

2017 ~  
2020



CHANGING LIVES FOR SAFER COMMUNITIES



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## Setting the direction for Probation

This Corporate Plan aims to build on the success probation has already achieved in the rehabilitation of people, who have offended. That success provides a sound basis for the Probation Service to continue its work to reduce reoffending and consequently **reduce the number of people who become victims of crime, which is our overall goal.**

“My view around the probation service is that they are the stand out organisation in the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland. Staff are extremely well trained. They are respected. They act with integrity. Much of the really good work that is being delivered in criminal justice in Northern Ireland you’ll find probation right in the middle of that”.

**Brendan McGuigan**  
Criminal Justice Inspector



The Probation Board contributes to reducing offending and making local communities safer through supervising people subject to court orders and engaging with them to challenge and positively change their behaviour. The Corporate Plan sets the strategic direction for probation to 2020 and beyond, against the background of the draft Programme for Government. It does this by identifying the Strategic Priorities for the Probation Service and the Monitoring Framework against which progress will be assessed across the life of the plan.

The Board began the process of developing this Corporate Plan in March 2016 with a seminar entitled 'Probation in Focus'. The seminar brought together stakeholders, partners, service users and staff to review probation's contribution to the Criminal Justice system in Northern Ireland and to consider what the priorities should be in the Corporate Plan 2017-20. What was clear from that event, and what has been apparent throughout the public consultation process, is the high regard in which probation is held and the value placed on the services it delivers. This is a welcome acknowledgement of probation's contribution.

While developing the Corporate Plan, the Probation Board engaged and consulted with more organisations and groups than ever before.

We met with Criminal Justice partners and have held discussions with community and voluntary organisations as well as elected representatives. We have also talked to our staff and their trade union representatives. The high number of formal responses received to the consultation process is a positive endorsement of the approach used. In addition to the formal responses received, a range of meetings with key stakeholders was held to gather informal feedback about the shape of the Corporate Plan. The Board is confident that these responses have helped us define the appropriate priorities.

The positive outcomes delivered during the Probation Board's last Corporate Plan are testament to the leadership, commitment and hard work of all the probation staff. I would like to pay particular tribute to the work of Cheryl Lamont in her role as Acting Director of Probation during that time. Finally, I would like to thank the members of the Probation Board, who contributed to the successful delivery of the last Corporate Plan and to those who will do so in this period. Their knowledge, experience and strategic thinking are crucial to the success of the Probation Board for Northern Ireland.

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**Vilma Patterson MBE**  
Chairman  
Probation Board for Northern Ireland

## Setting the scene

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During the three year life of the Corporate Plan, there will inevitably be challenges which have the potential to impact on service delivery. The most obvious of these is the predicted continuing downward pressure on budgets. To meet the challenges and ensure that the probation service delivers better outcomes and value for money, it will be essential to be innovative and work in partnership with both the Statutory and the Community and Voluntary Sectors to deliver positive outcomes in rehabilitation and preventing reoffending.

Probation has the leading role in delivering rehabilitation in Northern Ireland. It does this by helping people, who have offended, change their behaviours. The result of such changes is less reoffending with fewer victims. While the long established approach has rehabilitated many individuals, more needs to be done in tackling the root causes of the factors associated with offending behaviours. Addressing these root causes - as indicated in the Justice Committee's Report - is critical to achieving the reduction in reoffending rates included in the Programme for Government.

In March 2016, the Justice Committee published its 'Report on Justice in the 21st Century: Innovative Approaches for the Criminal Justice System in Northern Ireland (NIA 313/11-16). In the Report, the Committee emphasised the importance of tackling the underlying problems and root causes of (re)offending, if rates are to be reduced. The Committee also recommended that the use of problem solving justice should be explored.

This approach has now been included in the draft Programme for Government. Probation has the skills and knowledge to play a key role in this approach and make a real difference. If the problem solving approach is successful, there should be savings generated across the justice system and the wider public sector in Northern Ireland with better outcomes. Importantly, it will also reduce, over time, the number of victims. Such a change in approach requires sustainable, planned resourcing in order to deliver the longer term benefits (including cost savings) to the community. As a result of the change of approach, there may well also be a rise in the number of Community Sentences handed down by the Courts with a rise in the Probation Service's workload during the life of the Corporate Plan. Consequently, the emerging position will be kept under review.

### Real Life Stories

## “I’ve turned My Life Around”

### Hannah’s story

Hannah who had spent time in custody was released on licence and supervised through Probation’s Inspire model which deals with female offenders.

