

Publication

The Probation Service and the Community

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The Probation Service recognises and acknowledges the important role that the community plays in working with offenders, supporting their rehabilitation, reintegrating and engaging in a positive lifestyle

A Shared Community

Community is at the heart of the Probation Service. Offenders are part of their communities and even when they receive custodial sentences, they will eventually return to those communities. Many offenders under supervision have highly complex needs and may require a broad range of support and assistance if they are to make better choices for themselves and their communities. The strong ties that have been developed with various organisations; community, charitable and statutory, help the service to successfully address those needs. In every respect, the success of the

Probation Service is a joint effort, working daily alongside groups behalf of service users, as well as with state agencies, including the Irish Prison Service and An Garda Síochána in cities and towns across the country.

The work of the Probation Service work rooted in this shared community and it is a mutually beneficial relationship. The importance of creating this kind of 'continuity' of environments between offenders and others is vital in the process of rehabilitation and reintegration. Inclusion is a key principle of the Probation Service. Living and working in the same environment assists in developing common interests and shared goals.

Work in the Community

Very often offenders under our supervision have complex problems such as alcohol or drug dependencies - or may have poor literacy and social skills. These offenders require a wide range of support and assistance in the community if they are to make better choices for themselves and their communities. Specialised initiatives and support services are also delivered by community-based providers such as restorative justice, mentoring and sex offender programmes. The Probation Service provides funding and support to Community-Based-Organisations to develop and deliver services in communities - which undertake the work of the Probation Service in changing offending behaviour.

Thousands of our service users have 'passed through the gates' of these CBO programmes — both as part of the rehabilitation plan and as part of a Community Service Order (CSO).

The purpose of these programmes is to support the Probation Officer in working with offenders to change their offending behaviour and in addressing the issues related to it.

The Irish Probation Service provides funding to more than 60 Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) across the country (see link below) - with this funding accounting for about one third of our budget.

Offenders on probation may be referred to any one of these groups or services by their Probation Officers.

Examples of Probation funded projects include:

IASIO was set up in 2014 by the Department of Justice, through the Probation Service and the Irish Prison Service. One initiative developed in specific response to the needs of offenders is the Irish Association for the Social Integration of Offenders (IASIO).

IASIO: Help for ex-offenders is a national Community-Based-Organisation, CBO, for adult offenders in the Criminal Justice System which prioritises finding alternatives to re-offending and re-imprisonment.

This is achieved through the provision of direct services to offenders, both in the community and in all Irish prisons.

Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Programmes

The Cornmarket Project

The Cornmarket Project (<https://www.wld.ie/programmes/cornmarket-project/>) is an inter-agency community-based treatment and rehabilitation project under the auspices of Wexford Local Development. The project helps offenders and substance misusers to move to a more stable and productive lifestyle.

In April 2014, Cornmarket launched a programme called REFRAME, (Restorative Focused Rehabilitation and Motivation Enhancement).

As part of the project, each participant receives a Community Employment payment, while they participate in rehabilitative programmes to support their progress away from offending behaviour and drug and alcohol misuse.

Participants also take part in work designed to give back to the community, for example, by helping with the Tidy Towns work brigades as volunteers. The new programme was rolled out in Wexford Town, Gorey, Enniscorthy and New Ross.

Wexford County Council are assisting the project by providing allotments for the horticultural element of the programmes. The Local Employment Service is engaging with participants to enhance their prospects of progression into further education, training and the labour market. The Wexford Campus of Carlow IT and Wexford Local Development are also supporting the programme.

Le Chéile (Together)

Le Chéile (<http://www.lecheile.ie/>) is a nationwide project, working in partnership with the Young Persons' Probation (<http://www.probation.ie/EN/PB/WebPages/WP16000038>) (YPP) - division of the Probation Service, providing mentoring for young people in trouble with the law.

Le Chéile recruits, trains and supports volunteers from the community to act as mentors to young people who are under the supervision of the Probation Service.

Le Cheile is part supported by the Irish Government and the European Social Fund as part of the ESF Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning 2014-2020.

Work in the Community - The Numbers

2018 Statistics on the Probation Services Work in the Community

- Community Service Orders made: 2,499
- Number of years that would have been served if Community Service Orders had not been made: 1,054
- Total number of community service hours ordered in lieu of custodial sentence: 355,404

In 2018 this equated to over €3 million worth of unpaid work for the benefit of communities nationwide.

In 2018 the Probation Service managed 227 Orders for community service under the Fines (Payment and Recovery) Act 2014.

BETA

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