



PBNI Probation Board
for Northern Ireland



CORPORATE PLANNING 2020-23

FOREWORD

The Probation Board for Northern Ireland is seeking your views to help shape the future of probation services in NI. This consultation is part of the development of PBNI's Corporate Plan for 2020-23 which will set out the strategic direction for the organisation over the next three years.

The plan aims to build on the strong foundations which have been laid in developing effective probation assessments and interventions, alternatives to short prison sentences, a problem solving approach to justice and direct work with victims of crime.

Northern Ireland can be considered to be one of the safest places to live in Europe, with levels of crime being generally lower than other comparable regions. We know from crime surveys that the public want those who commit crime to be brought to justice and to be dealt with effectively. Respondents in the 2017/18 Crime Survey cited 'tougher sentences' as one of the two most important things the criminal justice system could do to improve its public confidence rating. This demonstrates that there is still significant work for all justice organisations to do to raise awareness and understanding of our collective role in making communities safer.

PBNI has held a series of seminars to help develop thinking about how we collectively deliver services across communities and influence the public policy debate.

We repeatedly heard that there is a need to move the debate away from 'tough justice' versus 'soft justice' to 'smarter justice'.

PBNI is therefore committed to engaging with communities and stakeholders to inform them of our role in tackling offending, leading in reducing reoffending and rehabilitation, working effectively and efficiently in order to deliver 'smarter justice'.

This plan provides an important opportunity for us to hear from stakeholders and communities about the services that are being delivered. PBNI has been innovative, collaborative, and responsive in meeting the challenges of the last number of years. Looking forward, this Board wants to create the circumstances for the organisation to thrive and develop further because in doing so, it will mean fewer people will reoffend and there will be fewer victims of crime. We need your views to help us do that. Together we can change lives for safer communities.

Dale Ashford
Chair of the Probation Board

ABOUT THIS CONSULTATION

PBNI is now consulting on its Corporate Plan for 2020-23 and would like to hear your views.

Probation is involved at all stages of the criminal justice process. It works in Courts providing pre-sentence reports to assist Judges to make decisions. It works in communities supervising sentences that

must be served in the community. It works in prisons, preparing prisoners for release and supervising those subject to licences. It also works directly with victims of crime through the Victims Information Scheme.

PROBATION WORKING WITHIN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM



We know that confidence in the service provided by probation is high. However the nature and complexity of crimes is changing. While low level crime such as criminal damage and theft has reduced; there have been increases in cybercrime, child sexual exploitation, sexual offending and crimes against vulnerable people.

Many of those subject to probation supervision also have serious addictions and mental health problems. Dealing with these issues and facilitating change is resource intensive.

76% of people under probation supervision in Northern Ireland have an alcohol or drug-related problem.

There is a well-established link between drugs, alcohol and crime. In fact, one of the biggest factors that influences whether someone will reoffend is their use of drugs and alcohol. Therefore tackling this type of behaviour is a priority for probation.

Likewise there are high numbers of people on probation supervision assessed as having mental health problems. 40% of people under supervision have a mental health problem. Evidence confirms that untreated or inadequately treated mental health needs contribute to criminal behaviour.

We are dealing with many individuals who have experienced some form of Trauma and/or Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE).