**“I spent time in prison for a few offences and the last time I came out I was referred to probation because I was subject to a licence. Probation didn’t so much teach me right from wrong because you know that yourself but they gave me a helping hand and a push. I never thought I would be sitting where I am today. I have a house and boyfriend and everything is going well for me. Whereas before I was sitting in a cell writing letters and feeling sorry for myself. My probation officer...if it wasn’t for her God knows where I would be or what situation I would be in. It’s basically all thanks to her that I’ve turned my life around”.**

## The Strategic Priorities for 2017-20

It is the Probation Board's responsibility to determine the appropriate priorities to reflect those of the Department of Justice and the Programme for Government. The identified priorities must be sufficiently flexible to be adapted both to potentially changing circumstances and to the availability of resources to deliver the service.

There were some themes which arose throughout the consultation process, including the importance of focussing on victims and people with mental health or addiction issues under probation supervision. There was also feedback from staff about the importance of more engagement with local communities and a greater focus on preventative work. Service users provided feedback about the importance of probation in helping them resettle and reintegrate back into communities. These themes have informed the identification of the strategic priorities, which will contribute to the delivery of Outcome 7 of the draft Programme for Government, 'We have a safer community where we respect the law and each other'.

The Probation Board has identified the following strategic priorities to facilitate rehabilitation and resettlement to make our communities safer with fewer victims of crime:



**Strategic Priority 1**

Delivering on probation's statutory obligations across the Criminal Justice System.

**Strategic Priority 2**

Prioritising Service Delivery on perpetrators of crime against vulnerable people.

**Strategic Priority 3**

Promoting an innovative and problem solving approach to encourage rehabilitation, reduce re-offending and address the issues commonly associated with re-offending behaviour.

**Strategic Priority 4**

Contributing to the delivery of the NI Executive's Fresh Start Agreement Action Plan.

**Strategic Priority 5**

Influencing the development and delivery of the public policy on resettlement and rehabilitation.

The approach to the delivery of the strategic priorities is set out on pages 25-27.

The Probation Service will deliver the strategic priorities on behalf of the Probation Board. The actions to do so will be set out in the annual Business Plan. It is published separately to this Corporate Plan, giving details, measurable actions and the desired outcomes. Progress is formally reviewed each quarter by the Board.

Throughout the period of the Corporate Plan, we will work with the Department of Justice to ensure the necessary resources are provided for the Probation Service to deliver its important role in the Criminal Justice system.

## Planning Assumptions

The Board acknowledges that there will be significant challenges and changes during the life of the Corporate Plan. For the Corporate Plan and its strategic priorities to be meaningful, it is important to have identified realistic underpinning assumptions. Such assumptions will be kept under review and will be revised as appropriate. Any changes to the assumptions could impact on probation's capability to deliver the identified priorities.

The following are the assumptions on which the Plan has been built.

### Resources

Firstly and most importantly, it is the Probation Board's responsibility to secure the necessary resources to deliver the priorities. There has been a practice in recent years to have one year settlements as a means of meeting the prevailing financial uncertainties. While understandable in the circumstances, such an approach encourages short term decision making, which often works against long term planning for service delivery, the workforce and PBNI's estate. Continuing with this practice could have an adverse effect on the delivery of the probation service over the longer term.

There will be continuing downward pressure on public finances due to ongoing economic uncertainties. Since 2010/11, PBNI's budget has already been reduced by 17.6% (or some £3.5m) although there have also been some limited, short term funds provided for specific projects and initiatives.

To date, the protection of frontline services has been prioritised and the back office costs have been reduced to a minimum. Any further reduction in the budget would inevitably adversely impact on frontline service delivery, including the level of supervision for those subject to court orders and licences.

Table 1 sets out the budgetary requirements across the 3 years of the Corporate Plan to continue the current level of service provision. It has been prepared on the basis of known and recurring pressures, which cannot be met from the reduced budget. It does not include any provision for initiatives previously funded separately outside the baseline.

**Table 1: Budgetary requirement 2017-20**

YEAR	PAY (£M)	NON-PAY (£ M)	TOTAL (£ M)
2017/18	15.23	1.51	16.74
2018/19	15.38	1.54	16.92
2019/20	15.53	1.57	17.10

**Note:**

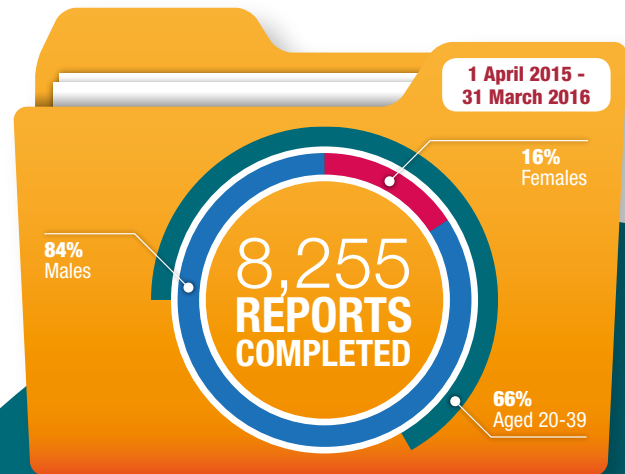
The figures are forecast estimates for future years based on the 2016/17 actual costs and known, uncontrollable pressures during the life of the corporate plan. These estimates do not include funds for projects such as RESET (a mentoring project for people released from prison) and ECO (a Community Sentence pilot project as an alternative to short term prison sentences).

