

THE ENHANCED COMBINATION ORDER OCTOBER 2015 TO NOVEMBER 2018



March 2019

Acronyms

ACE	Assessment, Case management and Evaluation
CRJI	Community Restorative Justice Ireland
HRCS	Human Resource Consultancy Services
NIACRO	Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders
NISRA	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
ORS	Offending Related Score
PBNI	Probation Board for Northern Ireland
PO	Probation Officer
PS	Problem Score
PSO	Probation Service Officer
ROP	Reducing Offending in Partnership

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Executive Summary

1.1 Context

- Research shows that short-term prison sentences are less effective in addressing offending behaviours than community-based disposals and that more than 50% of offenders sentenced to a short prison term will re-offend. The Lord Chief Justice therefore requested that the Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI), develop a demanding community sentence as an alternative to the high number (88% at May 2015) of prison sentences lasting less than 12 months. Based on existing legislation and known as the Enhanced Combination Order (ECO), ECOs offered Judges a community option in a more intensive format.
- Piloted in the Ards and Armagh & South Down court divisions since 1st October 2015 and extended to the North West in October 2018, ECOs focussed on restorative practice, desistance and victims, with service users also required to complete unpaid work within their local communities. Those with mental health issues were assessed by PBNI psychologists, with a treatment plan or referral to an appropriate health provider then forming part of the intervention. Where appropriate parenting/family support work and accredited programmes were also part of the order.
- In June 2017, the Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency published its evaluation of the ECO pilot¹. The evaluation focussed on the period up to March 2017 during which 136 offenders had been made subject to ECOs. The evaluation concluded that the qualitative and quantitative evidence showed that the initiative had been successful in achieving its aims. This is a follow on evaluation, which is based on work up to the end of November 2018, which encompasses 295 people who have been made subject to an ECO. This evaluation is similarly positive.

1.2 Methodology

- The current evaluation looks at the ECO initiative since its inception on 1st October 2015 until 30th November 2018. It used a mixed methodology approach of:
 - Administrative data held by PBNI and the Department of Justice's Analytical Services Group from the Causeway Data Sharing Mechanism;
 - Exit questionnaires completed by service users at the end of their order (30 questionnaires available at 30th November 2018); and
 - Interviews with service users (8), ECO managers (2) and stakeholders from Victim Support (1) and Barnardos (1).

¹https://www.pbni.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/ECO-Evaluation_Final-Report-04.12.17.pdf

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1.3 Service Users

- Service users were mainly male (94%) and had a median age of 28 years; the majority were medium or high risk reoffending.
- ACE risk and needs profile scores showed that 94% had difficulties with reasoning/thinking and almost 90% with responsibility/control and impulsive/risk taking. These factors were also relevant to recent and/or potential offending for almost all ECO service users.
- Approximately three quarters of service users were assessed as having problems with employment/education/training, family/personal relationships, alcohol and emotional well being. Just over 60% had problems with drugs.

1.4 How Much Has Been Done?

- By 30th November 2018, 295 service users had been subject to an ECO (293 individuals, 2 of whom received a subsequent ECO at a later date). Almost 56% were sentenced in the Ards court division, almost 42% in Armagh and South Down and over 2% in the North West where ECOs were only operational since October 2018. The average length of an order was 21 months.
- At the end of the first three years, 106 service users had successfully completed their ECO, 150 were still actively engaged, 38 had been revoked and 1 had passed away; 45 breaches were recorded, including 34 of the 38 participants who were revoked.
- The completion of unpaid work within local communities was one of the main requirements of ECOs and a total of 25,435 hours were sentenced by the courts between October 2015 and November 2018 with an average of 86 hours per service user. Based on the national living wage of £8.21 per hour, this was equivalent to almost £209,000¹ worth of work provided to communities in the Ards, Armagh/South Down and North West areas.
- All service users were offered an assessment with a PBNI psychologist during the first eighteen months of the pilot. This changed during the second eighteen months when the usual psychology consultation and referral process applied, with participants seen based on need. Around this time a dedicated Psychologist was put in place to work solely with ECO service users. This was reported by both PBNI staff and service users as having worked particularly well. By the end of October 2018 almost all participants (272; 92%) were recorded as having been referred to this service.
- Support with parenting/family relationships was available from Barnardos for those for whom it was a requirement. It was reported to have worked well with 73 referrals from October 2015, 69 of whom, at the time of the evaluation, had successfully completed the programme. The majority of service users had improved their scores in each of the outcomes of focus i.e. ability to understand the impact of their own behaviour (86%), family having access to support services (85%), improved knowledge of parenting/caring (79%) and improved self-esteem (69%).

¹Based on national living wage of £8.21 per hour.

Executive Summary

- Over one third (108) of participants had additional requirements attached to their order, mainly Drug/Alcohol Counselling, Thinking Skills and Treatment Programmes or a combination of these. These were addressed using a range of courses.
- The work with victims continues to be a challenge. PBNi representatives feel this is largely because the number of ECO cases with no identifiable victim is high. While Victim Support are very supportive of the ECO approach and the overall aims of the pilot, they did voice some frustration with the rate of progress, reporting 26 cases in 2018 and 7 during the first two months of 2019.
- Feedback in relation to Restorative Justice Interventions was positive, and useful in appropriate cases.

1.5 How Well Was It Done?

- To determine how the order was working, views were gathered through service user exit questionnaires and interviews with current service users (7), the PBNi managers (2) with responsibility for the initiative and stakeholders (2). This showed that almost all service users agreed they could get in touch with PBNi staff when needed (97%) and that staff had helped them to plan realistic and useful goals (93%) and to avoid/reduce re-offending (90%). All service users agreed the activities they did were useful.
- The majority of service users found the psychology referral (86%), the community service (77%), and the discussion and work on victim issues (73%) useful.
- Overall service users agreed their experience of taking part in ECO met their expectations (90%), they were satisfied with the support they received (93%), and would recommend ECO to someone else (90%). This was reiterated further during the qualitative phase of the research with service users grateful both for the support they were receiving and the fact the order enabled them to stay out of prison.