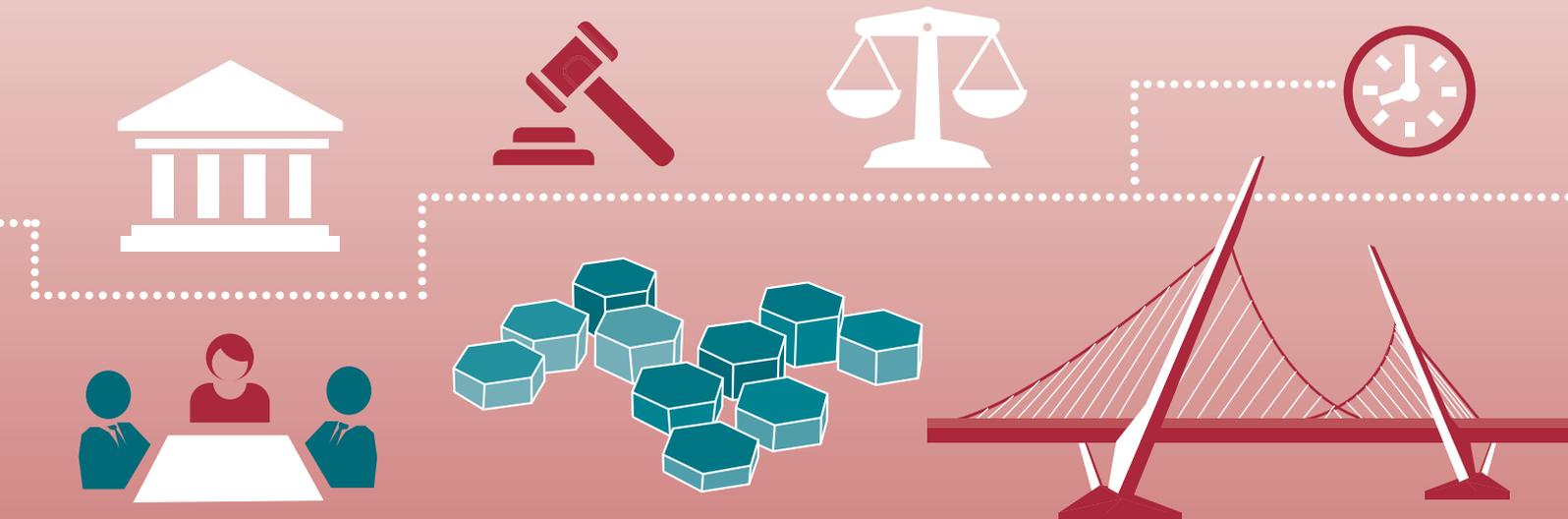
Therefore many of the people probation work with have significant vulnerabilities which need to be addressed to prevent further reoffending.



At the same time the resources available to deal with these complex and difficult issues are reducing. PBNI has received continuous cuts to its baseline budget within 2014-15, 2015-16, and 2017-18, however over the same period the level of temporary funding has continued to increase. Temporary funding is difficult to sustain. The uncertainty of programme funding not extending beyond one year is resulting in major implications on staffing other core business and impacting on PBNI's ability to secure staff on short term temporary contracts. There is also an impact on those who we partner with, in particular the voluntary and community sector. The ongoing uncertainty impacts upon the level of activity and outcomes that are achieved.

Therefore it is necessary for PBNI to continue to think about how it delivers its service into the future. This includes looking at international best practice, considering technological advancements that can assist our work and enhancing our partnership work with organisations and across communities.

This consultation provides an opportunity for stakeholders to inform and shape probation in the future. It provides an opportunity for all those with an interest in probation to help us ensure the organisation is fit for purpose, effective and efficient in the coming years. Most importantly, it provides an opportunity for everyone in NI to have a say in how probation can contribute towards making every community safer.



CORPORATE PLANNING 2017-20

The Corporate Plan in 2017-20 was informed by the draft Programme for Government and the then Minister for Justice's priorities. It was also informed by the work of the NI Assembly Justice Committee, in particular its 'Report on Justice in the 21st Century: Innovative approaches for the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland. PBNI's Corporate Planning period for 2017-20 saw the implementation of problem solving justice pilots and further development of innovative solutions to tackling the root causes of offending behaviour. It also saw the introduction of preventative work including the establishment of the 'Aspire' project and the non-adjudicated programme for domestic violence perpetrators.

During this period, funding continued to be delivered on a one year basis. PBNI has received continuous cuts to its baseline budget within 2014-15, 2015-16, and 2017-19, however over the same period the level of temporary funding continued to increase. Temporary funding has created difficulties in terms in terms of the establishment of permanent staff posts and difficulty making long term planning decisions.

