

PROBATION NEWS

Magazine of the Probation Board for Northern Ireland • Issue 5 November 2016

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Probation Board for Northern Ireland appoints new Chief Executive



The Probation Board for Northern Ireland has appointed a new Chief Executive, Cheryl Lamont.

Announcing the appointment Chairman of the Probation Board Vilma Patterson stated: *"I am delighted that Cheryl Lamont has been appointed as the new Chief Executive of the Probation Board for Northern Ireland. The Board looks forward to working with Cheryl in her new role."*

Cheryl has been (Acting) Director of PBNI for the past three years and as Chief Executive and Accounting Officer for PBNI she is responsible for the operational leadership, delivery and management of all Probation services in Northern Ireland.

Cheryl has worked for the Probation Board for over 32 years and is renowned across the criminal justice and social work fields as an outstanding leader and innovator. Cheryl introduced the first approved programme for perpetrators of domestic violence in Northern Ireland. She has also led in significant innovative initiatives including the modernisation of probation practice through the introduction of

IT systems, and the development of the Victim Information Scheme. Her work with victims also shaped her contribution to the multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements NI which she led as Chair for 3 years.

Cheryl Lamont said: *"I am delighted to have been appointed to the post of Chief Executive. I look forward to continuing my work with the Probation Board and officials from the Department of Justice and colleagues across the Criminal Justice sector. I am also keen to work with other sectors that have an important impact on reducing offending and keeping communities safer."*

Justice Minister, Claire Sugden said: *"Probation works within the justice system to change the lives of those who have offended and reduce the number of victims of crime. I congratulate Cheryl Lamont on her appointment. I am confident that Cheryl will lead PBNI onto greater achievements in the pursuit of reducing reoffending and changing lives for safer communities across Northern Ireland."*

Justice Minister
Claire Sugden (left)
congratulates Cheryl
Lamont on her
appointment as Chief
Executive of the
Probation Board for
Northern Ireland.

WELCOME to the fifth edition of the Probation News Magazine. In the 2014-17 Corporate Plan one of the priorities we outlined was 'engaging with communities'. This magazine provides a biannual opportunity to engage through sharing of news, best practice and information to stakeholders, staff and the public. We hope you enjoy reading this edition.



PBNI
Probation Board
for Northern Ireland



Introduction from the Chief Executive

This is the fifth edition of the Probation News Magazine and my first introduction as the Chief Executive. I am delighted to have been appointed to the post and look forward to leading the organisation through all the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. I firmly believe that Probation has a huge contribution to make across the criminal justice system so that lives are changed for safer communities. We are keen to keep you up to date on probation's work and I hope you find the articles of interest to you.



I am delighted to announce that at the recent NI Social Work Awards NI Jean O'Neill, Probation Area Manager for the Inspire Womens' Project, won the Lifetime Achievement Award (pictured left). I congratulate her on her richly deserved success.

There have also been some significant service developments in Probation which are detailed for you in the magazine. On 11 October the Justice and Health Ministers jointly launched our mobile app Changing Lives. The app is designed to assist offenders to desist from crime by providing resources and information on probation supervision, mental health, addictions, victims, and contacts for organisations that can provide advice and support.

There is also an article about the Enhanced Combination Order (ECO) pilot featuring a case study of an offender on one of these Orders. The ECO pilot has reached over 100 offenders and feedback so far is that this is an effective alternative to short prison sentences. Another recent innovation, the Reset mentoring project has now been formally evaluated with encouraging results in preventing reoffending in the crucial months post release from custody.

Probation has always been progressive in looking for innovative opportunities to improve practice and 2016 has been no different. In this magazine you will also read articles about our new Volunteers who provide practical support to people who have offended and contribute to their rehabilitation. Excitingly, Probation as part of the Reducing Offending in Partnership (ROP) initiative with the PSNI, YJA and NIPS has just launched the Stay Onside Programme in partnership with the Irish Football Association (IFA). Stay Onside aims to assist offenders in custody and in the community to stay away from crime through football, whether that is via coaching, refereeing or playing.