1.6 Impact

- The number of custodial sentences of 12 months or less, awarded by courts involved in the ECO pilot, decreased by 20.7% between 2015 and 2017. While there was also a reduction in the overall number of short term sentences across all the NI courts, at 3.4% this was significantly lower than that across the pilot areas and indicates that the correct people are being given an ECO, i.e. those who for whom the Court are minded to impose a short prison sentence.
- Nine in ten service users agreed that the programme had helped them address their offending behaviour and they were unlikely to commit a further similar offence. The vast majority found the help addressing problems in their lifestyle and the way they thought about future offending useful (87%) and agreed that PBNi staff's support helped them avoid/reduce re-offending (90%).

Executive Summary

- Problems with alcohol and drugs were identified for 71% and 61% of service users respectively. The benefits of the support provided to address addiction and mental health issues were highlighted during the interviews, particularly in relation to the work undertaken through the psychology element of the initiative. The vast majority of service users said they found the help addressing problems with drinking/drug use (83%) useful.
- Findings from the exit questionnaire show that just over three quarters of service users agreed that taking part in ECO had increased their confidence; 60% agreed it had helped them integrate back into their community and 53% with their family with 68% reporting that it had helped with family relationships.
- There was a statistically significant decrease between ACE scores recorded at the start and end of the order at an overall level and for both high and medium ACE service users with an average reduction of 7.3 and 4.7 points respectively.
- Official reoffending methodology has a significant time-lag, and at the time of publishing the most recent reoffending data there was insufficient evidence to assess the impact of the ECO on future offending behaviours in a statistically significant way. However, it could be argued that, given the type of individual typically in receipt of an ECO, a reduction in frequency and gravity of reoffending would be a more reflective measure of reoffending success than the binary outcome of official reoffending statistics, and so it is recommended that once data is available that greater analysis of offending type and frequency is carried out on the ECO cohort.

1.7 Overall

- The qualitative and quantitative evidence highlighted in this review shows that the ECO initiative continues to be an effective programme for service users who value and benefit from the support it provides. There is continued commitment from the staff involved, with service users continuing to hold them in high regard and the psychology element of the order has earned particular praise from both PBNI staff and service users.
- The initiative has been embraced by the Judiciary and as stated on the previous page the number of custodial sentences of 12 months or less, awarded by courts involved in the ECO pilot, has decreased by over one fifth between 2015 and 2017. This reduction in custodial sentences with the resultant decrease in tax payer costs was identified as a major benefit of the pilot. The indicative costs of ECOs has been estimated at £9k per annum, which on top of the clearly beneficial social impact, and focus on offending and victim issues, indicates a sentence which continues to provide value for money and better outcomes in comparison to short prison sentences.

1.8 Going Forward

Overall, the evidence indicates that the ECO initiative is working very effectively and is a robust community sentence as an alternative to a 12 month prison sentence. A number of recommendations, however, are detailed below for consideration going forward with any extension of the initiative to be properly resourced:

- Explore whether it would be possible to extend the order to other court divisions.
- Continue to progress the victim focussed work.
- Service users are able to avail of up to four sessions with Barnardos. Explore with Barnardos whether it would be beneficial to service users to make the duration and scope of the support more flexible.
- PBNI to calculate the proportion of eligible cases over the first three years to estimate the proportion of expected cases going forward to enable Victim Support to put appropriate plans in place.

2 | Context

2.1 Enhanced Combination Orders

Research shows that short-term prison sentences are less effective in addressing offending behaviours than community-based disposals and that more than 50% of offenders sentenced to a short prison term will re-offend. The Lord Chief Justice therefore requested that the Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI), develop a demanding community sentence as an alternative to the high number (88% at May 2015) of prison sentences lasting less than 12 months. Based on existing legislation and known as the Enhanced Combination Order (ECO), ECOs offered Judges a community option in a more intensive format.

Piloted in the Ards and Armagh & South Down court divisions since 1st October 2015 and extended to the North West in October 2018, ECOs focussed on restorative practice, desistance and victims, with service users also required to complete unpaid work within their local communities. Those with mental health issues were assessed by PBNI psychologists, with a treatment plan or referral to an appropriate health provider then forming part of the intervention. Where appropriate parenting/family support work and accredited programmes were also part of the order.

ECOs used a multiagency, multidisciplinary, collaborative approach with contributions from PBNI and a range of organisations including Barnardos, Community Restorative Justice Ireland (CRJI) and NI Alternatives. As well as Probation Officers (POs), ECOs involved Probation Service Officers (PSOs), Community Service Officers (CSOs) and PBNI Psychologists providing greater flexibility and choice.

2.2 The Review

An initial evaluation¹ of the ECO initiative was undertaken by the Human Resource Consultancy Services (HRCS) branch of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) at the end of the first 18 months. Published in June 2017, it showed that while demanding for both staff and service users the initiative was successful in achieving its aims and was valued and embraced by the Judiciary. Additional funding was subsequently secured to continue the pilot in the Ards and Armagh/South Down court divisions and to extend to the North West from October 2018. A second review which built on this initial evaluation was undertaken at the end of year three to examine how much had been done during the first three years, how well it had been done and the impact that it had on service users. This report provides an overview of these findings.

¹https://www.pbni.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/ECO-Evaluation_Final-Report-04.12.17.pdf

3 | Approach

About this Chapter

This chapter provides an overview of the data collection techniques used.

3.1 Data Collection

Qualitative and quantitative data was gathered using -

- **Interviews**

Semi-structured interviews were undertaken with service users (8), the ECO managers in the two pilot areas (2) and representatives from Barnardos (1) and Victim Support (1).

