

PROBATION NEWS

Magazine of the Probation Board for Northern Ireland • Issue 15 • Sep 2022



WELCOME to the fifteenth edition of the Probation News Magazine. This magazine provides a biannual opportunity to engage through sharing of news, best practice and information to stakeholders, staff and the public. We hope you enjoy reading this edition.

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NEW APPOINTMENTS TO PROBATION LEADERSHIP TEAM

Probation has recently had a number of new appointments to its top tier including a new Board Deputy Chair and two Directors of Operations.

The Justice Minister Naomi Long announced the appointment of Mrs Eileen Patterson as Deputy Chair of the Probation Board for Northern Ireland. Mrs Long said, "The work of Probation is extremely important contributing to a range of justice priorities at many stages of the criminal justice system. Probation undertake a vital role in supporting the organisation to continue its critical work of changing lives for safer communities. I am pleased to appoint Eileen as Deputy Chair of the Board and wish her well in supporting the Chair and Board in their important work."

Gillian Montgomery and Stephen Hamilton have also been appointed as Directors of Operations. Both Gillian and Stephen have extensive knowledge of Probation starting their careers in the organisation as Probation Officers. As a Director of Operations, Gillian and Stephen will support Chief Executive Amanda Stewart oversee the day to day running of the organisation as it works towards changing lives for safer communities.



Directors of Operations Gillian Montgomery and Stephen Hamilton, Chief Executive Amanda Stewart OBE, Deputy Board Chair Eileen Patterson, and Board Chair Max Murray CBE leading Probation with the aim of changing lives for safer communities.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DIARY



Welcome to this edition of Probation News. I am delighted that following an external recruitment competition, Gillian Montgomery has been appointed Director of Operations (Community and Courts) and Stephen Hamilton has been appointed as Director of Operations (Prisons, Programmes and Public Protection).

Both Gillian and Stephen have taken up post and the new senior leadership team will now embark on an ambitious programme of work to address the current workforce challenges in Probation and ensure the organisation is able to effectively deliver services to communities across Northern Ireland. I am also delighted that Eileen Patterson has been appointed as Deputy Chair of the Board and alongside Max Murray as Chair their support and strategic direction will be invaluable to the wider organisation.

Some of the challenges that we currently face include the fact that we have an increasingly complex caseload with more people presenting suffering poor mental health, trauma and serious addictions. There is also a gap between the supply and demand for social workers. This is not unique to probation and is being addressed by the Social Work Workforce Implementation Board, which Probation attends with Directors and Senior leads in Education, Health, Justice and the Community and Voluntary Sector. Funding pressures are also impacting across the organisation and as we develop our Corporate Plan for the coming three years, this will be an important factor in determining how services are delivered in the future.

Probation's partnership work has continued to develop, and I was delighted to meet this month with Director of the Probation Service Mark Wilson and attend the Probation EPIC awards in Dublin. Our cross-border partnership continues to strengthen and later this year we will hold a joint hate crime seminar and our annual Public Protection Advisory Group seminar bringing together practitioners from probation, police and prisons in both jurisdictions.

I was also pleased to attend a number of meetings this year with my counterparts in England, Scotland, Wales and the Channel Islands. We have much to learn from one another and sharing good practice and experience will benefit all.

As we approach the autumn Probation continues to implement its hybrid working arrangements. Consultation on these arrangements was undertaken across our organisation and with trade unions. It is Probation's intention to review the arrangements and we will be actively seeking views from service users and key partners that we work alongside, including the Prison Service to ensure that the arrangements enable Probation to continue to deliver effectively and meet the needs of service users and partners.

Finally, as we approach October it marks my first year in post as Chief Executive in Probation and I have to say the last 12 months has been an absolute pleasure and privilege for me. The staff in Probation are some of the most dedicated and committed people I have ever worked with. September 29 was 'Hidden Heros Day', a day established by the Butler Trust to reflect on the services, often delivered away from the spotlight, by probation, prison and youth justice. The staff in probation reflect that quiet determination to support communities, prevent people reoffending and change lives that most certainly marks them out as hidden heros within the justice system in Northern Ireland.