## Workload

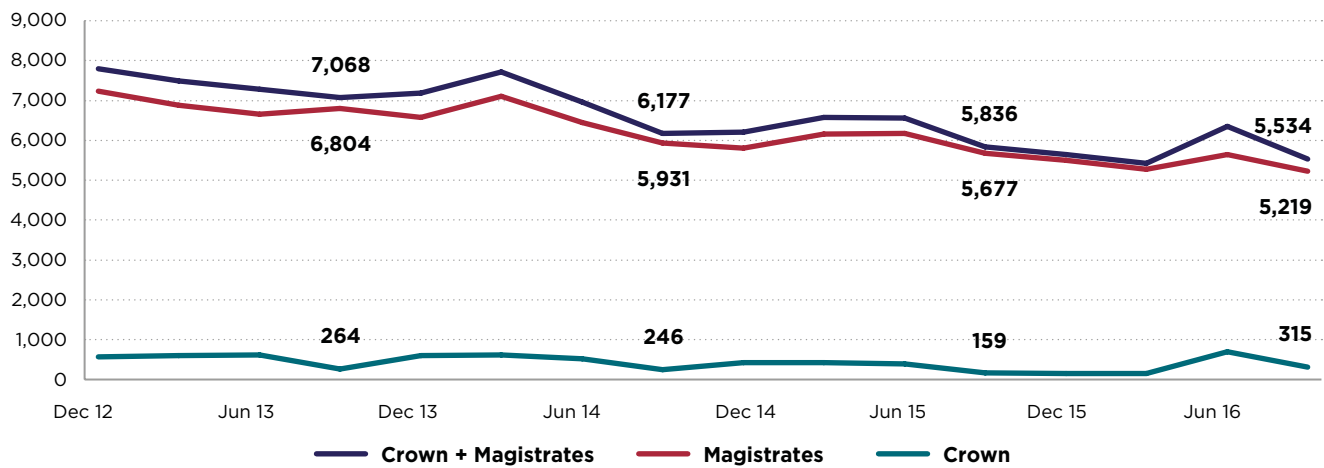
The Probation Service performs the lead role in the Criminal Justice System on delivering rehabilitation.

In 2015-16 it provided 8255 reports to assist decision making in the criminal justice process. Of these reports, 4445 were Pre-Sentence Reports provided to assist Judges in their sentencing decisions. In the prisons in Northern Ireland, probation staff deliver pre-release resettlement interventions to prisoners and also provide risk assessment reports to the Parole Commissioners to inform their decision making about prisoner releases. In the community, probation staff supervise people under a range of Orders and Licences to ensure sentence compliance. At 31 March 2016, there were 4209 people who were subject to Court Licences/Orders. These include Community Service Orders, Probation Orders and post custodial Licences. Services are also provided to victims of crime through our Victim Information Scheme.

**The successful delivery of the probation service is central to the promotion of public confidence in both community sentencing and the wider justice system because of its role in delivering sentence compliance, rehabilitation and resettlement.**