Probation works with the interest of victims at its heart. I was delighted recently that we were awarded the Workplace Charter Gold Award on domestic violence by Onus, a Women's Aid initiative which recognises organisations for their support to individuals suffering from domestic violence issues.

Probation is committed to working to changing lives for safer communities. Our priority is protecting victims and preventing reoffending. I hope you find this edition of the magazine informative and that it helps explain some of what we do. Please feel free to contact us or receive further information through our website www.pbni.org.uk.

Cheryl Lamont
Chief Executive



Welcome from the Chairman

Welcome to this edition of the external magazine of the Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI).

The aim of this publication is to engage with stakeholders, and to inform and raise awareness of the work of PBNI. I hope you find the articles informative.

The Probation Board has recently appointed Cheryl Lamont to the post of Chief Executive, as covered on the front page. Cheryl is a huge asset to the organisation because of her experience, her understanding of probation and criminal justice, her leadership qualities and her ability to drive progress and innovation across the organisation. I am delighted to be working with her in taking the organisation forward and building on Probation's strengths into the future.

The Board recently held its annual meeting with the Minister of Justice, Claire Sugden to report on a very successful year from Probation's perspective in the delivery of the Business Plan objectives and innovative work. The Board set out the contribution that Probation can make going forward to deliver the Programme for Government. This was the first opportunity for the board members to meet the new Minister and we were delighted to host the meeting in PBNI headquarters.

The Probation Board is at an important juncture. The consultation on the priorities for our Corporate Plan 2017 -2020 has recently concluded and the Board are in the process of drafting the plan itself. Encouragingly, from the stakeholder engagement meetings I held, and the consultation responses we received, there was universal support for the identified priorities, and we can now galvanise the priorities into specified actions and objectives.

Of course, we like to think we know the business of Probation better than anyone else, but it is important to us and always useful to see our work from another perspective. I would like to thank all of you who met with myself and the Chief Executive and responded to the Consultation. Continuing engagement is crucial and I can assure you that the conversations and collaborations will continue as the Corporate Plan is finalised.

Vilma Patterson MBE
Chairman



I-r seated; Cheryl Lamont Chief Executive, PBNI, Julie Erskine, Deputy Chairman, Justice Minister Claire Sugden and Vilma Patterson, Probation Board Chairman. L-r standing; Probation Board members Dave Wall, Ian Jeffers, Angela Matthews, Edgar Jardine, David Brown, Judith Gillespie, Robin Mullan and Thomas O'Hanlon.



Justice Minister Claire Sugden and Health Minister Michelle O'Neill (centre) launch the Changing lives app with Cheryl Lamont Chief Executive, PBNi (right) and Vilma Patterson, Probation Board Chairman (left).

New app helps offenders desist from crime

A new app designed to assist people who have offended to desist from crime has been launched by the Probation Board for Northern Ireland. The app also provides information on PBNi's victim information scheme.

The new app was launched on Tuesday 11 October by the Justice Minister Claire Sugden and Health Minister Michelle O'Neill.

Director of Probation Cheryl Lamont said of the app: *"Changing lives is the first app developed specifically to help offenders in Northern Ireland to desist from crime and become rehabilitated. Available on both Android and iOS it enables offenders who have problems with their mental health or addictions to identify their problems and find support. It offers advice on how to overcome problems with addictions and signposts people to appropriate services. People who believe they are at risk can also directly ring the Samaritans or Lifeline from the app. Over 70% of people on probation supervision have an addiction to alcohol or drugs. Over 30% have a mental health issue. Therefore we hope this app is a useful tool is assisting their rehabilitation."*

Chairman of Probation Vilma Patterson continued: *"The app also features a journal so that those on probation can keep track of any issues in their lives and share their progress or any challenges they face with their probation officer. A contacts section of the app enables people to ring directly through to probation staff as well as out of hours GP*

services and others. This app will also be of benefit to those who want more information about the services provided by PBNi. We know that engaging with those we provide a service to, is extremely important and we hope that this app will assist our engagement with service users."