Participation in interviews was voluntary. Those with participants were conducted in private (i.e. Probation staff were not present).

Recruitment of all participants was arranged by PBNI.

- **Questionnaires**

Participants completed an exit questionnaire at the end of their order. It gathered data relating to ECO expectations and experiences. By 30th November 2018, 30 completed questionnaires were available.

- **Administrative Data Sources**

The evaluation used administrative data held by PBNI along with data supplied to the Department of Justice's Analytical Services Group from the Causeway Data Sharing Mechanism.

3.2 Data Limitations

The following limitations should be kept in mind when reading this report:

- While 295 participants were subject to an ECO from 1st October 2015, 106 had completed the order by 30th November 2018 and were eligible to complete the exit questionnaire; responses were obtained for 30 (response rate, 28%).
- Data collected by PBNI in relation to offence type and additional requirements was largely free text. Recoding of this information was undertaken by HRCS statisticians but it is important to note there is an element of subjectivity when assigning categories.



4 Service Users

About this Chapter

This chapter provides an overview of the service user profile.

4.1 User Profile

By 30th November 2018, 295 ECO referrals were made (293 individuals, 2 of whom received a subsequent ECO at a later date). Participants were largely male and ranged in age from 17 to 69 with a median of 28 years; the majority were medium or high risk (Table 1).

The most common offence committed by participants of all ages was 'Violence against the person' (Table 2). This was followed by 'Public Order' for those aged under 30 and crimes defined as 'Drugs' for those aged 30+.

Table 1 – ECO participant profile

		Count	%
Age when ECO imposed (n=295)	17 to 29	163	55.3
	30+	132	44.7
Gender (n=295)	Male	274	93.5
	Female	19	6.5
Reducing Offending in Partnership (ROP) (n=106)	Yes	22	20.8
	No	84	79.2
ACE Risk of re-offending at start of ECO (n=285)	High	106	37.2
	Medium	147	51.6
	Low	32	11.2

Table 2 – Offence¹ type by age group (n=295)

Offence Type	% 17-29	% 30+	% Total
Violence against the person	38.7	34.1	36.6
Drugs	20.9	25.8	23.1
Motoring	17.8	22.0	19.7
Theft	20.2	12.1	16.6
Criminal Damage	17.8	12.9	15.6
Public Order	21.5	15.9	19.0
Burglary	10.4	3.8	7.5
Possession of Weapons	6.7	8.3	7.5
Sexual	2.5	6.8	4.4
Fraud	4.9	3.0	4.1
Robbery	1.2	0.8	1.0
Other	20.2	18.2	19.3

¹Individuals may have committed more than one offence type and consequently will be counted in more than one offence category.

4 | Service Users

4.2 Problems Faced by Service Users

ACE risk and needs profile scores were available for 273 (93%) service users. The scores reflect the problems and needs they faced for various factors within the social, personal and offending domains. Factors within all three domains are given an Offending Related Score (ORS); factors within the social and personal domains are also given a Problem Score (PS). The ORS reflects the extent to which the factor is relevant to the person's recent and/or potential offending while the PS reflects the extent of the problem for the client, regardless of any link with their offending. The ORS and PS prevalence rates are the proportion of those assessed as having a small, medium or large problem with each factor.

Table 3 lists the factors where more than half of service users were assessed as having a problem. It shows that 94% had difficulties with reasoning/thinking and almost 90% with responsibility/control and impulsive/risk taking. These three factors were relevant to recent and/or potential offending for almost all ECO service users. Approximately three quarters of service users were assessed as having problems with employment/education/training, family/personal relationships, alcohol and emotional well being. Just over 60% had problems with drugs and stress management. Appendix 1 provides prevalence rates for additional social, personal and offending related factors.

Table 3 – Factors where more than half of service users were deemed to have a small, medium or large problem

ACE Domain	ACE Factor	Prevalence Rate (%)		
		ORS	PS	
Social	Employment, Education & Training	59	76	
	Community	53	57	
	Family & Personal Relationships	53	74	
Personal	Substance Misuse & Addictions	Alcohol	68	71
		Drugs	55	61
	Health	Emotional Well Being	68	76
	Personal Skills	Reasoning/Thinking	98	94
	Individual Characteristics	Impulsive/Risk Taking	97	89
		Responsibility/Control	93	88
Stress Management		56	62	
Offending	Lifestyle & Associates	Does the offender's lifestyle put him/her at risk of reoffending?	84	n/a
		Do friends/ associates put him/her at risk of reoffending?	68	
	Attitudes	Does the offender deny responsibility for his/her offending?	50	n/a
		Does the offender disregard harm to his/her victim(s)	56	

5 How Much Has Been Done?

About this Chapter

This chapter provides an overview of the number and profile of ECOs imposed between 1st October 2015 and 30th November 2018 and the work that has been done with service users.

5.1 Orders Imposed

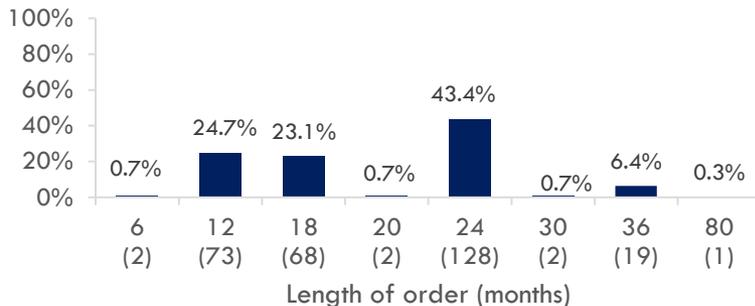
By 30th November 2018, of the 295 ECO referrals made, 106 had successfully completed their order, 150 were still actively engaged, 38 had been revoked and 1 had passed away. There were 45 recorded breaches including the 34¹ orders that were revoked.

The majority of orders lasted for 12, 18 or 24 months (Figure 1). The average length of an order was 21 months.

