an increasing number of people with poor mental health, trauma and addictions and that there are increasing pressures in being able to access suitable accommodation and employment opportunities. These wider societal issues are impacting upon the work of probation, and we need to address them in order to effectively tackle the causes of offending and prevent further reoffending.

Changes in crime trends mean that the type of offences staff are dealing with are evolving. Police statistics show that there has been an increasing trend in violence against the person and sexual offences. Legislative and policy developments in relation to violence against women and girls including offences of coercive control and non-fatal strangulation have also led to an increase in the prevalence of domestic abuse on probation's caseload.

Increased training including the development of professional curiosity to enable staff to recognise and respond to emerging risks and needs is a continuing priority. We want to ensure our people can effectively carry out their roles across all areas of the organisation; and that our culture is one where staff feel valued and safe in practice.

Through the implementation of a trauma informed approach, we aim to embed a culture underpinned by the values of transparency, supportiveness, learning, listening, co-operation, kindness and compassion.

Importantly we need to ensure that people have awareness and confidence in the work of probation. Our fourth priority is therefore to enhance our external relationships and partnerships with the judiciary, legislators, community representatives, the wider public and with the people who use our service. We have a significant role to play in developing our partnerships with others to support a strategic approach to reoffending and explaining the value that community sentences bring and the impact that probation can have on helping people to change their lives.

We look forward to your feedback on this Corporate Plan.



AMANDA STEWART
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

CASELOAD

ON 31 MARCH 2025

 **PBNI**

5,743

ORDERS/LICENSES
SUPERVISED BY
PBNI INVOLVING:

4,107

SERVICE USERS


**CASELOAD
SUPERVISED**

37.3%
DETERMINE
CUSTODIAL
SENTENCES

28.4%
PROBATION
ORDERS



89.9%

**MALES ACCOUNTED
FOR THE MAJORITY
OF SERVICE USERS
BEING SUPERVISED**



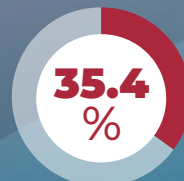
28.7%

OF SERVICE USERS
BEING SUPERVISED
WERE IDENTIFIED
AS HIGH RISK UNDER
ASSESSMENT, CASE
MANAGEMENT
AND EVALUATION
SYSTEM (ACE)



4.4%

OF SERVICE USERS
(182 SERVICE
USERS) BEING
SUPERVISED
WERE ASSESSED
AS SIGNIFICANT
RISK OF SERIOUS
HARM TO OTHERS
(SROSH)



