

Foreword

The Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) on Cooperation on Criminal Justice Matters provides an all-island framework for effective co-operation and co-ordination on criminal justice matters, including tackling criminal behaviour and working together in the prevention of crime. Cross-border co-operation on justice matters is vital to both of our jurisdictions and the IGA contributes greatly to ensuring that we are doing everything we can to promote good practice in these areas.

The development and enhancement of co-operation under the Agreement is taken forward by several Advisory Groups covering the areas of public protection, forensic science, youth justice, victims' issues, and criminal justice and social diversity issues. The Public Protection Advisory Group (PPAG) is jointly chaired by the Chief Executives of the Probation Board for Northern Ireland and the Probation Service, and its role is to oversee a programme of joint work and advise the Working Group with a view to enhancing protection of the public.

A key element of the PPAG work plan is the development of the *Irish Probation Journal*. This journal, which is a collaboration between the Probation Service and the Probation Board for Northern Ireland, is now in its twenty-first year. Partnership working can be difficult and requires investment of time and resources and commitment from staff. It is therefore a testament to both services that this particular collaboration has been in place for over two decades.

The collection of journals provides a rich source of information about changes and developments in probation practice and criminal justice and social policy. Over the past twenty years, the *Irish Probation Journal* has become a recognised forum for the sharing of criminal justice research, evaluation, analysis and debate on probation and community sanctions, contributing to the diversity and richness of our criminal justice knowledge base. In addition, it demonstrates the value of the synergy between academic research, criminal justice policy, and practice. Indeed, one of the key strengths of the Journal is its support of both academic and practitioner-led research and opinion.

The *Irish Probation Journal* has reached a special milestone and, to mark it, we are delighted to see this very special twenty-first edition – a compendium of previous articles, selected by probation practitioners and leaders, North and South, with their personal commentary and insight of the value, or impact, the selected article has for them in their respective roles.

This special edition features a range of articles which chart the trends in criminal justice and tell the story of how probation practice and wider criminal justice practice have developed as a result of evidence-based research. Trends and changes in policy, such as how we deal with women and young people who have offended, tackling substance misuse and addictions, problem-solving justice, and resettlement and reintegration of people who have offended back into communities are all subjects that have been researched and evaluated within the Journal.

The collective publications provide an important historical record of legislative and policy changes on this island. Indeed, it is of interest to us as leaders to see the broad range of articles which assess the impact of legislative change on areas of practice, including the management of sex offenders, tackling domestic abuse and how we provide services to victims of crime.

It is also of note that many articles over the past two decades comment on the changes in public perceptions and public understanding of criminal justice organisations.

We want to commend all those people who have taken the time to write for this year's edition and we want to thank everyone who has contributed to the Journal since its inception.

We are committed to maintaining our close working relationships and criminal justice co-operation, which ensure safer communities throughout the island of Ireland. The IGA mechanism continues to enable us to deliver effective co-operation between our respective organisations, and the publication of the *Irish Probation Journal* reinforces this.

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