Almost 56% of ECOs were sentenced in the Ards court division, almost 42% in Armagh and South Down and over 2% were in the North West where ECOs were operational only since October 2018 (Table 4). The vast majority of orders were imposed through the Magistrates and Crown Courts (Figure 2). While 37 Judges were involved in the pre sentence report request stage and 32 at sentencing, four judges imposed half of all ECOs.

While a significant number of POs (72) had experience of managing cases the majority had responsibility for one or two ECO participants; three staff were responsible for over one third of all service users.

Figure 1 – Proportion of service users by length of ECO (n=295)



¹4 orders were revoked without a breach.

Figure 2 – Number of orders by court type (n=295)

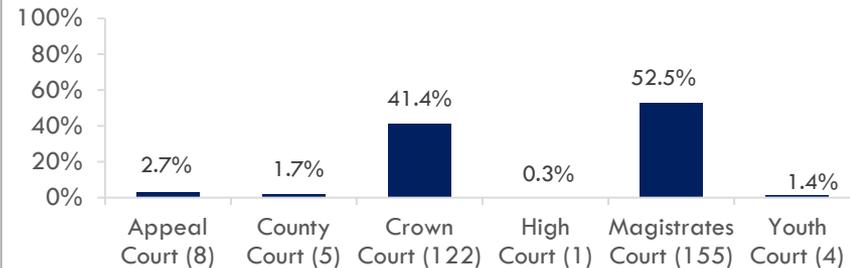


Table 4 – Number of orders by court location

	Court	Count	%
Armagh & South Down (123; 41.7%)	Armagh	35	11.9
	Banbridge	16	5.4
	Craigavon	1	0.3
	Lisburn	1	0.3
	Newry	70	23.7
Ards (165; 55.9%)	Belfast	3	1.0
	Downpatrick	118	40.0
	Newtownards	44	14.9
North West (7; 2.4%)	Limavady	2	0.7
	Londonderry	5	1.7
Total		295	100.0

5 | How Much Has Been Done?

5.2 Community Service

The completion of unpaid work within local communities was one of the main requirements of ECOs. By 30th November 2018, the mean number of community service hours sentenced was 86 with a total of 25,435 hours sentenced by the courts from October 2015. This was equivalent to almost £209,000¹ worth of work provided to communities in the Ards, Armagh/South Down and North West areas.

Securing restorative placements, particularly when there was no identifiable victim, was challenging and the restorative element of the order tended to be addressed through separate restorative/victim awareness work rather than community service. Over half of placements were therefore reported to be with a squad (Figure 4).

Figure 3 – Proportion of service users by Community Service hours sentenced (n=295)

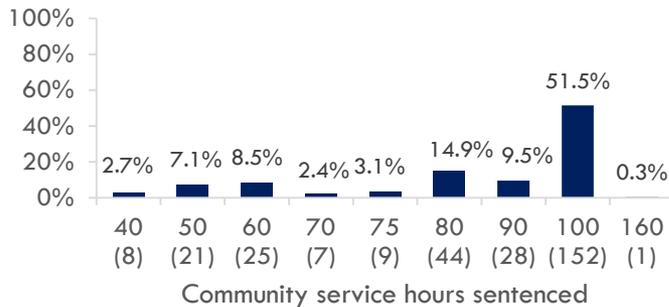
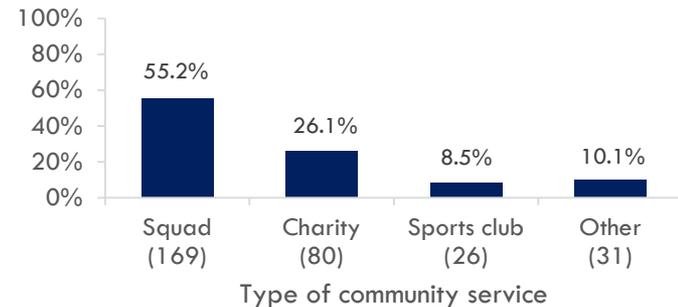


Figure 4 – Proportion of service users by type of Community Service (n=260)



¹Based on national living wage of £8.21 per hour.

5 How Much Has Been Done?

5.3 Psychological Intervention

At the outset of the pilot all participants were offered an assessment with a PBNI psychologist and, then where appropriate, mental health interventions. This changed at the end of the first eighteen months and from then on the usual psychology consultation and referral process applied, with participants seen based on need. Around this time a dedicated Psychologist was put in place to work solely with ECO service users. This was reported to have worked particularly well as the individual is located with staff who cannot praise this service highly enough.

By 30th November 2018 92% of participants (272) were recorded as having been referred to the PBNI psychologist.

5.4 Parenting/Family Support

The ACE risk and needs profile scores show that 74% of service users had at least a small problem with family and personal relationships (see Section 4.2). Participation in parenting/family support work, if appropriate was a requirement of the ECO.

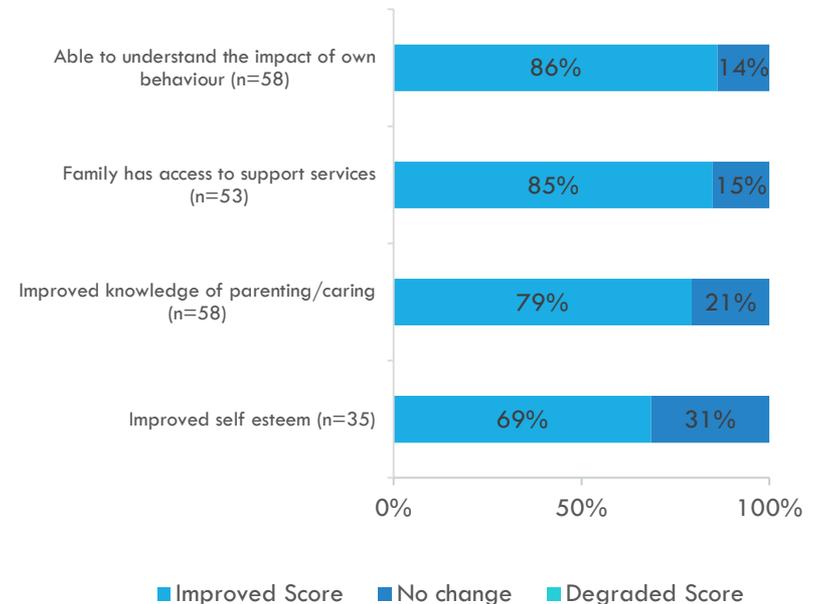
Support from Barnardos was reported to have worked well with 73 referrals from October 2015, 69 of whom, at the time of the evaluation, had successfully completed the Barnardo's programme.