MORE THAN

1/3

OF SERVICE USERS
BEING SUPERVISED
WERE AGED
30 TO 39

661

SERVICE
USERS

**PUBLIC
PROTECTION
ARRANGEMENTS
FOR NI (PPANI)**

16.1%
OF SERVICE
USERS BEING
SUPERVISED

BETWEEN 1 APRIL 2024 AND 31 MARCH 2025



387

NEW VICTIMS

REGISTERED
WITH PBNI

6,397
REPORTS

COMPLETED 

Excluding letters
to the court

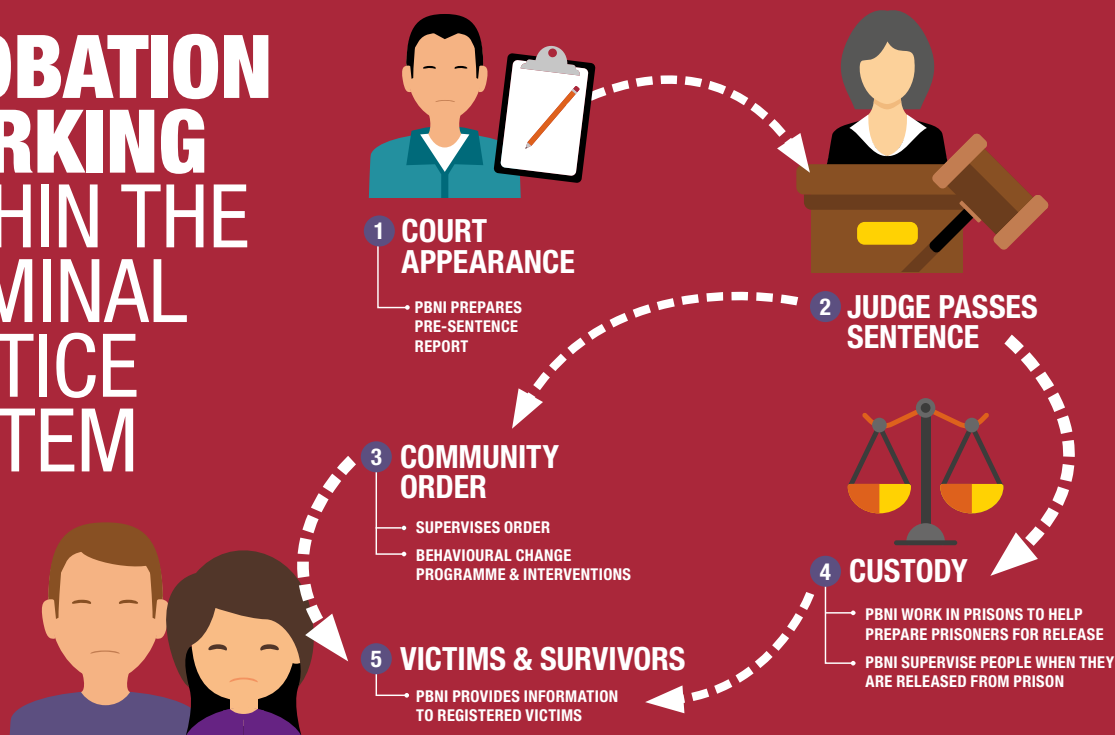
 **PBNI** Probation Board
for Northern Ireland

HOW PROBATION CHANGES LIVES FOR SAFER COMMUNITIES

The role of probation is to reduce reoffending and help make communities safer. We do this by assessing and managing risk and tackling the root causes of offending behaviour and provide a problem-solving approach. We also have a role in prevention and intervening as early as possible to prevent people continuing in the cycle of offending behaviour. We support and hold people to account to help them change their lives and become rehabilitated and reintegrated into local communities. There are a number of touch points where probation works alongside partners to deliver services.

- We provide pre-sentence reports to assist the Judiciary to make decisions.
- We supervise sentences imposed by the Judiciary that must be served in the community and we supervise licences imposed when someone leaves prison.
- We work in prisons, preparing prisoners for release subject to licences.
- We work with victims of crime through the Victim Information Scheme.

PROBATION WORKING WITHIN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM



Our probation officers are social workers who are qualified and trained in risk assessment and management which are essential skills in this complex and challenging work. We also have staff who are psychologists, community service officers, probation services officers, and administrative staff in operational teams. We also employ finance, communications, human resources and IT staff to support front line staff and carry out our statutory duties. Every member of staff contributes to changing lives for safer communities.

OUR AIM, VISION AND VALUES

OUR AIM

PBNI's aim is:

'changing lives for safer communities'.

OUR VISION

We will reduce reoffending by tackling the root causes of offending behaviour and rehabilitating people and reintegrating them into communities. We will be collaborative and transformative to reduce the number of victims of crime and build safer communities.

OUR VALUES AND GUIDING 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.

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 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 people's 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.

BECOMING TRAUMA INFORMED

We are on a journey to becoming Trauma Informed.

We will be guided by the following six principles:

1. Safety
2. Trustworthy & transparent
3. Peer support
4. Collaboration & mutuality
5. Empowerment & choice
6. Cultural, historical, gender issues.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE LAST CORPORATE PLAN (2023-2026)

HOW MUCH WE DID



WE SUPPORTED AND PROVIDED INFORMATION TO

710 VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS

WHO HAVE REGISTERED WITH THE PBNI VICTIM INFORMATION SCHEME.