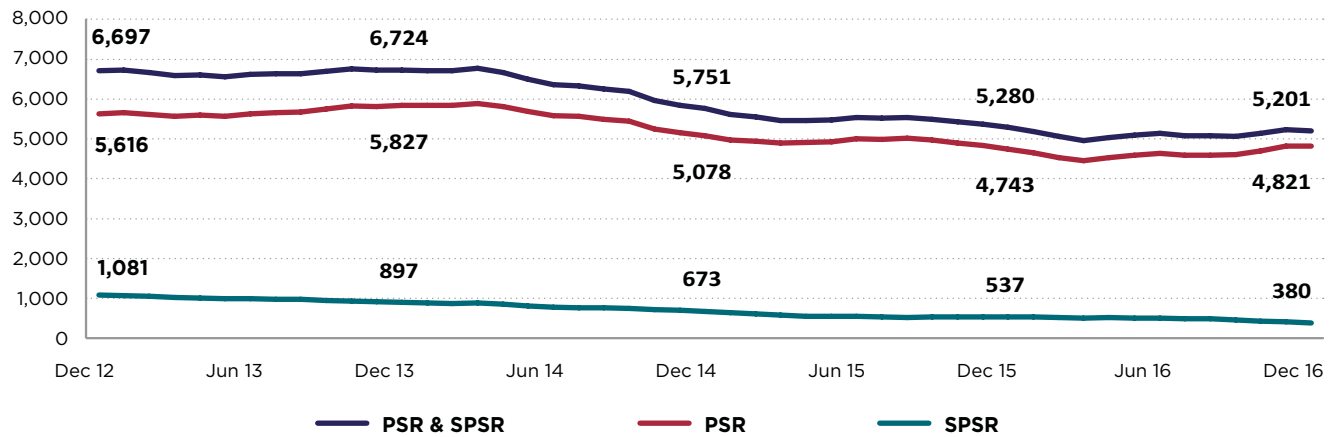


**Figure 1 Number of Defendants convicted, by quarter\*: 31 December 2012 to 30 September 2016**



\*Sourced from Public Prosecution Service NI Quarterly Statistical Bulletins.

Figure 2: Number of Pre- Sentence Reports and Short Pre-Sentence Reports- Rolling 12 month totals: 31 December 2012 to 31 December 2016

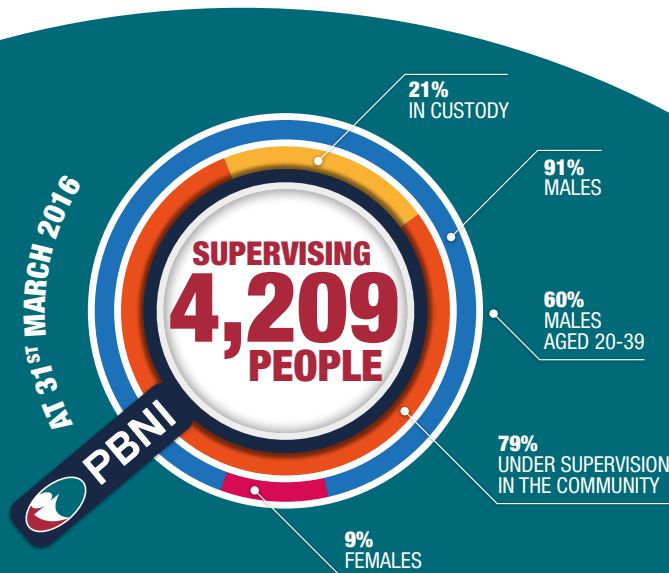


During **2014/15** PBNI offenders delivered approximately **146,000** hours of unpaid work to the community

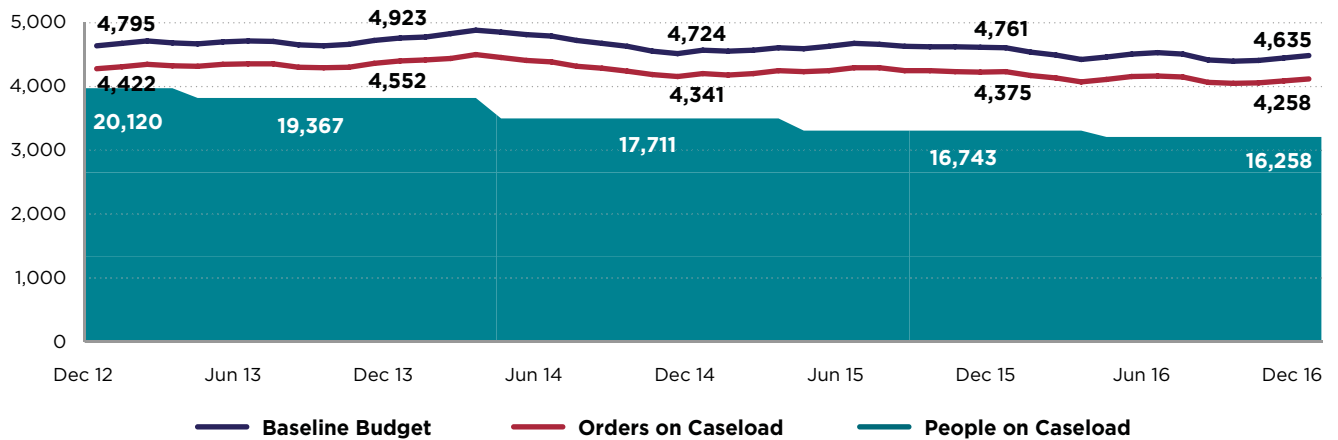
Although the recorded crime has shown an overall trend downwards over the last twelve years, there has been a slight increase over the last three years. The nature of crime is, however, dynamic and it is currently changing with more incidents of cyber crime. The result of this is that the work of the probation staff is likely to have to adapt to meet the new, emerging challenges. The recent increase in crime and a focus on tackling the root causes of offending may lead to an increase in the overall workload over the life of the Corporate Plan.