Service users were asked to rate their level of need, when they started and finished working with Barnardos, in terms of the following four outcomes of focus -

- Able to understand the impact of own behaviour;
- Family has access to support services;
- Improved knowledge of parenting/caring; and
- Improved self-esteem.

Figure 5 shows that by the time they had completed the programme the majority of service users had improved their scores in each of the outcomes of focus i.e. ability to understand the impact of their own behaviour (86%), family having access to support services (85%), improved knowledge of parenting/caring (79%) and improved self-esteem (69%). While the scores on some of the outcomes remained unchanged for a minority of services users, no scores were degraded.

Figure 5– Outcome Progress Scores for Service users working with Barnardos



5 | How Much Has Been Done?

5.5 Accredited Programmes

The completion of an accredited programme, if appropriate, was a requirement of the ECO pilot. Over one third (108) of participants had additional requirements attached to the order, mainly Drug/Alcohol Counselling, Thinking Skills and Treatment Programmes or a combination of these. These were reported to be addressed using a range of courses.

5.6 Victim Focussed Work

The work with victims continues to be a challenge. PBNI representatives feel this is largely because the number of ECO cases with no identifiable victim is high and the number of victims recorded in the data as having registered with the Victim Information Scheme is low (4 registered victims).

“Victim support has been a challenge. However, the context of the lack of progress is now understood. The number of ECO cases with no identifiable victim is quite high. The challenge remains for us to work with the client when a victim is identified.” PBNI

Victim Support were very supportive of the ECO approach and the overall aims of the pilot. They did however voice some frustration with the rate of progress, reporting 26 cases in 2018 and 7 during the first two months of 2019. There was uncertainty whether this was because appropriate cases were not being referred or because the number of cases with an identifiable victim was low and suggested that it would be helpful for PBNI to calculate the proportion of eligible cases over the first three years to estimate the proportion of expected cases going forward.

While there has been progress with communication between the two organisations, including the establishment of a single PBNI contact point for referrals, further improvements were thought necessary to ensure POs fully understood the correct referral process and to ensure the victim focussed work was a core principle of the initiative.

6 How Well Was It Done?

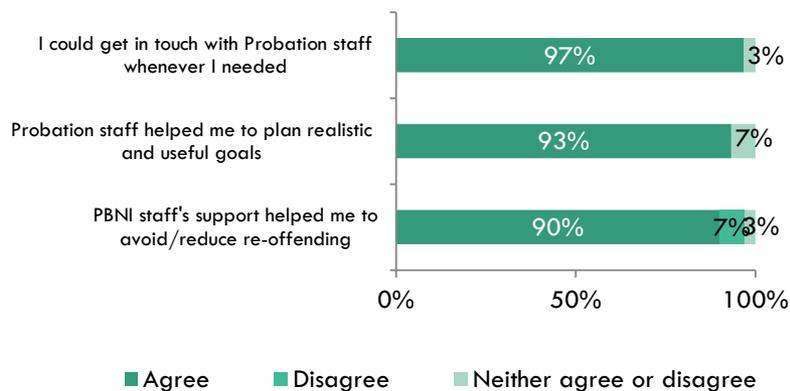
About this Chapter

To determine how the order was working, views were gathered through exit questionnaires (30 available) and face to face interviews with current service users (7) and the PBNI managers (2) with responsibility for the initiative. This chapter provides an overview of these findings.

6.1 Reasons for Participating

The exit questionnaire showed that the main reasons service users had agreed to take part in an ECO were to avoid prison (50% of service users) or to stay out of trouble (27%). A small number said it had been for support with mental health issues and staying sober (also raised during the client interviews) or to increase self-esteem, find work or obtain a better life.

Figure 6 – Service users' experience of PBNI support (Source: Service User Exit Questionnaire, n=30)



6.2 PBNI Support

Figure 6 shows the vast majority of service users agreed they could get in touch with PBNI staff when needed (97%) and that they had helped them to both plan realistic and useful goals (93%) and to avoid/reduce re-offending (90%). The high regard that service users had for POs/PSOs was highlighted during the qualitative phase of the research and the continued commitment from staff is to be commended.

"The people involved in this programme were all very helpful and gave me hope for the future". Service User

"[Named PO] is dead on. She does care. She asks how you're getting on. She's very genuine although you couldn't pull the wool over her eyes". Service User

6.3 Views on ECO Elements

6.3.1 Referral to the Psychologist

The exit questionnaire showed that 86% of service users found the psychology referral useful (Figure 7) and during the interviews both service users and PBNI managers were highly complimentary of this element of the order and the benefits that it provided.

"I thought the Judge was harsh when he put me on ECO but [named psychologist] has made me see that I have a drink problem and he helped me look at different things, like problems in my childhood. I hadn't seen the problems". Service User

"One member of psychology is now dedicated to working with ECO clients. Communication is excellent as he is located with staff. Staff cannot praise this service highly enough". PBNI Manager

6 | How Well Was It Done?

6.3.2 Community Service

Approximately three quarters of service users found the community service useful and during the interviews spoke of their positive experiences.