WE DEVELOPED A **FAIR AND MODERN PAY STRUCTURE** TO HELP STABILISE THE ORGANISATION.

WE HAVE ESTABLISHED

A NEW STAFF ENGAGEMENT FORUM

TO LISTEN TO STAFF VIEWS AND HELP BUILD A POSITIVE WORKING CULTURE.



A NEW STRATEGY FOR WOMEN WHO HAVE OFFENDED HAS BEEN

APPROVED ✓

ENGAGEMENT SURVEY



 **PBNI** Probation Board
for Northern Ireland

WE HAVE COMMITTED TO CONDUCTING AND PUBLISHING **AN ANNUAL STAFF ENGAGEMENT SURVEY.**

WE PROVIDED

12,818
reports

to assist Judges make sentencing decisions.



WE HAVE ENHANCED OUR EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT AND **PRODUCED A NEW SHORT FILM** ABOUT THE WORK OF PROBATION.



WE CONTINUED OUR PARTNERSHIP WORK ACROSS THESE ISLANDS AND WITHIN EUROPE TO **SHARE BEST PRACTICE AND KEEP PEOPLE SAFER.**

SURVEY



 **PBNI** Probation Board
for Northern Ireland

WE CARRIED OUT **A SURVEY OF ACCOMMODATION NEEDS OF SERVICE USERS**

TO BETTER UNDERSTAND HOW WE CAN WORK COLLABORATIVELY TO ADDRESS THE DIFFICULTIES IN ACCESSING SERVICE

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE LAST CORPORATE PLAN (2023-2026)

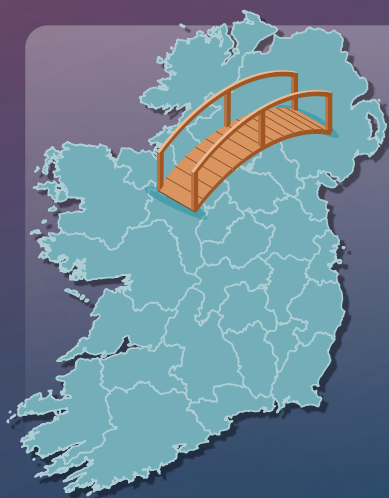
HOW MUCH WE DID

WE HAVE SETUP AN INTERNAL TRAUMA AND RESILIENCE IMPLEMENTATION GROUP AND APPOINTED A TRAUMA IMPLEMENTATION CO-ORDINATOR TO DRIVE FORWARD OUR TRAUMA INFORMED APPROACH.



**£4,750,000
FUNDING**

TO OVER 70 COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS
TO ASSIST PROBATION
DELIVER THEIR CORE TASK OF
REDUCING OFFENDING.



WE DEVELOPED AND DELIVERED WITH OUR PARTNERS IN THE PROBATION SERVICE A NEW CROSS-BORDER LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME.

WE HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF



THE NI EXECUTIVE'S STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS (EVAWG)



WE PROVIDED STAFF TO ALL THREE PRISONS IN NI TO ASSIST IN THE RESETTLEMENT OF THOSE LEAVING CUSTODY AND RETURNING TO THE COMMUNITY.

WE CONTRIBUTED TO A RANGE OF PARTNERSHIPS INCLUDING:

-  **THE PUBLIC PROTECTION ARRANGEMENTS NI**
-  **PCSPS**
-  **MULTI AGENCY RISK ASSESSMENT CONFERENCES**
-  **DOMESTIC HOMICIDE REVIEWS**

 **PBNI** Probation Board
for Northern Ireland

THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE INSPECTION'S FOLLOW UP REVIEW ON PROBATION PRACTICE PUBLISHED IN 2024 FOUND IMPROVEMENTS TO ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AND TRUSTED RELATIONSHIPS.