Amanda Stewart OBE
Chief Executive

CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION



This year the Probation Board for Northern Ireland marks 40 years since it's establishment. The first Board meeting took place in December 1982. Over the last 40 years much has changed in terms of how we deliver services and the social, financial and political context in which we operate. Throughout this time however, our desire to work in partnership with communities holds firm.

We know that in order to effectively tackle the causes of reoffending we need to work in partnership and in, with and through communities.

We also have a range of key partners including the prison service, court service and police service. There are a number of touch points where Probation works alongside partners to deliver services. For example:

- We provide pre-sentence reports to assist the Judiciary to make decisions.
- We supervise sentences imposed by the Judiciary that must be served in the community and we supervise licences imposed when someone leaves prison.
- We work in prisons, preparing prisoners for release subject to licences.
- We work with victims of crime through the Victim Information Scheme.

These partnerships are key in enabling us to deliver the right services in the most effective way.

The Board is currently consulting on our Corporate Plan for 2023-26 and partnership working is a key part of our plan. Indeed, this year mindful of the challenges we face including budgetary uncertainty and recovering services following the Covid pandemic, we have streamlined our plan to four strategic priorities.

Those priorities are:

- **Our People** – we will develop, support, and empower our staff to improve service delivery.
- **Our Services** – we will deliver an effective, quality statutory probation service to reduce reoffending.
- **Our Funding** – we will prioritise our budget to maximise service delivery.
- **Our Partnerships** – we will develop our partnerships to help make communities safer.

Our consultation is open until 10 November, and we would be keen to hear from partners and stakeholders about our priorities. You can contribute to the consultation by accessing the Draft Corporate Plan 2023-26 on our website.

Finally, I want to congratulate Board Member Eileen Patterson on her appointment as Deputy Chair of the Board. Eileen brings a wealth of experience to the Board which will be invaluable. I also want to congratulate our two new Directors of Operations who were appointed in September 2022. Gillian Montgomery has been appointed Director of Operations with responsibility for Community and Courts and Stephen Hamilton has been appointed Director of Operations with responsibility for Public Protection, Programmes and Prisons. I have no doubt that our leadership team led by Chief Executive Amanda Stewart is well equipped to ensure Probation services continues to develop and deliver services to all Communities.

Max Murray CBE
Board Chair

PROBATION BOARD ASKS PUBLIC FOR VIEWS ON SHAPING THE FUTURE OF PROBATION SERVICES



Probation has a public consultation open for 10 weeks as part of the development of the Board's Corporate Plan for 2023-26 to set out the strategic direction of the organisation over the next three years.

Max Murray Chair of the Board said, "The Probation Board is committed to working in partnership to help us reduce reoffending, tackle the root causes of offending behaviour and make communities safer. This Plan provides an important opportunity for us to hear from stakeholders and communities about the services that are being delivered and how we can shape services over the coming three years.

The challenges faced over the last Corporate Planning period have been unprecedented. This Plan has been developed against the backdrop of continuing challenges. The pandemic, pressures on budgets and the fact that our staff are working with more people who are suffering from poor mental health and addictions are impacting upon how we deliver services. While these issues pose particular challenges for PBNi there is also an opportunity for us to implement learning from the last number of years and continue to be innovative in developing our practice.

This Plan sets out our desire to continue to be an organisation which is innovative, creative, collaborative and solution focused. Working alongside our partners we want to develop and continue to improve our services to provide a high quality, probation service to all."

Chief Executive Amanda Stewart continued, "Probation has a statutory role to deliver services to people who have offended and victims who are registered with our Victim Information Scheme to help make communities safer. Currently Probation staff are working with over 4,000 individuals and the complexity of cases we are dealing with has significantly increased with individuals presenting with addictions, mental health issues, with many at risk of suicide and self-harm. The numbers of victims registered with the Victim Information Scheme has increased over the last Corporate Plan period and we have significantly developed our restorative approach. This is an area we will continue to develop. A critical element of our role is working with those who have committed sexual and violent crime, including domestic abuse and this will continue to be a priority".

Ms Stewart continued, "Probation's strength lies in its ability to work in partnership with a range of organisations including statutory partners such as the prison service, police service,

courts, key stakeholders in health and education as well as the large network of voluntary and community groups across Northern Ireland.