Justice Minister Claire Sugden jointly launching the new app today said: *"Probation works within the justice system to change the lives of those who have offended and reduce the number of victims of crime. We know from research that poor mental health and addictions is a major factor in people reoffending. We also know that tackling these two issues is critical if we are to help those who have offended overcome their own difficulties to build a new life, but also and importantly, in reducing reoffending. Hopefully this app will assist those who have offended to desist from crime and contribute to creating a safer NI."*

Health Minister Michelle O'Neill added: *"My Department is committed to working together with our justice colleagues to assist those with mental health problems within the justice system. It is vital that there is a collaborative approach to tackling the health problems of those within the justice system. I am therefore delighted to support this initiative."*



Enhanced Combination Order

Over 100 people have now received an Enhanced Combination Order, following the introduction of a new pilot in October 2015. These are 100 people who would have been sentenced to a period of custody had the Enhanced Combination order not been developed.

In October 2015 PBNI began piloting the Enhanced Combination Order (ECO) in two pilot Court areas, Ards and Armagh & South Down, offering judges in these areas an alternative to prison sentences of 12 months or less. The initial pilot is for a period of 18 months, ending in March 2017, followed by a period of evaluation.

The aim of the Enhanced Combination Order is to bring together elements of community supervision, such as community service and restorative justice, with a greater emphasis on victim engagement. The order involves a more intensive supervision and a range of measures to facilitate rehabilitation. Importantly all those subject to the order receive a psychological assessment to determine if they have any mental health issue which may need to be addressed.

The initiative is being led by the Probation Board's Deputy Director, Paul Doran, working closely with partner organisations such as the police and Victim Support.

There is a wide variety of types of offender (and offences) diverted from custody as part of the pilot. This includes offenders convicted of violent offences, theft/burglary, driving offences, drugs related offences and public order.

Initial findings indicate that the pilot is making an impact with many in the cohort of classic 'revolving prison door' offenders. Official reoffending figures (produced by the Department of Justice (DOJ)) will not be officially available until at least 18 months after the time period in question, but early indications are that the pilot scheme has been very effective in preventing reoffending.

"I wanted to take the opportunity to make a positive change"

Michael was sentenced in October 2015 to an Enhanced Combination Order for drug offences.

As part of that order he is being supervised by a probation officer for 18 months and must carry out 100 hours of unpaid community service.

Michael has been using drugs since he was 16 years old and during that time has been convicted of several offences.

In his own words he tells how he ended up within the criminal justice system:

Enhanced Combination Order Pilot

The Enhanced Combination Order will be piloted from 1st October 2015 in the Court Divisions of Armagh & South Down and Ards. The aim of Enhanced Combination Order is to divert offenders from short-term custodial sentences by offering Sentencers an existing community option in a more intensive package with a focus on rehabilitation, reparation, restorative practice and desistance.

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 **PBNI** Probation Board for Northern Ireland
Changing Lives for Safer Communities

"I didn't have a very good childhood and a lot of my behaviour stemmed from witnessing abuse among family members.

I was 12 years old when I turned to drugs to escape. At this stage my school work suffered, I started hanging around with the wrong people and getting into trouble. Selling drugs seemed like an easy way to make money.

I tried on occasions to change my lifestyle but it was difficult. I had previously spent short spells in prison.

With the start of the Enhanced Combination Order I got support and I wanted to take the opportunity to make a positive change in my life.

I attended the community addiction team as part of the order and through that got the motivation to stay off drugs.

I also worked with Barnardos and that really gave me a better understanding of how my kids feel and helped me take responsibility for my actions."

Michael also completed some restorative work and said that helped him understand 'his actions were about more than just me, there were victims'.

After six months being supervised by probation, Michael said:

"Probation has changed my life by signposting me to the right services.

I know I can lift the phone now and get help and support and that in turn, has helped me be more positive about my life. Probation has helped me manage my problems."

Since starting this order Michael has completed all of his community service hours, and fully complied with his order.

His probation officer believes his future is much brighter.



RESET (adult mentoring scheme) Evaluation

Reset is an intensive, desistance based, mentoring project that was introduced as a pilot scheme in 2015-16 to provide intensive resettlement support to support the work of Probation Officers and to specifically assist offenders at the critical stage of transition from custody to the community. Its aims were to positively impact on reoffending to ensure that, when possible and appropriate, recall back to prison for offenders subject to license could be prevented. It also seeks to enhance positive citizenship outcomes for offenders and therefore benefit the wider community. Delivery of this innovative project was commissioned from the Community and Voluntary Sector, with NIACRO winning the contract.