DRAFT STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Looking ahead to the next 3-year period, the Board together with the senior staff have identified a number of priorities to support the achievement of our organisational aim of ‘Changing Lives for Safer Communities’. These are shaped by the priorities identified in the PfG and the Department of Justice Corporate Plan 2025-2028. They are also informed by the changes in crime trends, the increase in prison population, the emerging trends in Probation’s caseload including those relating to recent advances in legislation and the forthcoming legislative changes in respect of sentencing.

1. Develop the quality of our practice and delivery of core statutory functions, taking account of best practice

Probation is a public service with a legislative remit to deliver a range of services to reduce reoffending, protect the public and make communities safer. Our statutory functions include the provision of pre-sentence reports and assessments to sentencers; the supervision of community sentences and licences; our multi agency work through the public protection arrangements and the provision of information to registered victims of crime.

We will develop the quality of our practice in all areas of our operational work in courts, communities, custody and with victims of crime and we will have a specific focus on the delivery of our core statutory functions. We will use evidence, data and best practice to ensure we operate consistently and effectively in all areas.

2. Develop our practice, systems and processes in response to emerging needs and priorities

We will respond to changes in the profile and emerging needs of our caseload, which includes addressing wider societal issues impacting on reoffending such as addiction, poor mental health, lack of accommodation and the need for employment support. We will also respond to emerging risks and priorities across the wider justice system including changes in the types of offences committed with more online and cyber offending, greater prevalence of domestic abuse and violent crimes committed against women and girls, and challenges experienced in terms of the significant increase in those imprisoned in Northern Ireland.

We will also consider how we further develop our systems and processes in response to opportunities to optimise the use of our data and digital technology including Artificial Intelligence which may enhance our efficiency and enable us to provide a more effective service.

Like many other parts of the justice system PBNI continue to face significant pressures as operating costs continue to increase, at a time when demand for services and support remains high. We will work to ensure that we exploit all opportunities for transforming and modernising delivery of our services and in a way that supports climate change objectives.

3. Empower our people, develop our organisational culture and lead a trauma informed approach.

We want to empower our people to carry out their roles effectively across all areas of the organisation. We are committed to providing training and developing staff's skills so that they can deliver services in a changing operating environment. Importantly we will continue with the advances already made in respect of having an organisational culture where everyone feels valued and supported. Central to achieving this, is continuing on our journey to becoming a trauma-informed organisation. This means that we recognise the widespread impact of trauma, understand its signs and symptoms and develop a culture underpinned by the values of transparency, supportiveness, learning, listening, co-operation, kindness and compassion.

4. Enhance external relationships and partnerships.

We will work to ensure that people are aware and have confidence in the work of probation. We will do this by enhancing our external relationships and partnerships with the judiciary, legislators, community representatives, the wider public and with the people who use our service. We have a significant role to play in developing our partnerships with others to support a strategic approach to reoffending and explaining the value that community sentences bring and the impact that probation can have on helping people to change their lives. In order to support sustainable change and reduce reoffending, we must also target the underlying causes of crime. For this reason, we will continue to foster collaboration and leverage the innovation, skills and expertise of statutory partners and the community and voluntary sector, benefitting from their unique perspective in support of achieving our shared aims.

ABOUT THIS CONSULTATION

PBNI is consulting on its Corporate Plan. We want to hear your views. This consultation seeks views on PBNI's priorities for the Corporate Plan. We invite comments on this Plan from members of the public, key stakeholders as well as organisations and individuals who have an interest in this area. Responses should be provided by 16 December 2025 (please note that it may not be possible to accept consultation responses after this date). You can respond to the consultation exercise online, via email, or by post.