If we are to be effective in preventing people from re-offending we need to intervene at the earliest opportunity and that means working alongside a range of partners and within local communities. Only by working together can we effectively change lives for safer communities."

We want to hear your views. This consultation seeks views on Probation's priorities for the Corporate Plan 2023-26. 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 **10 November 2022**.

You can respond to the consultation exercise by email or post and **information on the consultation can be found in publications on our website**. You can respond by email to info@probation-ni.gov.uk or by post to:

Gail McGreevy, Head of Communications
Probation Board for Northern Ireland
80-90 North Street
BELFAST BT1 1LD

MEET THE STAFF BEHIND DELIVERING PROBATION SERVICES

Probation has staff who are committed to help change lives for safer communities. From frontline staff to corporate staff, all are dedicated to delivering services to local communities. Read below about some of those staff members.

MICHELLE GRANT AREA MANAGER

Joining Probation in 2001 I was a Probation Officer for over 15 years.

I worked with service users with the aim of rehabilitation and resettlement. It was a

privilege to be allowed into every person's life and was fantastic

to see so many go on to achieve their dreams, some of which they hadn't even dreamt of before engaging with Probation.

Now an Area Manager I currently work in the mid-Ulster area. Supporting a range of staff, I thoroughly enjoy working within this team. I am very proud of their achievements in working with service users and local communities in order to change lives for safer communities.



FIONA QUAIL INFORMATION AND GOVERNANCE OFFICER

It is such a privilege to be in a position to support our front line staff who work tirelessly to change lives and keep our communities safe.

I see my role as making life easier for all our staff so we allow our IT systems such as Content Manager to work for us, saving valuable time and therefore increasing productivity.

A records management system will alleviate the need for paper files, staff will have the ability to find and retrieve records in seconds whilst adhering to regulatory compliance. Time is valuable and time saved is a definite benefit to our staff.



EDDIE BLACK COMMUNITY SERVICE SUPERVISOR

Life as a community service supervisor is both demanding and rewarding. The demands we face are from service users with specific needs and placements needing work done. Every day is different from the next and the challenges diverse within it.

We are rewarded by seeing people change behaviour and by sharing their experiences at work, we see jobs progress beyond our expectations. Meeting new people and listening to their journeys builds resilience which helps us stay motivated.



MEET THE STAFF BEHIND DELIVERING PROBATION SERVICES CONTINUED

KERRI O'NEILL AREA MANAGER

I joined Probation in 2015 after five years in Child Protection Services in NI and Australia where, as a senior practitioner, I specialised in community development and high risk pregnancies alongside my child protection roles and responsibilities. Within Probation I initially worked in the South Belfast and Lisburn generic team before moving to the Intensive Supervision Unit Belfast and then onto the Public Protection Team. In June 2020 I started my career in management and am currently the Area Manager for the Intensive Supervision Unit that covers North Antrim and Mid Ulster. I have also had experience in managing generic staff and community service. Our team supervise those who have primarily committed sexual offences and/or domestic violence that are subject to the Public Protection Arrangements for Northern Ireland. I also represent the organisation at a variety of multiagency partnerships relating to public protection.

Our staff continue to strive to ensure the needs of our service users are met and to promote their rehabilitation and reintegration within the community. Public Protection remains of paramount importance and we work to address offending behaviour to reduce the likelihood of recidivism alongside our community partners. I feel very humbled and honoured to work for an organisation that works tirelessly to make our communities safer.



CHERYL JOHNSTON PROBATION SERVICE OFFICER

I have always had an interest in criminal justice and wanted to work within it. My ambition of continuing my education to study Social Work was put on hold when I had my son who is Autistic.

I started working for Probation as a Probation Service Officer (PSO) in June 2018 as part of the Supervised Activity Order Team. I spent the first 6 months working in the West Belfast and Lisburn area and got to learn about the different elements of Probation by helping with Community Service, visiting/opening placements and going to court.