PBNI CASELOAD STATISTICS 2018/19

PBNI CASELOAD



As at 31st March 2019, PBNI were supervising **4,154** people on the caseload, similar to the **4,147** in the previous year



One in ten of the PBNI's current caseload is female

REPORTS COMPLETED FOR COURTS



8,427 reports completed for court between April 2018 - March 2019



Increase in reports completed between 2017/18 and 2018/19

NEW ORDERS ADDED IN 2018/19



3,167

new orders added
in 2018/19



Combination Order - **20% increase**
Probation Order - **19% increase**
ECO - **21% increase**

PBNI VICTIM INFORMATION SCHEME



At the end of March 2019,

348 victims

were registered on the scheme



During 2018 / 19,

**173 new
registrations**

(13% higher than in
2017/ 18 (153))

At 31 March 2019 there were 4,154 people being supervised by PBNI.

In the last Corporate Planning period there was a change in the security assessment from September 2017 to December 2018. This impacted upon staff's sense of safety and security.

This period also saw the collapse of the NI Executive and Assembly which has had an impact on PBNI and the wider public sector. Staff were also involved in preparatory meetings to consider the impact of the UK withdrawal from the EU on PBNI.

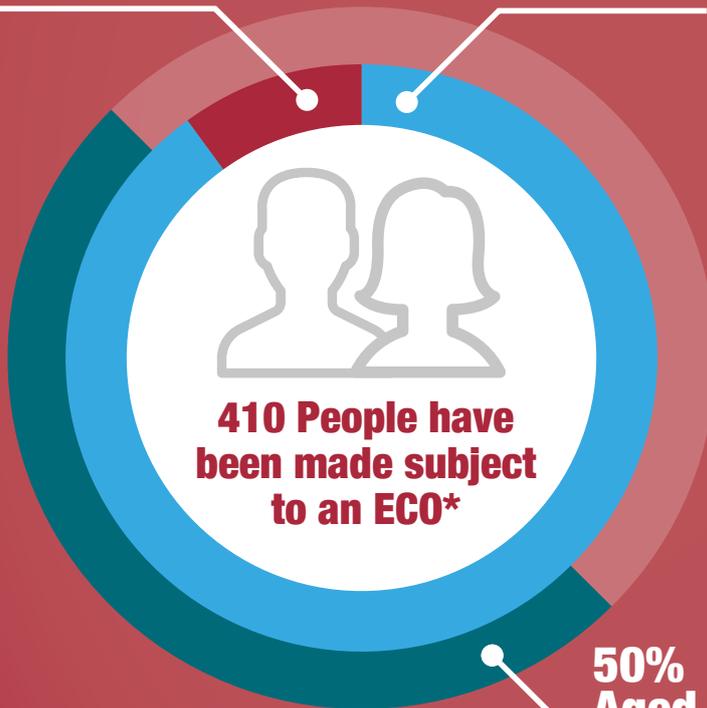
WHAT WAS ACHIEVED IN CORPORATE PLANNING PERIOD 2017-20

Update on the Enhanced Combination Order

The Enhanced Combination Order (ECO) continues to be a crucial order in diverting offenders from short-term custodial sentences and preventing reoffending.

10% Female

90% Male



People who are subject to this order have been convicted of a range of offences including:

- drug offences
- motoring offences
- violent offences
- theft & dishonesty offences

50% Aged 20-29



Everyone subject to an Order is triaged for mental health issues with appropriate cases receiving treatment from PBNI psychology staff.