YOU CAN PROVIDE YOUR FEEDBACK

1. Online at [PBNI Corporate Plan 2026-29 Consultation - NI Direct - Citizen Space](#) or use the QR Code below:



2. Via email to info@probation-ni.gov.uk; or
3. By post to Gail McGreevy, Head of Communications 80-90 North Street Belfast BT1 1LD

CORPORATE PLAN 2026-29

CONSULTATION

RESPONSE FORM

Who is responding? *We will ask you for some identifying details*.*

Name:

Organisation:

Email:

QUESTION 1:

500 WORD LIMIT

Do you agree our four strategic priorities will support us to achieve our aim of changing lives for safer communities?

Yes

No

Do you have anything further to add?

QUESTION 2:

500 WORD LIMIT

Is there anything missing from the strategic priorities?

Yes

No

Do you have anything further to add?

QUESTION 3:

500 WORD LIMIT

What values should guide Probation's decisions and actions?

QUESTION 4:

500 WORD LIMIT

How would you describe the impact we aim to make to achieving safer communities?

QUESTION 5:

500 WORD LIMIT

Is there anything further you wish to add?

EQUALITY SCREENING

Equality screening has been completed on the draft Corporate Plan Priorities for 2026-2029 and it has been screened out. The screening document can be found on our website [Corporate Plan 2026-29 Equality Screening](#)

DATA PROTECTION

Data collected during the course of the consultation process will be analysed and a summary report will be published. Any contact details or other information that will identify a respondent as a private individual will be removed prior to publication. All information will be handled in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Your information will not be shared outside of the PBNI.

WHAT RIGHTS DO YOU HAVE?

A copy of PBNI's Privacy Notice can be found here [Probation Privacy Notice – Those Responding to PBNI Consultations](#)

Respondents should also be aware that PBNI obligations under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) may require that any responses not subject to specific exemptions under the Act be communicated to third parties on request.

If you have any concerns about how your personal data has been handled, please contact PBNI Data Protection Officer at: Probation Board for Northern Ireland (www.pbni.org.uk) 80-90 North Street, Belfast, BT1 1LD

Email: DPO@probation-ni.gov.uk Tel: 028 90522 2522

You can find out more information about your rights from the Information Commissioner's Office and you have the right to lodge a complaint. Information Commissioner's Office (www.ico.org.uk) Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF
Email: casework@ico.org.uk Tel: 0303 123 111

IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?

“ I can say with confidence that the staff at PBNI Magilligan are the best group of people that have worked with me. The staff worked on my release back into the community, providing me with a lot of support and guidance, which I am grateful for, and value this immensely. ”

SERVICE USER

“ I’m here basically paying my debt to society. It was an alternative to prison. I’ve learnt a lot. I don’t know where I’d be without my probation officer. ”

SERVICE USER

“ Just a wee text to say I’ve completed the final timesheet and now have completed the 200 hours and to say thanks as well. I’ve successfully got a full-time job and am going to help out more with a local charity who have been amazing. Thank you for your support. ”

SERVICE USER

“ My experience with the staff at the Portadown office has been amazing. I cannot commend enough every one of you for your level of commitment, sacrifice (it’s not only a job), care and, yes, at some point, love that you’ve shown me at every stage of my rehabilitation. ”

SERVICE USER

“ The Probation Board offers a range of rigorous, empirically based programmes and resources in the context of community-based sentences aimed at the effective rehabilitation of offenders. Community based sentences under the supervision of probation will obviously not be appropriate in many of the more serious cases but where it is properly in contemplation it can be an important and effective option for the sentencing court. We have looked at the need for sentencing to be commensurate with, i.e. proportionate to, the seriousness of the crime; but there will be occasions where the proportionate response to a level of offending may take the form of a well thought through, robust, process of probation supervision over an extended period. ”

LADY CHIEF JUSTICE

“ I am impressed and encouraged by the leadership demonstrated and grip on these recommendations that have been used as a lever to drive change and improvement for service users and staff. ”

**CHIEF INSPECTOR OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE
IN NORTHERN IRELAND**