

Irish Prison Service & Probation Service STRATEGIC PLAN 2018-2020



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IRISH PRISON SERVICE & PROBATION SERVICE

JOINT STRATEGIC PLAN 2018 - 2020

Strategic Objective: to have a multi-agency approach to offender management and rehabilitation from pre to post imprisonment in order to reduce re-offending and improve prisoner outcomes.

This is the third joint strategy between the Irish Prison Service and the Probation Service and sets out an ambitious set of actions to achieve improved outcomes to the benefit of Irish society. The Strategy is underpinned by a recognition that the costs of re-offending by ex-prisoners can be devastating and long term, and are frequently felt by the most vulnerable in our society. Most obviously, there is the impact on victims and on their families; also on communities, predominantly the most disadvantaged. Where re-offenders are imprisoned their families suffer. The children of prisoners are more likely to offend and experience imprisonment than other children. Re-imprisonment is extremely costly for society and for the criminal justice system.

There is, however, considerable evidence of the factors that influence re-offending. These include:

- education;
- employment;
- drug and alcohol misuse;
- mental and physical health;
- attitudes and self-control;
- institutionalisation and life-skills;
- housing;
- financial issues and
- family networks and support.

For example, being in employment reduces the risk of re-offending, as does having stable accommodation. The challenge for our Services in assisting a convicted offender away from crime is often considerable. Many prisoners have poor skills and little experience of employment, few positive social networks, severe accommodation issues, and often all of this complicated by drug, alcohol and mental health problems.

While these factors can have a huge impact on the likelihood of a prisoner re-offending, the time spent serving a prison sentence can provide a real opportunity for constructive work. Building on the increasing evidence of what works in tackling the problems of offenders, and in reducing reoffending, this Strategy seeks to address many of the factors identified as making a difference.

Offending behaviour programmes, for example, aim to change the way offenders think, highlighting the effect of their behaviour on themselves and others, and to teach positive strategies to avoid the situations that lead to offending; alcohol and drug addiction counselling services and programmes are essential given the prevalence of substance misuse in the lives of those who offend.

Mental health assessment and support to those in prison experiencing mental health problems is crucial to positive outcomes. Effective resettlement work can directly match prisoners to available jobs in the community. Working with the third sector supports the provision of advocates, advice, support and encouragement.

Linking with statutory services such as Local Authorities and the Department of Social Protection can mean for some that a sentence can be utilised to improve contact with public services. Successful resettlement demands an integrated approach to rehabilitative programmes and support. This Strategy has actions that cover the entire sentence, pre and post custody. It seeks to address many of the factors either associated with a prisoner's offending or likely to increase the chances of their re-offending.

JOINT STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

2018 - 2020

Our Strategic Actions

Action	Strategic Outcomes
1: Improve Sentence Management	
We will continue to develop a schedule of offender programmes delivered in prison with the overall objective of reducing reoffending.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Improved engagement in prisoner programmes; ✓ Improved resettlement and reintegration of offenders; ✓ Increased stability for offender on release; ✓ Reduced re-offending; ✓ Safer Communities.
2: Maximise joint working between the Irish Prison Service and Probation Service	
We will improve our systems for working together in the delivery of services to offenders, in order to achieve greater cohesion in our work to reduce offending behaviour and to promote a safer society. We will continue to work to enhance the delivery of existing joint working initiatives to support safer communities and review opportunities for further collaboration and information sharing to enhance offender programmes and reduce areas of duplication.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ More collaborative and inclusive working; ✓ Enhanced two-way communication; ✓ More efficient and effective working within both organisations; ✓ Increased handover of risk relevant information to provide for smoother transition of cases between Services; ✓ Joint training initiatives to support shared learning and collaboration; ✓ Research on joint initiatives to review and inform interventions;
3: Develop a range of responses for female offenders to afford them more opportunity and help realise their potential.	
We will build on existing gender informed approaches, expand options and focus on effective through-care and resettlement into communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Effective co-ordinated services in custody and in the community; ✓ Increased awareness and Implementation of gender informed practice; ✓ Improved transition and resettlement to community facilities (Abigail centre and the Step down unit.); ✓ Improved collaboration across organisations; ✓ Improved parenting, familial /community relationships; ✓ Reduced re-offending; ✓ Proactive use of community sanctions for women in the Criminal Justice System.