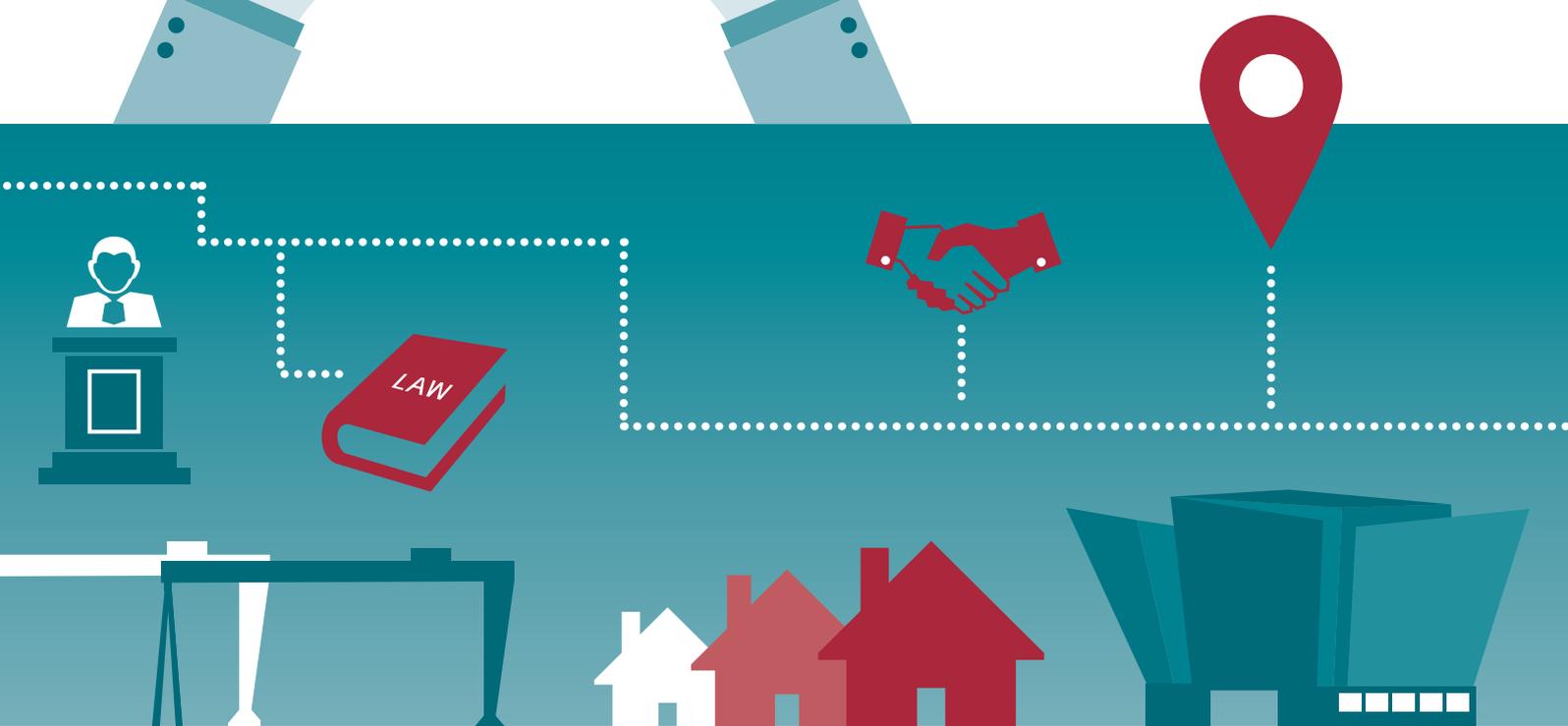
Over the course of the last strategy we:

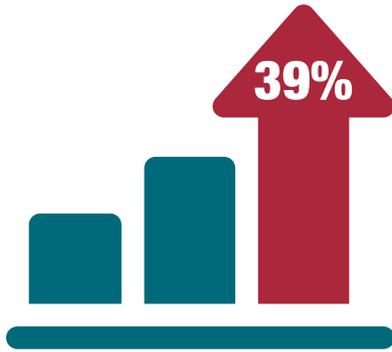
- Developed the Enhanced Combination Order (ECO) and rolled it out to three court areas. The Order has been evaluated by NISRA and Ulster University. At June 2019 410 people have received an ECO instead of a short prison sentence. All participants have been considered for a psychological assessment and over 70 people have taken part in parenting interventions. The number of custodial sentences of 12 months or less, made by courts involved in the ECO pilot, decreased by 20.7% between 2015 and 2017. 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.
- Played a lead role in the development of the Substance Misuse Court which was launched at Belfast Magistrates' Court in April 2018. The court adopts an alternative approach to tackle the root causes of offending behaviour and aims to reduce reoffending and substance misuse among participants and to facilitate their rehabilitation.
- Developed and delivered an innovative and mobile Graffiti Removal Scheme in partnership with Belfast City Council.
- Played a key role in the development of the Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programme which was launched in March 2018 in the Londonderry Court area. The scheme allows judges to refer suitable offenders - who must accept that their behaviour is harmful, unacceptable and needs to change - onto a therapeutic behaviour change programme.
- Developed and delivered a new programme in partnership with Women's Aid within the Western Health and Social Care Trust aimed at males over 18 who have demonstrated the potential to be abusive within relationships and whose children are assessed as at risk by Social Services.
- Established Service User Forums to improve service delivery and give those who have offended and victims an opportunity to feedback on probation practice.