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) were commissioned to undertake independent evaluation of the project. The evaluation of the pilot was positive, having analysed quantitative administrative data and qualitative information gathered through baseline and exit surveys to mentees, mentors, Probation staff and project partners.

Reducing the number of recalls to prison during the first 12 weeks post release was one of the key objectives of the Reset programme. The evaluation found that Reset was impacting on

this area. Further, there was a statistically significant decrease between pre and post Reset ACE (likelihood of reoffending) scores among those who successfully completed the programme.

With regards to accommodation, Reset was found to be making a difference in this area and, by the end of the mentoring process, over half of Mentees had secured permanent accommodation. Over a fifth of Mentees were in some form of full or part time employment by the end of the mentoring process; a further 10% were in education or training. Not everybody required support with family or social integration but Reset was found to have helped when needed. The majority of Mentees said Reset helped them, post release, to integrate back with their family (60%) and into their community (71%). In terms of self-esteem, over two thirds of Mentees said that taking part in Reset had increased their self-confidence.

NISRA concluded that 'the qualitative and quantitative evidence highlighted in this evaluation shows that the project has been successful in achieving its aims in reducing the likelihood of recall and of being a highly worthwhile and effective programme for Mentees who valued the support it provided'.

PBNI Volunteers

The Probation Service has developed a volunteer scheme, and are asking members of the public to consider playing a role in supporting probation staff and enhancing community safety in local areas.

Cheryl Lamont, Chief Executive said: *"I am strongly of the view that volunteers can assist individuals who are subject to Probation supervision by spending time with them on a regular basis, assisting them to access services in their local communities and helping them to build confidence and contribute as positive members of society. Volunteers bring a wealth of skills and experience and make a valuable contribution to our work."*

Over the past year, PBNI have recruited and trained a number of volunteers. There are presently 20 volunteers placed with Probation teams across the service and they have commenced working with PBNI service users, providing valuable support services. The initiative will be further

developed in future to build up the bank of volunteers within Probation so that they can provide a range of practical support roles, complementing the work Probation Officers and Probation Services Officers perform on a daily basis.

A volunteer who is currently based with a Probation team recently spoke of her work with two men: *"Meeting with them outside the office environment, spending time talking to them about everyday interests and events, accompanying them to appointments and contributing to the management of their orders, is personally rewarding and I believe I am making a difference"*. It is clear that volunteers wish to contribute to the work of PBNI and have valuable time and energy to offer to our clients. It is important that we fully avail of and progress this exciting scheme.

To find out more about the PBNI Volunteer Scheme please contact Jean O'Neill, Probation Area Manager on 02890 316488 jean.o'neill@pbni.gsi.gov.uk.



Offenders Urged to 'Stay Onside'

Offenders in Northern Ireland are getting the chance to turn their lives around through a new programme launched by the Irish FA and agencies including PBNI who are involved in the Reducing Offending in Partnership (ROP).

ROP is a Northern Ireland-wide approach to the management of priority, or prolific offenders and young people at risk of offending, by the Police Service, Probation, Youth Justice Agency and Prison Service.

A new and innovative intervention has been developed by the ROP agencies in conjunction with the IFA. Called "Stay Onside" it was launched on 17 November in the new national stadium at Windsor Park.

The Stay Onside programme is aimed at reducing further offending through football and enhancing participant's opportunities to make a positive contribution to local communities.

With the Irish Football Association and its Football for All Strategy, young and adult offenders aged between 16 and 24 years will be offered the chance to participate.

Justice Minister, Claire Sugden, commenting on the launch of the new programme said:

"This programme is both innovative and collaborative. I am delighted that Justice organisations including probation, police, prisons and youth justice have come together with the Irish FA to design a programme which aims to tackle the root causes of offending. We need to move beyond dealing with the symptoms of crime and instead deal with the causes and I believe this programme provides an opportunity to do just that."