I was then moved to Mid Ulster and the past three and a half years I have been the PSO for the team covering Armagh, Dungannon and Magherafelt. I do one to one Brief Intervention work with service users and really enjoy seeing where we can help them to understand themselves better, achieve their goals and have hope for a better future. I like to think I am a friendly face with a listening ear.

I also help to facilitate the Mid Ulster's Women's Service User group. I really enjoy this more informal part of the job. It is a privilege to hear their stories and learn from them.



JULIAN DAVIDSON HR PEOPLE PARTNER

I joined Probation in March 2019, hoping my change in career would provide me with more opportunities. Probation certainly did that for me. I commenced as an Administrative Officer and after one year of service, Probation supported me in obtaining my Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) qualification. This enabled me to progress within the HR team and following some promotions I am now an HR People Partner.

My role as an HR People Partner is to provide day-to-day HR guidance and services. I support managers, staff, trade unions, and colleagues in Probation to ensure a people focused HR service delivery to help Probation achieve its corporate aims and objectives in an efficient and effective way. Ultimately, I love helping people and being an HR People Partner lets me do exactly that.



Probation has a range of careers covering operational and corporate roles.

PROBATION HELPS CHANGE LIVES

Probation works to change lives for safer communities by working with those sentenced to a community-based sentence. The work our Probation Officers, Probation Service Officers and Community Service Supervisors do with those they supervise challenge their behaviours and support them to move forward. Below you can see the impact Probation has made on people's lives.



Just a wee text to say I've completed the final timesheet and now have completed the 200 hours and to say thanks as well. I've successfully got a full time job and am going to help out more with a local charity who have been amazing. Thank you and all the best.



I never gave up because you made me believe in myself. A lot of people look at you funny and treat you different when you have a record. But you never did. So you should be proud of yourself because you are changing peoples lives with how you treat them.



I couldn't have wished for a more supportive Probation Officer. From the very first day he treated me as an individual and worked with me at my own pace. He told me there are things we would have to talk about and that he would do it when I was ready.



Hope this email finds you well. I'm trying to convey my experience at the Portadown office of the PBNI.

My experience with the staff at the Portadown office had been amazing! I cannot but commend every one of you for your level of commitment, sacrifice (it's not only a job), care and yes, at some point love that you've all shown towards me at every stage of my rehabilitation. I personally 100 percent am amazed by you all.

I'm lost for words to show my gratitude and express my feelings, but I'm certain that I've made my point.

Again, thank you for everything.



Honestly, you changed me for the absolute best, and that's a hard thing to do but you done it. :}

I can't thank you enough. Really appreciate every second you give me. You really did help and I am so thankful.



The Substance Misuse Court helped me get onto a ward for a medical detox. Talking to my Probation Officer helped me the most and the Judge listening to me and talking to me. I would recommend the SMC to others; I liked the approach and I did not feel judged. It's the first time I've felt like that in a long time.



The programme really makes you address your alcohol issues, take responsibility and face up to things. Once you accept you have a problem it is surprising what you can do with the right support. I felt like I wasn't being judged and am so glad I took this opportunity.



BOARD MEMBERS VISIT STAFF AND PROJECTS

Members of the Probation Board have been visiting Probation teams and Community Service projects to hear, first-hand, about the work Probation staff are delivering within a community setting. They engaged with staff in the Shipquay Street, Armagh, West Belfast, North Belfast, and Victims Information Unit hearing from staff about the services, being delivered in the heart of the community, as they supervise and support people to change their lives for safer communities

Board Members also had the opportunity to visit a community service placement based at Knockbreda Methodist Church, South Belfast, meeting with service users, staff and the local community group who are helping give back to the local area by transforming waste ground into a local community garden. The garden project has been highlighted by BBC Radio Ulster's Gardener's Corner.

PROBATION EXPANDS ITS GRAFFITI REMOVAL SCHEME



Probation's Director of Operations Gillian Montgomery and Derry City and Strabane District Council Mayor Sandra Duffy launching the PBNI Council in partnership Graffiti Removal Service at the Guildhall. The new service will see people on Community Service Orders removing non-contentious graffiti from wherever it appears.'