- Developed and implemented a Workforce Modernisation Strategy to ensure we have a business model which is effective and efficient. This has included the development of new Practice Standards. Clear, consistent standards are the platform for sound professional judgement. The standards provide this platform by detailing the minimum requirements for practitioners at the key stages of our work with people who have offended.
- Developed a new project called 'Aspire' that works with marginalised young men aged 16-30 at risk of becoming involved or further involved in criminality and supports them to resist negative influences. It is part of the NI Executive programme of work which was established as a result of the Fresh Start Agreement. This project has been evaluated and found to be a 'highly worthwhile and effective programme for service users who very much value the support it provides'.



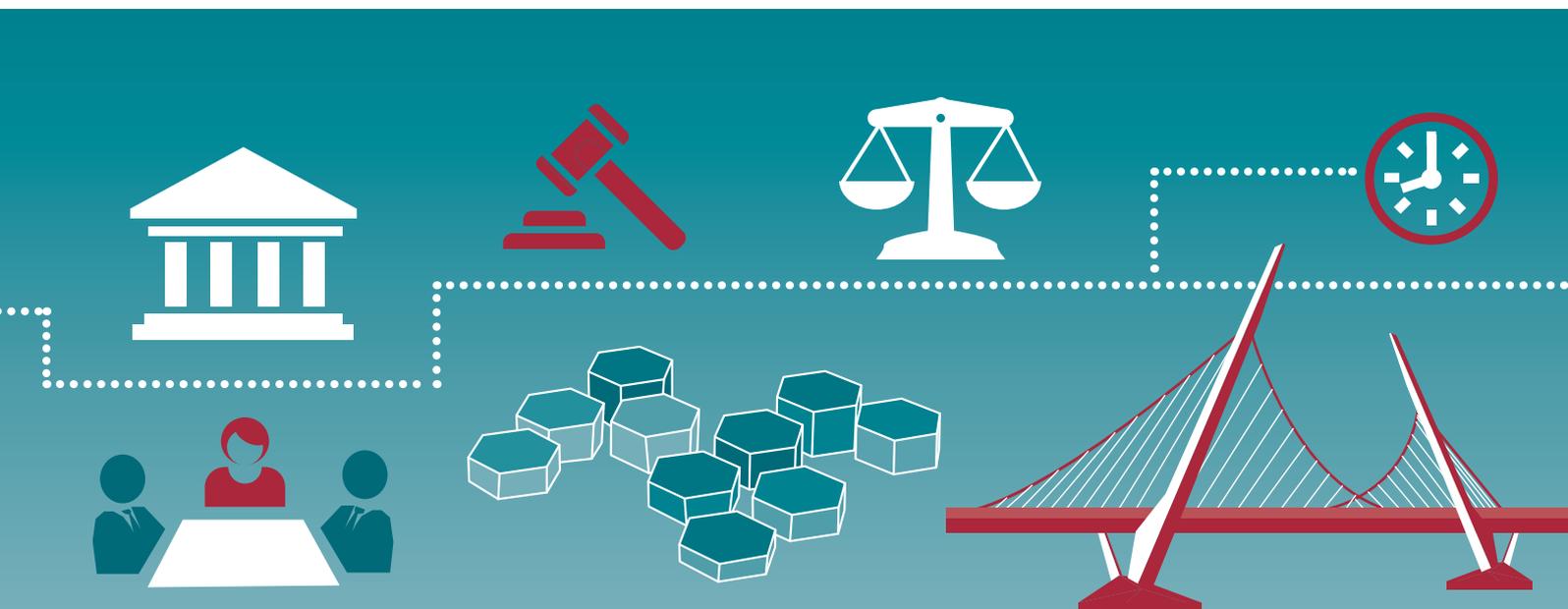
**OVER
340
VICTIMS
REGISTERED**





During 2018/19, there were **173 new registrations** to the Victim Information Scheme, **39%** higher than 2017/18.

- Increased the number of victims registered with the victim information scheme by 39% and introduced an online registration service for victims of crime in November 2017.
- Developed and implemented an Estates Strategy which has included providing new and modern office spaces in Coleraine, Downpatrick, and Omagh.
- Secured funding from the transformation fund and developed our award winning mobile phone app 'changing lives' to help promote desistance from crime.
- Provided funding to the Community and Voluntary sector for a range of interventions to support people moving away from reoffending.
- Reduced staff sickness by 30.5% in the last business year.
- Made significant progress in delivering a new case management system and modernising our IT infrastructure.



PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS

- There has not been an Assembly or Executive in place since January 2017. This, of course, may change over the period of the next Corporate Plan.
- The policy direction of the Department of Justice will continue to focus on taking forward the outgoing Executive's draft Programme for Government and also to continue to take forward the outgoing Minister's policy priorities.
- There is likely to be continuing pressure on public sector finances with the attendant implications for service delivery. Uncertainty about budget settlements, and temporary funding for projects inhibits longer term planning. There is a risk that the baseline budget is being propped up with temporary in-year funding for programmes, with no confirmation that funding will be available in future years.