Figure 1, sourced from Public Prosecution Service, shows the number of defendants convicted in Crown Courts and Magistrates Courts since December 2012. While convictions have reduced by 24% since 2012/13, the number of people on probation's caseload has reduced by 4% in the same period. The details are shown in Figure 4.

Even with the reduction in convictions of about 24% since financial year 2012/13, as reflected in Figure 1, the number of Pre-Sentence Reports completed in December 2016 shows a rise from the previous year. There is no reason to expect the number of PSRs to change significantly out to 2020.



**Figure 3: People under statutory\* supervision in custody and community, Point in Time: 31 October 2012 – 31 October 2016 and budget provision**



\*Excludes people on non-statutory supervision, i.e. remand/sentence and inescapable voluntary.



The caseload also covers the full spectrum of the risk of re-offending: low, medium and high. If individuals are not successfully managed, their likelihood of re-offending will increase over time. Therefore, it is important to effectively manage all offenders. It is assumed that the level of supervision will not be reduced.

Figure 3 shows that the number of orders and the people under supervision has remained largely flat since December 2012 but in the same period there has been a significant reduction in the baseline budget.

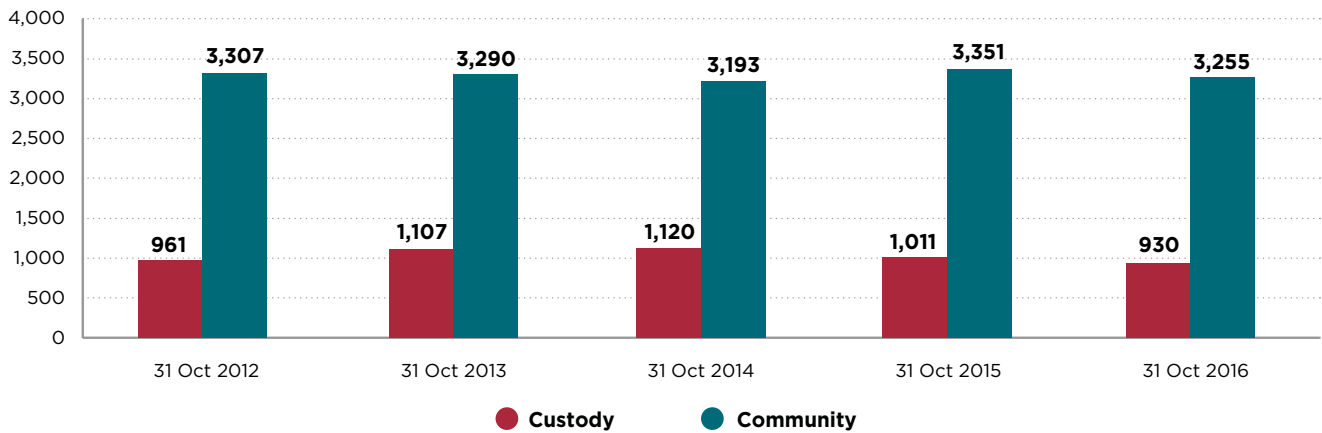
The numbers of high risk offenders and offenders with complex needs require a comprehensive and resource intensive response if we are to reduce re-offending and make Northern Ireland safer. The level of commitment necessary to manage the risk is unlikely to change.

In 2015, 76% of custodial sentences imposed in Northern Ireland were for 12 months or less. If more people are given community sentences instead of custody, the number of prisoners will reduce and the Probation Service's caseload is likely to increase.

**1364 victims** have been provided a service by the **Victim Information Scheme** since its establishment



Figure 4: The number of people supervised in the community and in prison



\*Excludes people on non-statutory supervision, i.e. remand/sentence and inescapable voluntary.

## General

At the time of writing there remains uncertainty about the future political landscape in Northern Ireland. March 2017 will see fresh elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly and there may be a period of political negotiation following that election, which might require the identified priorities to be reviewed. The legislative and policy frameworks within which probation works could also change during the lifetime of the plan. If so, the priorities might have to be reviewed.

The Probation Service will continue to develop its cross border working and cooperation notwithstanding any change in the UK's relationship with the European Union.

## Real Life Stories

### **“RESET has been life changing”**

#### **Simon's story**

Simon spent 10 months in custody and was released on licence. He was one of the first offenders to be supervised through the new RESET mentoring project. He outlines the benefits of the project:

**“When I came out of prison I was really worried about not being able to find employment. My mentor was William and he has been very supportive in helping me take steps back into employment. He helped me write a disclosure letter to future employers which is something I was really concerned about. He has also helped me access training and write a CV. William also works closely with my probation officer which was important.**

**I have no doubt that RESET will help me stay out of custody. When you surround yourself with positive people it gives you a more positive outlook. This project is fantastic. The support and encouragement I have received has been so important. I won't be going back to custody. I am determined to stay away from crime. I would go as far as to say RESET has been life changing for me.”**

# The Probation Board for Northern Ireland

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The Probation Board is a Non-Departmental Public Body sponsored by the Department of Justice. Board Members are appointed on a fixed term of 3 years with the possibility of reappointment for a further period of 3 years. These appointments are made by the Minister of Justice.