"I loved the Community Service. I kept in contact with them and made friends out of it. I got a lot out of it". Service User

Community service was described as 'a mixed bag' by staff who reported a need for more creativity and more individualised placements to meet the needs of clients for example those with mental health issues who have difficulty leaving their home. This was however a general rather than an ECO specific issue.

"We have squads but there is a need for more bespoke and tailor made placements". PBNI

6.3.3 Work on Victim Issues

Approximately three quarters of service users found the discussion and work on victim issues useful. The core work undertaken by POs with service users was reported by staff to be working well as was the work undertaken by Community Restorative Justice Ireland (CRJI) and NI Alternatives. As already highlighted in section 5.6 the work with victims continues to be a challenge, largely because of the low numbers of cases with an identifiable or registered victim.

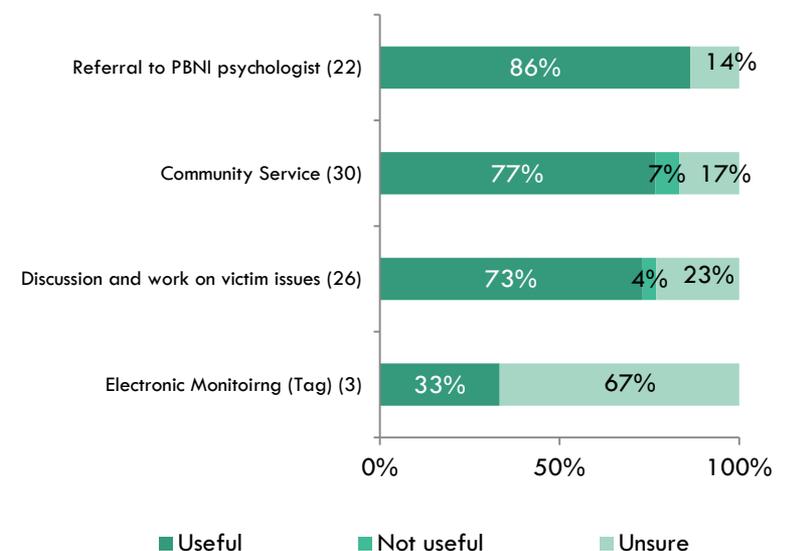
6.3.4 Parenting/Family Support

The feedback from both staff and service users regarding the support provided by Barnardos was very positive.

6.3.5 Electronic Monitoring

Electronic monitoring was relevant to only three of the 30 individuals who completed the exit questionnaire, one of whom reported finding it useful.

Figure 7 – How useful did you find the following -
(Source: Service User Exit Questionnaire)



6 | How Well Was It Done?

6.6 Suggestions for Changes to ECO

Service users were asked both in the exit questionnaire and during the interviews what they would change about the ECO programme. A number of suggestions were made. Note however that suggestions represent the views of a small number of individuals (number in brackets) so need to be considered in perspective -

- Reduce the pace during the initial weeks of the order (2);
- Change the duration of the order (2);
- Provide additional resources for courses e.g. first aid, money management (2);
- Use discretion when dealing with parents of young children and involving social services (1);
- Provide work programmes so people feel they are achieving without it being mandatory (1);
- Home rather than office appointments (1);
- Make counselling element longer (1);
- Building Better Relationships programme a little too long in duration (1);
- Ensure community service provides skills for work (1);
- Retain the same PO throughout the course of the ECO (1).

“Too many Probation Officers, too many different faces. One or two would be better but I’ve had five or six. You build up trust and then you get somebody else. If you see them more as a friend you’re more likely to tell them things”. Service User



7 | Impact

About this Chapter

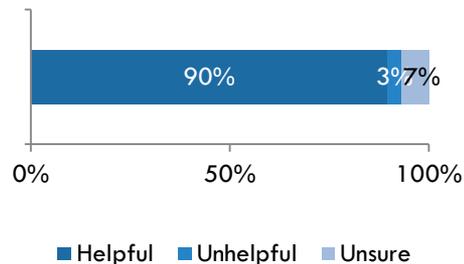
This chapter provides an overview of the impact of ECOs on service users and society.

7.1 Addressing Offending Behaviour

Figure 9 shows that nine in ten service users said they had found the programme had helped them address their offending behaviour. When asked to explain their answer the most commonly cited responses related to the focus on behaviours that lead to their offending,

“Looked at my criminal record seen it was all drink related. Talking about how I feel about the police, family experiences and past, reflective work”. Service User

Figure 9 – Overall, how helpful do you think this programme has been in helping you to address your offending behaviour? (Source: Exit Questionnaire, n=29)



the support provided by staff,

“It gave me something to focus on, enjoyed the support from [named PO/PSO]”. Service User

and to the psychological interventions.

“Psychology was so useful looking at your beliefs/motives. Up to the individual to engage and use it and I have. More of this type of work on your mind/attitude is most beneficial. First thing of any benefit to me”. Service User

A small number said that it had enabled them to settle in the community, had been because of a specific programme (NI Alternatives Start) or because of family.

The majority of the service users who completed the exit questionnaire agreed that PBNi staff’s support helped them avoid/reduce re-offending (section 6.2, 90%) and that the help addressing problems in their lifestyle and the way they thought about future offending was useful (87%, Figure 10).

“I thought it was just going to be the same as orders I’ve been on before but this has given me a chance to give it another go. There’s a year gone and I’m sweet. It’s helped me stay out of trouble”. Service User

Figure 11 shows that nine in ten service users said they were unlikely to commit a further similar offence.