Derry City & Strabane District Council has joined with the Probation Board for Northern Ireland to offer a new service for the removal of non-contentious graffiti across the city. The new service will see people undertaking community service orders employed to remove non-contentious graffiti from walls, buildings or wherever else it may appear.

Probation has been running a successful Graffiti Removal Scheme in partnership with Belfast City Council for the last few years. Partnering with Derry City & Strabane District Council now expands the scheme to the North West.

The Mayor of Derry City & Strabane District Council Cllr Sandra Duffy, explained, "Graffiti is an issue in almost every community, defacing surfaces on public buildings, private homes, children's playgrounds, bus shelters etc. The negative impact of graffiti should not be underestimated. Whole neighbourhoods feel the demoralising effect, as their area is daubed in unsightly graffiti and clean-up is costly.

"Graffiti is also a prevalent and environmental problem, linked to anti-social behaviour in many areas. The Council has finite resources to deal with the scale of non-offensive graffiti throughout the city and we see this partnership with the Probation service as a mechanism to addressing some of the non-contentious graffiti in the city."

Amanda Stewart, Chief Executive of Probation, said, "Keeping communities safer is only possible through strengthening our partnerships with other partner organisations and working alongside communities to respond to concerns and issues that arise in local areas. This new service working in partnership with Derry City & Strabane District Council is delivering a local solution to issues and concerns around graffiti and is central

to building confidence in the work of Probation. This project reinforces the commitment of Probation to work with partners and the local community to continue to improve community safety and I am very proud of the service we are launching today and what it represents."

Assistant Director of Probation Niall McEvoy also said at the launch, "The service will give an opportunity to people who have offended to make good on the harm they have caused to local communities as well as improving the environment for the citizens of the Derry City & Strabane District. We will seek feedback from the local community on the operation of the Graffiti removal scheme. A similar service in Belfast is working well and, if on evaluation the project here is successful, we will engage with other councils to roll out graffiti removal services across Northern Ireland if that is something local councils and communities would find useful."

Requests to have graffiti removed from private property will be handled by the Derry City & Strabane District Council Environmental Team. Once the nature of the graffiti is assessed, then non-contentious cases are referred to the dedicated Probation Community Service team to remove.

PROBATION COMMUNITY FUNDING MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Probation has a Community Service Work Placements Grant Aid scheme that has had two rounds this year. The scheme is setup to provide placements within community groups who offer meaningful work and effective supervision of people subject to any such Court Orders.

One such group is the Cloughmills Community Action Team who received funding from Probation to help them manage and maintain areas at the former flax scutching mill site in Main Street, Cloughmills where the Community Action Team has developed a large community horticultural garden and refurbished the mill buildings to provide a range of services for the community. Jim Whitten of Cloughmills Community Action Team welcomed the funding provided by Probation saying, "We welcome this partnership with Probation which is an organisation with its roots in every community in Northern Ireland.

Through this partnership we will be doing our part with Probation in changing lives for safer communities and we look forward to working together with Probation into the future."

Chief Executive of the Probation Board for Northern Ireland Amanda Stewart explains, "Probation works in partnership with a range of organisations across the community and voluntary sector. Probation is committed to working in partnership with every community in Northern Ireland. Indeed, we believe that in order to rehabilitate and resettle those who have been sentenced, we must work collaboratively to change lives for safer communities."



LOCAL RESIDENTS DELIGHTED WITH ALLEYWAY CLEAN-UPS

Recently Community Service squads have been working at cleaning up alleyways in South Belfast and two different areas have been showing off their delight with the facelift on Tik Tok.

They kindly sent the Tik Tok videos through to us and we have been able to put them up on our Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn accounts.

Probation supervised Community Service squads are continually working with local communities and partnering with groups to clean up areas. This benefits not only those communities but gives those we supervise an opportunity to make amends for the damage they have caused through their behaviours.

If you have a project suggestion please find out more on our **Community Service page** on our website. There is also an **online nomination form** for projects.

[Check out the videos on Twitter](#)

One of the residents from one of the groups involved told us of the impact of Community Service on their area saying: *"It makes such a big difference to people's sense of pride in where they live and it makes people feel good about themselves when they see the place so clean and tidy."*

PROBATION'S SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

Probation works to change people's lives to enable safer communities through reducing re-offending. This is carried out through:

Assessing people subject to a community order or licence and annually preparing over 10,000 reports for Courts, Parole Commissioners and others.