- PBNI is a part of the criminal justice system and as such works with a range of criminal justice partners including the judiciary, court service, PSNI, NIPs and YJA. PBNI also work with health trusts and the Public Health Agency. Likewise PBNI has built strong partnerships with the voluntary and community sector. A constant theme of PBNI work has been collaboration to help prevent reoffending.
- There is a major review on sentencing being carried out by the Department of Justice which includes community sentencing which is likely to impact upon the work of probation.
- Problem solving justice continues to be a key part of the justice system. Evidence to date shows that problem solving justice is working and has the potential to improve outcomes for people in NI. PBNI want to continue our work within problem solving justice and to enhance our work in early intervention with adults in the future.
- There has been an increase in the complexity of cases PBNI deal with and an increase in the vulnerability of service users. This may continue into the future.
- The impact of the UK withdrawal from the EU may impact upon probation's role in particular with the RoI.
- Effectiveness of the justice system and issues such as delay will continue to be a priority across the justice system.
- In the UK and across Europe there is a focus on digital justice. The Department of Justice is continuing to work in this area.
- PBNI will continue to work within Policing and Community Safety Partnerships and local government to make local communities safer.

PBNI'S AIM, VISION AND VALUES

OUR AIM

PBNI's aim is:

'changing lives for safer communities'.

OUR VISION STATEMENT

We will lead in the reduction of reoffending by tackling the root causes of offending behaviour and rehabilitating people. We will be collaborative and transformative to reduce the number of victims of crime and building 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 transform their lives.

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

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

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

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR 2020-23

PBNI's priorities for the Corporate Plan will be informed by the draft Programme for Government and aligned to the Department of Justice's priorities.