Figure 10 – How useful did you find the help addressing problems in your lifestyle and the way you think about future offending? (Source: Service User Exit Questionnaire, n=30)

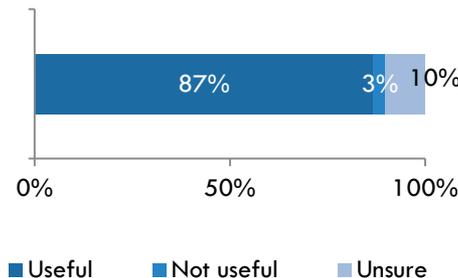
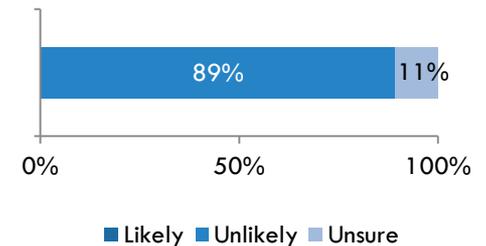


Figure 11 – At this point, how likely is it that you would commit a further similar offence? (Source: Exit Questionnaire, n=28)



7 | Impact

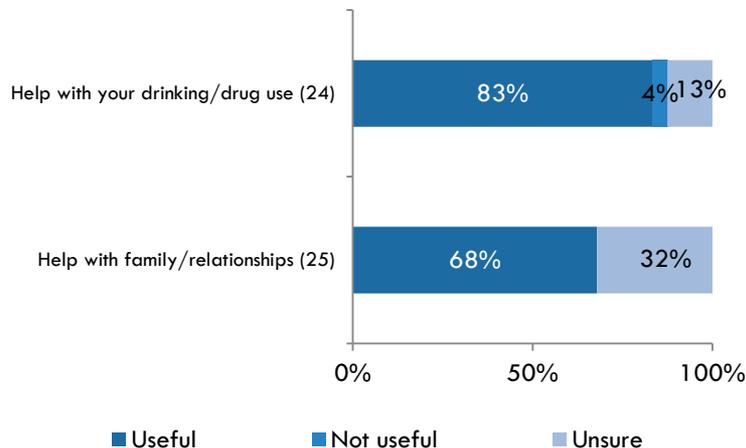
7.2 Support with Addiction and Mental Health

Issues with alcohol/substance misuse and mental health were identified in both the data (section 4.2) and interviews as being significant problems for service users. The vast majority (83%) found the help they received with drinking/drug use useful (Figure 12). The benefit of the support in this area, both from within PBNl and external organisations (e.g. Davina’s Ark, MindWise) was highlighted during the interviews.

‘I wouldn’t have had the confidence to say’ I have a mental health issue’ I can now put it up on my Facebook page ‘I go to MindWise’. Service User

“The counselling has helped me in so many ways – why I committed the offence. It’s given me coping mechanisms”. Service User

Figure 12 – How useful did you find the following -
(Source: Service User Exit Questionnaire)



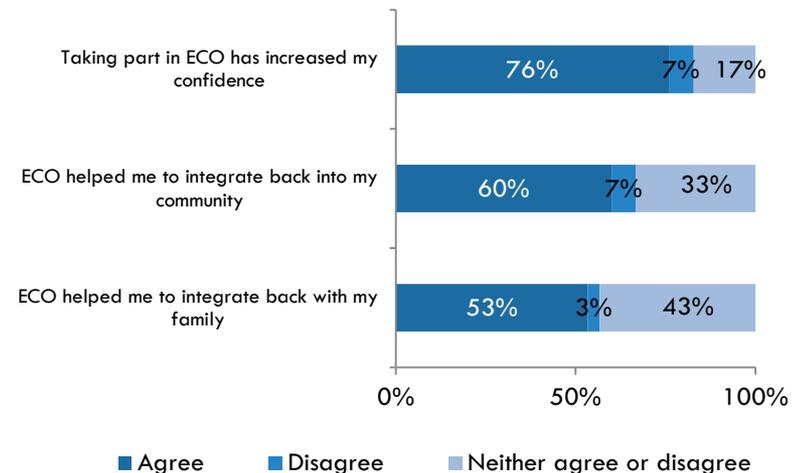
7.3 Support with Confidence and Integration

Over half of service users agreed ECO had helped them integrate back with their family (Figure 13) and 68% had found the help with family/relationships useful. This was also discussed during service user interviews, particularly in relation to the re-establishment of relationships with family members.

“Got me in contact with my sister because we fell out over something silly. I have been living on my own since I was sixteen. My mum and I fell out. Now we are close. We meet up once a week, my mother and my sister”. Service User

Just over three quarters of service users agreed that taking part in ECO had increased their confidence; 60% agreed it had helped them integrate back into their community.

Figure 13 – Service users’ experience of being on the ECO programme
(Source: Service User Exit Questionnaire, n=30)

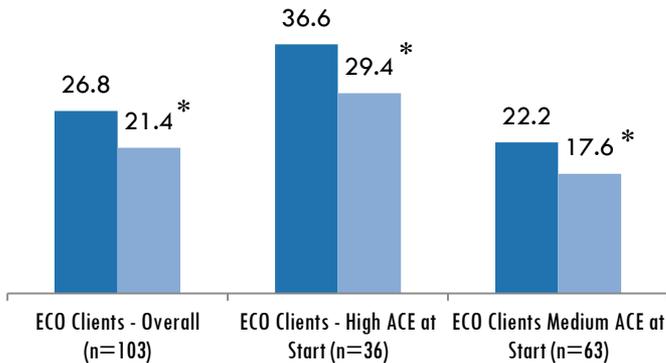


7 Impact

7.4 Reducing Risk

There was a statistically significant decrease between ACE^{1,2} score recorded³ at the start and end of the order at an overall level (n=103, p<0.05) and for both high and medium ACE service users with an average reduction of 7.3 and 4.7 points respectively. The number of participants with a low ACE score was too few so it was not possible to run significance testing on this group.

Figure 14 – Difference between Client¹ ACE Score recorded^{2,3} at start and end of order



*Statistically significant decrease (p<0.05).

¹service users who have not been revoked and have completed ECO by 30/11/18 .

²service users who have an ACE conducted within a year of starting/ending order.

