



Treatment of Sex offenders released in 2013 or to be released in 2014.

The treatment of sex offenders is centred in Arbour Hill where sex offenders undertake the Building Better Lives programme (BBL). The programme comprises group interventions in three modules and allows responsive and flexible delivery of rehabilitation services which take account of individual risk, needs and capacity.

The programme is provided by a team of psychologists who have developed specific expertise in clinical practice including assessment and therapeutic work with men convicted of sexual offences.

The Baseline Project is a joint initiative between the Northside Inter Agency Project (NIAP) and the IPS Psychology Service which has been providing group programmes for young offenders in St Patrick's Institution with a history of sexually harmful behaviour. It also continues work into the community for those with convictions for sexual offences.

The group programmes are rolling programmes with new participants joining and others leaving groups in response to progress. Time for completion does vary from individual to individual.

Not all sex offenders are suited to group programmes and other prison-based therapeutic interventions include one-to-one interventions. Sex offenders also engage with other services in order to address other related needs, such as mental health needs.

While offenders can be supported and encouraged in their efforts to address their offending behaviour, ultimately successful completion of an intervention programme depends on the willing participation and commitment of appropriately motivated individuals. It is not possible to force an individual to engage in psychological intervention against their will.

The Probation Service across the prison estate engages with sex offenders in individual work during their sentence. This work primarily focuses on preparation for release, reducing the risk posed by the individual following release and also on child protection issues which may arise.

In response to your query I can advise that of the 179 sex offenders released during 2013, 22 had engaged with the BBL programme in Arbour Hill.

A further 29 individuals engaged with the psychology service in other prisons.

Of those to be released in 2014 (142) – 24 individuals have engaged or are currently engaged with the BBL programme in Arbour Hill.

A further 21 individuals engaged/are currently engaged with the psychology service in other prisons.

Building Better Lives Programme

Arbour Hill Prison

Arbour Hill

Dublin 7

The Building Better Lives Programme

The Building Better Lives Programme (BBL) is a therapeutic programme for men who acknowledge that they have committed a sexual offence and who have a desire to build a better life for themselves. The programme, devised by psychologists within the Irish Prison Service, is based on a world renowned therapeutic approach. It currently runs in Arbour Hill Prison in Dublin.

How the Building Better Lives Programme will help you

If you participate openly and fully in the programme, it will help you to;

- Better understand what aspects of your lifestyle, thinking patterns and moods may have contributed to your sexual offending,
- Discover more healthy ways of meeting your needs,
- Develop a positive and realistic plan for your future that identifies specific goals and strengths that will help you to lead a productive and meaningful life,
- Understand how you can prevent any future offending, and
- Build more trusting, open relationships that will support you better in the future.

What you will do on the Building Better Lives Programme

You will be part of a group of 8 men who have committed sexual offences and who, like you, want to address their offending behaviour in a positive and productive way. The group will meet twice weekly. Your commitment to the BBL programme will require;

- Participating in a brief assessment of your strengths and needs prior to beginning the programme,
- Maintaining the confidentiality of the group,
- Taking a meaningful part in all group activities and discussions,
- Speaking at your own pace about your life experiences, strengths and difficulties,
- Attending all group sessions in a punctual, consistent and respectful way,
- Completing some specific aspects of group work after sessions, and

- Involving a significant person from your life that you choose in supporting you on this journey.

The structure of the Building Better Lives Programme

The BBL programme involves open rolling groups. Members move in and out of these groups at different times as they have completed their work. This supports new group members in the beginning and allows a continuous flow of men.

- **Exploring Better Lives Group (EBL)**

The aim of this group is to help you to recognise how you can bring about positive change in your life. This group runs twice weeks for about 2 months. Shortly after completing EBL you will progress to the next group.

- **Practicing Better Lives Group (PBL)**

The aim of this group is to help you to develop a better understanding of the factors in your life that contributed to your offending. A key part of this group is to support you in developing positive and realistic future plans and skills. This group runs twice weekly for about 6 months.

- **Maintaining Better Lives (MBL)**

The aim of this group is to provide ongoing support for men who are serving long sentences for sexual offences. Taking part in the group will help you to maintain the benefits you achieved in your previous work and help you link up with community supports. The group runs once a week for about 4 months. You will have completed the PBL group at least one year prior to beginning this group.

We recognise that it takes courage for anyone to talk about themselves in a group. We work hard to provide groups that are safe and supportive for everyone. We look forward to working with you.

Comments from past group members

“The BBL course gives you a chance to work on your weaknesses and thrive on your strengths. You also get a chance to do a review on yourself and life in general. Don't regard past mistakes as bad see them as good lessons learned”.

“What I got from the group is: a voice”.

“I think the group is very good, it makes you more aware of what you did and it makes you relax more”.

“I find the group a great place to express my opinions. It is helping me deal with a lot of issues that I have. I like the confidentiality of the group”.

“Helps build confidence. Biscuits are supplied. Helps you with your offence in a good way. You're not made feel like a monster”.

“For me it is the complete trust I felt from the group which put me totally at ease and that I could open up and be safe within the group”.

“I believe that the BBL program has helped me gain confidence in myself and has given me hope for the future”.

“At first I found it difficult but after the first session or two I now find myself looking forward to each week’s session”.

“It’s been a good help to keep my head in check from what I got out of the first course and where I went wrong growing up and what to watch out for in the future”.