Supervising over 4,100 people subject to a range of court orders and licences at any given time.

Delivering behavioural change programmes in custody and in the community covering areas such as violent offending, sexual offending and drug and alcohol misuse.

Providing a Victim Information Scheme to any person who has been the direct victim of a criminal offence where the person who has offended is subject to supervision by Probation.

Working alongside statutory and other partners to minimise the risk of harm posed by people who offend.

Probation's Senior Leadership oversee the day to day running of Probation.



AMANDA STEWART
CHIEF EXECUTIVE



GILLIAN MONTGOMERY
DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS



STEPHEN HAMILTON
DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS



LIZ ARTHUR
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
FOR RISK



JILL GRANT
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR
PROGRAMMES AND INTERVENTIONS



AIDEEN MCLAUGHLIN
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
FOR URBAN



PAUL KING
HEAD OF FINANCE
AND ESTATES



GAIL MCGREEVY
HEAD OF COMMUNICATION
AND COMPLIANCE



CATHERINE SWEENEY
HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES AND
ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT



NIALL MCEVOY
(TEMPORARY) ASSISTANT
DIRECTOR FOR RURAL



DEIRDRE GRANT
(TEMPORARY) ASSISTANT
DIRECTOR FOR PRISONS

CONTACT PROBATION AT

PROBATION HEADQUARTERS

80/90 North St, Belfast BT1 1LD
Communications Unit

028 9052 2522
028 9052 2522

SPECIALIST TEAMS

ISU Alderwood House

Hydebank Wood, Purdysburn Road, Belfast, BT8 7SL 028 9025 7340

Aspire

4th Floor, 41-43 Waring Street, Belfast, BT1 2DY 028 9031 6436

Programme Delivery Unit

1st Floor, 80-90 North Street, Belfast, BT1 1LD 028 9052 2585

Public Protection Team

PSNI Seapark, 151 Belfast Road, Carrickfergus, BT38 8PL 028 9025 9576

Victim Information Unit

4th Floor, 41-43 Waring Street, Belfast, BT1 2DY 0300 123 3269

AREA TEAMS

West Belfast and Lisburn

Glenshane House, 202a Andersonstown Road, Belfast, BT11 9EA 028 9030 6630
Unit 4, Wallace Studios, 27 Wallace Avenue, Lisburn, BT27 4AE 028 9262 3456

North Belfast and South East Antrim

2171 – 179 Duncairn Gardens, Belfast, BT15 2GE 028 9034 7474

South and East Belfast

297 Newtownards Road, Belfast, BT4 1AG 028 9052 6655
330 Ormeau Road, Belfast, BT7 2GE 028 9054 1444

Down and Ards

15 Castle Street, Newtownards, BT23 3PA 028 9185 8282
Downshire Civic Centre, Ardglass Road, Downpatrick, BT30 6RA 028 4461 8281

North Antrim

3 Wellington Court, Ballymena, BT43 6EQ 028 2566 2345
19/20 The Diamond, Coleraine, BT52 2DN 028 7034 6880
1 Curran Road, Larne, BT40 1BS *Contact Ballymena*

North West

25 Shipquay Street, Londonderry, BT48 6DL 028 7131 9670

Rural South

1d Monaghan Street, Newry, BT35 6BB 028 3025 3030
12 Church Street, Portadown, BT62 3LQ 028 3839 7575

Rural West

Sperrin Centre, 1 Market Street, Omagh, BT78 1EE 028 8225 4872
Cathcart Square, 14 Dublin Road, Enniskillen, BT74 6HH 028 6634 3345

Rural Mid Ulster

9 Kirk Avenue, Magherafelt, BT45 6BT 028 7930 2115
2 Feeney's Lane, Dungannon, BT70 1TX 028 8775 4848
25 College Street, Armagh, BT61 9BT 028 3752 9876



PBNI Probation Board
for Northern Ireland

028 9052 2522

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Our contacts are online at
www.pbni.org.uk/contact/
and on “**Changing Lives**” app