³The ACE conducted closest to the service users start/end has been selected for analysis.

⁴Based on national minimum wage of £8.21 per hour.

7.5 Work Provided to Communities

As already discussed in section 5.2 25,435 community service hours were sentenced by the courts from October 2015, equivalent to almost £209,000⁴ worth of work provided to communities in the Ards, Armagh/South Down and North West areas.

7.6 Reducing Short Term Prison Sentences

The number of custodial sentences of 12 months or less, awarded by courts involved in the ECO pilot, decreased by 20.7% between 2015 and 2017 (Table 5). While there was also a reduction in the overall number of short term sentences across all the NI courts, at 3.4% this was lower than that across the pilot areas suggesting that ECO was impacting on prison numbers.

Table 5 – Number of Custodial Sentences of 12 months or less

	2015	2016	2017
Downpatrick	102	102	81
Newtownards	178	120	130
Armagh	30	53	35
Banbridge	19	16	14
Newry	110	102	88
Total	439	393	348

8

Overall

About this Chapter

This chapter provides an overview of aspects of the initiative that have worked well and the challenges that have been faced. Many of these aspects have been documented in previous sections; those that have not are covered in more detail.

8.1 Aspects Working Well

Previously mentioned in the report -

- **Support from PO/PSO** (Section 6.2)
- **Psychological support** (Sections 5.3 & 6.3.1)
- **Support with parenting/family relationships** (Sections 5.4 & 6.3.4)
- **Support with drink/drug use** (Section 7.2)
- **Support with addressing offending behaviour** (Section 7.1)
- **Restorative work provided by CRJI and NI Alternatives and PBNI staff** (Section 6.3.3)
- **Increased client confidence** (Section 7.3)
- **Significant reduction in ACE scores** (Section 7.4)
- **Reduction in number of short custodial sentences** (Section 7.6)
- **Provision of 25,435 hours worth of work provided to communities** (Section 5.2)

- **Services generally well embedded**

The wrap around services associated with ECO (e.g. psychology, NI Alternatives, CRJI, Barnardos) were reported as now being well embedded with a new employability service recently introduced (NIACRO Working Well Project).

- **Strong links with the community mental health services**

Staff reported strong links with the community mental health and addiction services.

- **The PSO role**

The PSO role was seen as critical for the crisis management of service users. It enabled a high level of contact including home callouts.

- **Targeting the right people**

Staff felt that the right people were generally being targeted.

- **Committed staff**

"The staff I have had are so committed that overall for me it has worked. The combination of PSO and PO makes it work". PBNI

- **Good collaborative approach between PO, PSO, CSO and external organisations including CRJI, Alternatives and Barnardos**

- **Continues to be embraced by the Judiciary**

"I've had a really good experience through the whole thing and I look forward to my meetings because they always help me. I'm entitled to step down to (coming in every) two weeks but I'm happy to stay on one".

Service User



8

Overall

8.2 Challenges

- **Lot expected of service users at the outset**

It was reported that some staff had the potential to do too much with service users at the start of the order and that it was important to sequence interventions to prevent service users from becoming overwhelmed.

“Some ECO clients will have additional requirements on their Order like attending Thinking Skills programme. Sometimes this can be a big ask as they have to be settled first. The majority have mental health and addictions and need to be stabilized but a court has made that they should attend this programme”. PBNI

- **Completion of community service for service users in employment**

“There are a percentage of clients that do not have mental health or addiction problems. They are often in employment and have committed a one off offence (perhaps a high monetary value offence). There is so much around ECO that they don’t need yet they have been put on the programme and have to come and see us. These clients struggle to arrange completing their community service around work.” PBNI

Previously mentioned in the report -

- **Greater creativity required for community service placements** (Sections 5.2 and 6.3.2)



9

Appendix 1

ACE Risk and Needs Profile for ECO service users at start of the order

ACE assessments were available for 273 (93%) service users starting an ECO. Tables in this Appendix present the prevalence rate for various social, personal and offending related issues identified. The ORS and PS prevalence rates are the proportion of those assessed who were deemed to have a small medium or large problem in the area. ORS prevalence rates greater than 5% are presented in these tables.

Personal Domain	Factor	Prevalence Rate %	
		ORS	PS
Substance Misuse & Addictions	Alcohol	68	71
	Drugs	55	61
Health	Mental	35	45
	Emotional Well Being	68	76
Personal Skills	Interpersonal/Social Skills	17	26
	Reasoning/Thinking	98	94
Individual Characteristics	Aggression/temper	53	53
	Boredom/ Need for Excitement	40	47
	Impulsive/Risk Taking	97	89
	Self-Esteem/Self-Image	27	47
	Sexuality/ Sexual Behaviour	6	5
	Discriminatory Attitudes	12	12
	Responsibility/Control	93	88
	Stress Management	56	62

Social Domain

Factor	Prevalence Rate %	
	ORS	PS
Accommodation	33	44
Community	53	57
Employment, Education & Training	59	76
Finances	44	51
Family & Personal Relationships	53	74

Offending Domain	Factor	Prevalence Rate %
		ORS
Lifestyle & Associates	Does the offender's lifestyle put him/ her at risk of reoffending?	84
	Do friends/ associates put him/her at risk of reoffending?	68
Attitudes	Does the offender deny responsibility for his/her offending?	50
	Does the offender disregard harm to his/her victim(s)	56
	Does the offender disregard effects of his/ her offending on people to whom they are close?	32
	Does the offender have anti-social and/ or pro-criminal attitudes?	45
	Does the offender have beliefs which enable him/ her to deny the facts about their offending?	48
	Does the offender view the benefits from crime as outweighing the costs?	22
Motivation/Attitude to supervision	Does the offender appear unmotivated to avoid re-offending?	43
	Does the offender appear unmotivated to deal with relevant problems?	49
	Does the offender appear to not accept being under supervision?	23