Action	Strategic Outcomes
4: Enhance engagement with victims of crime	
<p>In keeping with the requirements of the Criminal Justice (Victims of Crime) Act 2017, EU Victims Directive (2012/29/EU) establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Increased awareness of services available to victims; ✓ Clarity on the role, responsibilities and interfaces between Irish Prison Service/Probation Service; ✓ Enhanced communication for persons considering registering for information with the Irish Prison Services Victim Liaison Service. ✓ Enhanced service provision to victims engaging with our services.
5: Develop innovative responses for specific groups of offenders	
<p>We will continue to engage with specific cohorts in custody, ensuring that initiatives are based on best national and international evidence based best practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Enhanced engagement with specific groups of offenders; ✓ Development and maintenance of joint initiatives with specific groups of offenders; ✓ Development of Building Better Lives Programme for sexual violence to include persons who deny the offence; ✓ Proactive engagement and interventions with people convicted of non-sexual violent offending; ✓ Proactive assessment of young adults in custody (18 – 24 years old) to inform sentence management; ✓ Enhance our working in relation to perpetrators and victims of domestic violence.
6: Enhance the employability of offenders	
<p>We will work together in order to increase the number of ex-offenders who secure sustained employment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Improved delivery of relevant prisoner programmes; ✓ Higher rates of re-employment of people with convictions; ✓ Improved resettlement and reintegration of offenders; ✓ Increased stability for offenders on release; ✓ Reduced re-offending; ✓ Safer Communities.

Action	Strategic Outcomes
7: Engaging service users.	
We will work in partnership with service users including with relevant organisations to provide opportunities for peer led improvements to our service delivery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Recognition of the role service-users play in reducing re-offending; ✓ Expansion of engagement with service users; ✓ Better feedback to improve services; ✓ Peer led offending behaviour and mentoring programmes.
8: Promoting research and evaluation.	
We will continue to promote research and evaluation to ensure evidence informed practice in our joint work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Research to inform practice; ✓ Improved evaluation of services; ✓ Recidivism research into Building Better Lives programme.
9: Improve the provision of Drug & Alcohol Services in Prison and the community.	
We will work together to increase equity of access, choice and person-centred treatment and intervention options. Co-ordination of services will enhance clear treatment pathways. The experience of prison will be seen as an opportunity to address addiction with a focus on outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Improved pre-work and preparation; ✓ More appropriate referral, assessment & care planning; ✓ Improved case management, treatment & recovery management; ✓ Focus on pathway of care for dual diagnosis.

STRATEGIC ACTION 1

Improved Sentence Management

We will continue to work collaboratively to improve formation and delivery of coherent multi-disciplinary sentence plans and supports for individuals from committal to post-release

Actions		Responsibility
1.1	We will continue to develop a schedule of offender programmes delivered in prison with the overall objective of reducing reoffending.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service
1.2	We will work together with the prison-based multi-disciplinary teams as part of Integrated Sentence Management to identify needs and set goals for individual prisoners, within agreed parameters, to improve prisoner engagement and outcomes.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service
1.3	We will work together with the prison-based multi-disciplinary teams to record interventions on Prisoner Information Management System to better inform prisoner progression and release plans, assisting in reducing duplication.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service
1.4	We will continue to build on the success of incentivised early release schemes including the Community Support Scheme and the Community Return Scheme.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service
1.5	We will continue to engage with statutory and voluntary partners to develop protocols and deliver programmes to better support reintegration of prisoners into the community on release.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service
1.6	We will continue operation of the Joint Agency Response to Crime targeting prolific recidivist offenders.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service

STRATEGIC ACTION 2

Maximise joint working between the Irish Prison Service and Probation Service

We will continually improve our systems for working together in delivering services to offenders, in order to achieve greater cohesion in our work to reduce offending.

Actions		Responsibility
2.1	We will develop and agree a Service Level Agreement to underpin the contribution of the Probation Service to prisoner sentence management and community re-integration.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service
2.2	We will improve our systems for capturing data relating to offender management in prisons, including the further development of information-sharing systems.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service
2.3	We will work towards achieving a clearer focus on set objectives with the co - funded Community Based Organisations to further improve services to prisoners and ex-prisoners.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service
2.4	We will improve access (including the use of technology) for staff of the Probation Service to prisoners for assessments for courts, the Parole Board pre-release planning and offence-focused work.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service
2.5	We will identify areas for conducting joint research with prisoners and ex-prisoners to enhance our understanding of desistance from offending.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service
2.6	The Irish Prison Service Psychology Service and Probation Service will formalise the exchange of risk relevant information to inform best practice interventions.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service
2.7	The Irish Prison Service Psychology Service and Probation Service will continue to develop and maintain joint intervention initiatives with specific groups of people in custody.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service
2.8	The Irish Prison Service Psychology Service and Probation Service will hold joint training initiatives to support shared learning and collaboration where appropriate.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service
2.9	The Irish Prison Service Psychology Service and Probation Service will establish clear guidelines on clear division of 'lead agency' responsibility for those persons serving life sentences, sentenced prior to 01/04/17.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service
2.10	<p>The Irish Prison Service Psychology Service will second an Irish Prison Service Psychologist to Probation Service HQ, Haymarket to support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Case consultancy; ● Client Programme Development; ● Support joint working; ● Development of external sources of Psychology support; ● Specialist Assessment and Intervention; ● Assist Probation Officer training and development. 	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service