**Board members are as follows:**

Vilma Patterson MBE, Chair  
Julie Erskine, Deputy Chair

David Brown  
Judith Gillespie CBE  
Edgar Jardine CB  
Ian Jeffers  
Angela Matthews  
Robin Mullan  
Thomas O'Hanlon  
Gearoid OhEara  
Pauline Shepherd  
Barbara Stuart  
Dave Wall



## The Role of the Probation Board

The Probation Board is an arms length body of the Department of Justice. It is responsible for securing the maintenance of the probation service and determining the policies and strategic direction required for its delivery. Within this governance framework it also monitors and provides assurances of the service's performance against the Corporate Plan and the supporting annual Business Plan objectives.

The structure of the Board and its representation from across our communities in Northern Ireland provides a level of independence, accountability, oversight and strategic thinking which is to the benefit of probation practice and delivery. This includes a focus on ensuring the delivery of an effective and efficient service to reduce the number of victims of crime throughout Northern Ireland.

The Board meets on a monthly basis and oversees matters of strategic significance. There are currently three Board committees which provide the governance framework for the organisation. These are the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC), Policy and Practice Committee and Corporate Resources Committee.

In delivering its priorities and objectives, the Board is accountable to the Minister of Justice. The Probation Service's Chief Executive, as accounting officer, is responsible to the DOJ's Permanent Secretary for the proper discharge of the public funds.



## Management Executive Team

**Cheryl Lamont** | Chief Executive  
**Paul Doran** | Director of Rehabilitation  
**Hugh Hamill** | Director of Operations  
**Gillian Robinson** | Head of Human Resources  
**Catherine Teggart** | Head of Finance

## Delivering the Probation Service

As Chief Executive I am responsible for leading and developing all areas of the Probation Service. I am also the accounting officer for the organisation. It is my role to oversee the delivery of the Board's strategic priorities.

Probation staff use their skills and abilities to facilitate rehabilitation and to tackle the root causes of offending. By doing so, they will change lives for safer communities. Those unique skills include the ability to make skilled judgments about how to reduce risk and influence positive change to reduce reoffending.

Probation practice is delivered and informed by social work practice. Probation Officers are registered with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council and develop respectful and honest relationships with individuals who offend as well as promoting the rights of victims. Along with colleagues from Psychology, Corporate Services and other professional backgrounds,

Probation staff use skills and evidence to inform their practice and decisions in the assessments and oversight of people who offend.

Importantly the priorities in this plan also provide the organisation with a further opportunity to be innovative, creative and collaborative. Innovation will be encouraged and supported in all elements of our practice over the coming three years. Indeed I believe that the challenges we face are best addressed through the development of imaginative and innovative practice in collaboration with our partners.

A key element of our work over the life cycle of this Corporate Plan will be to focus on dealing with the root causes of crime which are the reasons why people choose to offend. Resettlement mentoring schemes, the development of social enterprises to support employment, restorative practices, and practice interventions to tackle the underlying causes of offending will all be key in helping tackle the causes of crime. **The overarching goal is to have fewer victims of crime through breaking patterns of offending behaviour.**

Over the course of this Corporate Plan we will prioritise increasing our engagement with partners and community representatives so that the public and stakeholders better understand the role probation has in building safer communities. Priorities for us include engagement with the Minister, the Department of Justice and the Justice Committee. However we also want to work with officials and representatives in

“We acknowledge the work PBNI does to ensure safety through risk assessments, pre-release settlement interventions and supervision of offenders. This work contributes to the ability of victims to speak and for their voices to be heard. Victim Support NI welcomes all mechanisms that allow the victim’s voice to be heard and consequently welcomes PBNI’s contribution and commitment to restorative justice and its extension.”

**Victim Support**

the Departments of Health, Finance, Education and Communities. We also want to extend our reach into academic, business, and community and voluntary sectors. Rehabilitation and preventing reoffending extend far beyond the Criminal Justice system.

We will also enhance our engagement with service users as we know that offenders who are engaged are more likely to desist from crime.

Finally engagement with staff and building on communication internally will be an important feature of this Corporate Plan. Staff throughout the organisation will help us deliver on all of the priorities contained in this strategy.

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**Cheryl Lamont**  
Chief Executive  
Probation Board for Northern Ireland

# Probation Works



69%

of those supervised by the Probation Board for Northern Ireland in the community through a **community disposal** did not go on to reoffend within one year.