Deputy Director of Probation and Chair of the ROP Steering Group, Paul Doran stated:

"Through this programme young people who have offended will learn skills such as problem-solving, teamwork, how to deal with anger issues, and victim empathy. Many of those who have offended have very few positive relationships in their life and it is hoped that through this programme they will encounter positive role models who can motivate and inspire them but also challenge their attitudes and help them move away from a life of crime."

PSNI ACC Stephen Martin added: *"The role of the police service is to help keep people safe by policing with the community. We know that to build a safe and secure society we need to work with a range of partners and have the support of the wider community. This initiative is a great example of policing with the community which has the potential to make a real impact in reducing re-offending. This new programme will be evaluated so that we fully understand the outcomes and can evidence the impact. I want to pay tribute to the leadership of the IFA for their commitment in helping to design this programme which will benefit people throughout NI."*

Irish FA President David Martin said: *"The Irish FA is committed to football for all and believes that our sport makes a positive impact on the community in Northern Ireland. I am delighted that the association is helping to pioneer this innovative programme and I look forward to seeing the meaningful impact it has in the coming months and years."*

PBNI achieves Onus Gold Award for third year in a row



PBNI has again been awarded the Workplace Charter Gold Award on domestic violence at ONUS's 7th annual awards ceremony held on 25 October at the Braids Arts Centre, Ballymena.

ONUS was established in 2007 by Women's Aid. The Workplace Charter was developed by ONUS to enable organisations and communities to be recognised for their support to individuals suffering from domestic violence issues.

The Award's ceremony highlighted the importance of tackling domestic violence and abuse in our society, communities, churches, schools as well as in the workplace. ONUS also presented the Safer Community Award, the Safer School Award, the Safer Church Award and Safer Borough Award.

Many organisations were represented including the PSNI, Policing Board, Women's Aid, Borough Councils and Safer Communities (DoJ). Speeches were made by Will Kerr (Assistant Chief Constable) and Anthony Harbinson (Director of Safer Communities, Department of Justice).

PBNI is committed to ensuring a supportive working environment for any employee who discloses that they are experiencing domestic violence and abuse.

As part of the commitment to the ONUS Workplace Charter on Domestic Violence, PBNI has in place the role of 'Trusted Colleague' to offer peer support to staff who are affected by domestic abuse.

The Trusted Colleague network is made up of a number of fully trained employees at all levels of the organisation. The training was excellent and indeed having the expertise and training in-house was commended by ONUS.

Domestic violence and abuse has a devastating impact on victims and their families.

- PSNI statistics record that they attended 28,287 domestic incidents during 2014-2015.
- 999 women stayed in refuges across N. Ireland as result of domestic violence (Womens Aid Federation NI annual report 2013-14).



Pictured at the awards ceremony is Joanne Wilson, Human Resources PBNI with Will Kerr, Assistant Chief Constable PSNI.

Given these statistics all workplaces (including PBNI) will have staff that have experienced or are experiencing domestic abuse at some point, as well as those who are perpetrators of abuse.

PBNI has also signed up to the Safe Place initiative which offers a wide range of services to all victims of domestic violence. As part of the initiative anyone signing up to the Safe Place must support 3 commitments:

1. Support the Safe Place Pledge: never to commit, condone or stay silent about domestic violence
2. Acknowledge domestic violence is a problem that impacts on all of us as a society, and will be prepared to play our part in supporting victims and sending a clear message to perpetrators that domestic violence is intolerable
3. Provide a Safe Place for victims of domestic violence to confidentially access information.

PROBATION WORKING WITHIN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM



1 COURT APPEARANCE

- PBNI PREPARES PRE-SENTENCE REPORT



2 JUDGE PASSES SENTENCE

3 COMMUNITY ORDER

- SUPERVISES ORDER
- BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE PROGRAMME & INTERVENTIONS



4 CUSTODY

- PBNI WORK IN PRISONS TO HELP PREPARE PRISONERS FOR RELEASE
- PBNI SUPERVISE PEOPLE WHEN THEY ARE RELEASED FROM PRISON



5 VICTIMS & SURVIVORS

- PBNI PROVIDES INFORMATION TO REGISTERED VICTIMS