THE PRIORITIES ARE:

- **Shaping and Influencing Criminal Justice Policy and Practice.**
As the lead in rehabilitating people who have offended, PBNI will work to shape and influence criminal justice policy and practice. PBNI would like to see a greater focus in preventing people becoming involved in criminality and early intervention and will work with partners to take this forward. We know the factors that lead to offending behaviour and we know that in order to effectively rehabilitate people we must deal with those factors. Therefore in the coming 3 years PBNI through a range of initiatives will focus on tackling drug/alcohol related offending; poor mental health; and building opportunities to enhance people's education, employment and parenting skills. PBNI cannot do this work alone and that is why a partnership approach will be adopted.
- **Delivering an innovative and problem solving approach to reducing reoffending through partnership and collaboration.**
Problem solving Justice is at the heart of the justice Programme for Government delivery plans. PBNI has a key role in the implementation of a number of problem solving justice initiatives including the substance misuse court, the enhanced combination order, and the domestic violence perpetrator programme. Over the course of the next Corporate Plan PBNI will develop this work further.



- **Demonstrating Effectiveness and Efficiency**

PBNI will deliver effective probation practice through the supervision of community sentences and licences, through the delivery of assessment reports, through the delivery of risk management plans and through its work with victims. It will enhance its practice over the next 3 years by having a programme of research and implementing the recommendations from inspections and audits of practice. Our focus will be on implementing evidence based practice. Through the governance framework the Board will ensure that the organisation is efficient and that we deliver services that are value for money and making a difference to people's lives.

- **Valuing and Developing our People**

We will develop our people and ensure they are trained and skilled to carry out their jobs effectively. We will create a culture where wellbeing and learning are at the forefront of what we do. We want to empower staff to have the skills, empathy and ability to engage in transformative change. We want to have professional staff across all grades and disciplines and skilled practitioners that can effectively manage behavioural change.

- **Building Awareness and Confidence in communities about the professional role of PBNI**

PBNI will work collaboratively across government and with criminal justice partners, the statutory, community and voluntary sectors to develop a comprehensive engagement and communications strategy which will inform and engage to build awareness of our role in creating safer communities.

YOUR VIEWS

We want to hear your views. This consultation seeks views on PBNI's priorities for the Corporate Plan 2020-23. 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 or requests for further information should be provided by 31 October 2019 (please note that it may not be possible to accept consultation responses after this date). You can respond to the consultation exercise by email, post or online.

Questions for you:



QUESTION 1:

Do you agree with our aim, vision and values?



QUESTION 2:

Do you agree with our strategic priorities or is there anything else we should add or take out?



QUESTION 3:

What are probation doing that you feel is important and should continue or develop?



QUESTION 4:

What could probation do better in the future?

You can send us your views and your answers in the following way



EMAIL

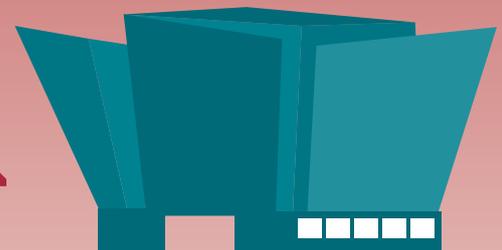
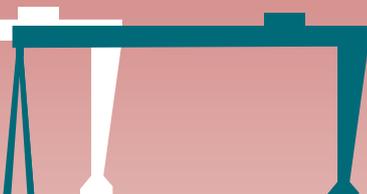
consultation@probation-ni.gov.uk



POST

Gail McGreevy, Head of Communications
Probation Board for NI
80-90 North Street, Belfast, BT1 1LD

We would be happy to meet and discuss elements of our work during the consultation period. Please send any queries, comments or requests for information/meetings to consultation@probation-ni.gov.uk or telephone: **(028) 9052 2661**



PUBLICATION OF RESPONSES

PBNI intends to publish responses to the consultation (the contact details of private individuals will be removed prior to publication) and a summary of responses online following completion of the consultation process. Please tell us if you don't want your response to be published. Any personal data will be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018. Respondents should also be aware that PBNI's obligations under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 may require that any responses not subject to specific exemptions under the Act be communicated to third parties on request.

ACCESSIBILITY

If you require the consultation document in an alternative format this can be arranged by contacting Gail McGreevy on gail.mcgreevy@probation-ni.gov.uk.

If you have any queries about PBNI's consultations or wish to request documents in alternative formats, please contact:



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