46%

Reoffending Rate

Overall, the one year proven **reoffending rate** for adults who were released from custody was **46%**



**32%**

Reoffending Rate  
on Community  
Supervision

In Northern Ireland,  
the one year proven  
**reoffending rate** for adults  
who were released from  
custody on **community  
supervision** was **32%**

**PBNI**  
**1.6%** of Justice  
department budget



# The Probation Service's Values

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There are a number of values which underpin all of the work carried out by probation staff. These are:

- **Respect for Human Dignity**  
The innate right of all people to be valued and to be treated ethically
- **Recognising Peoples Capacity to Change**  
All people given the right circumstances have the ability to change and grow
- **Victim Awareness**  
Working with offenders to raise awareness of the impact of crime on victims
- **Integrity and Professionalism**  
Conducting business with transparency, honesty and impartiality in line with professional codes, placing the obligations of public service above personal interests
- **Collaborative Working**  
Valuing the help and contribution of our statutory, community and voluntary partners in making communities safer
- **Equality and Diversity**  
Recognising, understanding and responding to people's unique needs

# Delivering the strategic priorities 2017-20

The following sets out how the Probation Service will deliver each of the strategic priorities.

## Strategic Priority 1

### Delivering on Probation's statutory obligations across the Criminal Justice System

The Probation Service will continue to deliver on the statutory obligations in relation to: providing assessment reports to the Courts and Parole Commissioners; supervising people subject to Court Orders and Licences; providing resettlement services to prisoners; and providing information services to victims. In doing so and in the face of continuing budgetary challenges, there will be a focus on improving effectiveness and efficiency. This will include the delivery of a new more efficient case management system; a refreshed estates strategy; a new business delivery model which will shape how we deliver our services to the public; and contributing to and improving on the effectiveness of the Criminal Justice System by implementing a new format for pre-sentence reports to the Magistrates Courts.

## Strategic Priority 2

### Prioritising Service Delivery on perpetrators of crime against vulnerable people

The Probation Service will target more effectively our service delivery on the perpetrators of crime against vulnerable people: children, older people, minority groups and victims of: domestic violence, sexual offences and hate crime. This will require strengthened collaborative working with key partners across Northern Ireland (the Police Service, Prison Service, Youth Justice Agency, Community and Voluntary sector; and local Health and Social Care Trusts) in order to be more effective in reducing the number of vulnerable people at risk of becoming victims.

“COPNI is pleased to note that one of the priorities in this document is targeting PBNI's service delivery on the perpetrators of crime against vulnerable people, which include older people, and welcome any future partnership approach to taking this forward.”

**Commissioner for Older People Northern Ireland**

“The Lord Chief Justice values greatly the Probation Board’s unique contribution to the criminal justice process, including the professional assessments provided to the courts by probation staff. He commends the Probation Board’s approach to innovation, as demonstrated through initiatives such as the Enhanced Combination Order pilot, and its commitment to play a key role in the development and delivery of problem solving courts.”

The Lord Chief Justice  
**Sir Declan Morgan**

### Strategic Priority 3

#### **Promoting an innovative and problem solving approach to reducing re-offending.**

The Probation Service is committed to developing and delivering innovative work. This includes playing a key role in the development and delivery of problem solving courts as a means of dealing more effectively with the root causes of offending behaviour, in a range of areas including mental health, domestic abuse and substance misuse.

### Strategic Priority 4

#### **Contributing to the delivery of the NI Executive’s Fresh Start Agreement Action Plan**

The Probation Service will contribute to the delivery of the NI Executive’s Action Plan. This includes leading on the delivery of a bespoke initiative for young men to build their resilience and capabilities and to reduce their vulnerability to becoming involved in paramilitarism and criminality.

## Annual Business Plan

The annual Business Plan is the delivery mechanism for the strategic priorities. It is published separately to the Corporate Plan giving details, measurable actions and outcomes. The plan allows judgements to be made on progress towards the intent set out in the Corporate Plan. The measurable actions and outcomes will be based on the principle of delivering positive, measurable outcomes. The Probation Board monitors the progress of the Business Plan quarterly. In addition, what actually happened in the delivery of the Business Plan is reported in the Probation Board's Annual Report.

### Strategic Priority 5

#### **Influencing the development and delivery of the public policy on resettlement and rehabilitation.**

This priority will include the implementation of a Communications Strategy (2017-20) and working closely with the Department of Justice and other Departments on the Programme for Government Outcome Indicators, which have an impact on resettlement and rehabilitation.

# The Probation Story



## Innovation and efficiency

new projects  
on rehabilitation,  
restorative practices,  
and communication



## Collaborative working with partners



## Ensuring Offenders Comply with Court Orders

## Assessing the Impact

Probation is an important and integral part of the Criminal Justice System. Within that context, the Board has a duty to demonstrate positive outcomes.

The Probation Service places an emphasis on evidence in monitoring and evaluating its practice. Such an approach is consistent with the draft Programme for Government which is encouraging public bodies to measure the impact of their activities. To do this, it will be important to have appropriate indicators and measures in place. The monitoring framework will allow the Board and its Committees to monitor their efforts.

“PBNI is well placed to work at both a strategic and operational level across sectors and settings to influence and help shape Society’s understanding of how investment in effective justice systems will address the sources of crime and reoffending and will help to make communities safer. PBNI has, through repeated successful CJI inspection reports demonstrated its effectiveness.”

**Northern Ireland  
Social Care Council**



**Table 2: Monitoring Framework**

Key Outcome	Indicator
To have fewer people, under probation supervision, reoffending	The Reoffending Rate
To increase the level of community sentences	An increase in the percentage and number of community sentences made by the Courts
To ensure sentence compliance	An increase in the percentage of sentences supervised by probation completed
To prioritise service delivery to the perpetrators of crime against vulnerable people	The number of offenders who complete their sentence for offences against vulnerable people
To have better informed and supported victims, through increased usage of the Victim Information Scheme	The number of users of the VIS
To increase satisfaction rates of the users of Probation's services	The satisfaction rates of victims, Sentencers and service users
To have fewer young men becoming involved in paramilitarism and criminality	Implementation and evaluation of the 'Aspire' Young Men's Project

The Monitoring Framework will be used by the Board and its Committees to assess progress towards the overall outcome of the Strategic Priorities: to facilitate rehabilitation and to make our communities safer with fewer victims of crime.

# Organisational Achievements – Corporate Plan 2014-17

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During the current Corporate Plan, we delivered a number of achievements that have had a positive impact on improving the service. These include:

## Innovation

- In response to a request from the Lord Chief Justice, Probation implemented an Enhanced Combination Order (ECO) pilot. At the time of writing, 105 people are subject to ECOs, who would otherwise be subject to a short custodial sentence. Evidence shows that re-offending outcomes for people on community sentences is significantly better than for those of people released from custody following a short sentence.
- As an effective means of reducing both the number of people being recalled to custody and reducing re-offending, Probation (in partnership with NIACRO) provided a mentoring service (RESET) for people leaving custody to support their reintegration into the community, in the critical weeks after release.
- A mobile APP for people under statutory supervision has been introduced. The APP is downloaded onto the service user's mobile phone and provides information and advice in order to support desistance from offending behaviour.

## Real Life Stories

### The positive effect of using an Enhanced Combination Order

#### Michael's story

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 outlines his experience of being on the Enhanced Combination Order:

**“From 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.”**

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.”**

“The Trust recognises the emphasis that PBNI has placed on testing and developing innovative practices and the contribution that this is making to creating safer communities in Northern Ireland. The innovative app ‘Changing Lives’ is testament to PBNI’s ability to be at the cutting edge of service user engagement.”

Princes Trust

## Service Improvements

- A new range of group programmes aimed at reducing offending behaviour, including the Building Better Relationships - a Domestic Violence programme - have been introduced. Research shows that participation and completion of such programmes reduces the likelihood of re-offending.
- Probation has introduced a Volunteer Scheme. The work of the volunteers supports the work of probation by providing a practical support to people under statutory supervision.
- Probation has delivered two Restorative Justice pilot schemes, in partnership with NI Alternatives and Community Restorative Justice Ireland. Restorative practices are an effective means of addressing offending behaviour and the harm it does. Restorative interventions are also a component of the Enhanced Combination Order (ECO) pilot.
- To promote understanding, awareness and increase public confidence in Probation, we have established a highly successful Twitter account. The account provides a wide range of information on the work and activities of Probation.
- To increase efficiency, Probation has upgraded IT hardware for front line staff. This provides for greater flexibility on where staff can work and has reduced the amount of time travelling and associated costs. In addition, to meet the challenging financial situation, we reduced our Estate portfolio from 32 properties to 23, without any significant impact on service delivery.



## Partnership Working

- Probation has representation in all the Policing and Community Safety Partnerships throughout Northern Ireland. This has allowed Probation to directly inform local initiatives in order to promote safer communities
- Substance misuse is a common factor in offending behaviour. To more fully address this factor, Probation, in partnership with the Public Health Agency, has put in place new arrangements to increase the accessibility to such services for people under Probation's supervision
- With the Community and Voluntary Sector, Probation has increased the number of approved hostel beds for people under statutory supervision. Approved hostels play a significant role in enhancing public protection
- In partnership, with the Irish Football Association and other Criminal Justice Partners, Probation is part of the 'Stay On Side' initiative, which provides the opportunity for young people to engage in a range of activities aimed at diverting them from offending behaviour



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