STRATEGIC ACTION 3

Develop a range of responses for female offenders to afford them more opportunity and help realise their potential.

We will work together to build on existing gender informed practice, expand options and focus on effective through care and resettlement into communities.

Action		Responsibility
3.1	We will support the re-settlement of women following custody, through the development of a step down residential unit in Dublin.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service
3.2	We will continue to support partner agencies at the Abigail Centre, Finglas, providing an effective female centered option for transition, re-settlement and re-integration in the community.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service
3.3	We will examine and incorporate the learning from joint Irish Prison Service/Probation Service research into female offending/ custodial trends.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service
3.4	We will support empowering initiatives and responses that enhance recovery, education, training or other opportunities for women.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service
3.5	We will work with all stakeholders to promote gender informed programmes and approaches in custody and the community.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service
3.6	We will support joint training across agencies informed by international and current best practice.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service
3.7	We will continue to address the issue of domestic violence and abuse with perpetrators to improve the lives of women and their children affected by these issues.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service

STRATEGIC ACTION 4

Enhance engagement with victims of crime

In keeping with the requirements of the Criminal Justice (Victims of Crime) Act 2017, EU Victims Directive (2012/29/EU) establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime.

Action		Responsibility
4.1	We will prepare and implement a joint protocol to guide our engagement with victims of crime.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service
4.2	We will review existing modes of communication to facilitate victims' access to relevant information and services.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service
4.3	In accordance with the commitments in our Victims Charter we will provide prisoners with avenues to address and take responsibility for their offending behaviour.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service
4.4	We will provide an appropriate and timely response to requests for Restorative Justice interventions in accordance with agreed protocols.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service
4.5	We will facilitate victims in making written submissions to the Parole Board should they so wish	Irish Prison Service
4.6	We will engage in joint training with partner agencies where possible.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service
4.7	We will evaluate current practices and procedures to inform further engagement with victims of crime.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service

STRATEGIC ACTION 5

Developing innovative responses for specific groups of offenders

We will continue to engage with specific cohorts in custody, ensuring that initiatives are based on best national and international evidence based best practice

Actions		Responsibility
5.1	We will fully implement the Sex Offender Risk Assessment and Management (SORAM) arrangements in our prisons and in the community.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service
5.2	<p>We will develop and maintain the Building Better Lives (BBL) Programme for sexual violence in the Midlands and Arbour Hill Prisons.</p> <p>The Irish Prison Service and Probation Service will review international best practice interventions with persons convicted of sexual violence who deny their offence.</p> <p>The Irish Prison Service and Probation Service will review how data is collated on persons that engage in interventions focused on sexual offending.</p>	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service
5.3	We will continue to develop sentence planning, including reintegration into the community, for young adults in custody (aged 18 - 24 years) serving a sentence.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service
5.4	We will promote engagement with persons convicted of violent offences and explore opportunities for joint interventions.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service
5.5	We will explore areas of joint support for people in custody who are mentally unwell.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service
5.6	In conjunction with relevant services, the Irish Prison Service and Probation Service will finalise the Older Adults in Prison Policy.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service
5.7	We will work to identify and to improve engagement with members of the Traveller Community in custody in offence related interventions.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service
5.8	We will explore opportunities for joint working in relation to perpetrators of Domestic Violence.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service

STRATEGIC ACTION 6

Enhancing the Employability of Offenders

We will work together in order to increase the number of ex-offenders who secure sustained employment.

Actions		Responsibility
6.1	We will jointly implement the Social Enterprise Strategy 'A New Way Forward'.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service
6.2	We will continue to co-fund a Social Enterprise Project Manager to deliver on strategic actions and to support the establishment of social enterprises who employ people with convictions.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service
6.3	The Probation Service will administer a Seed Capital Fund (Dormant Accounts) for Social Enterprises with the support of the Irish Prison Service.	Probation Service
6.4	We will ensure a greater focus on employment outcomes for the GATE and LINKAGE Services provided by the Irish Association for the Social Integration of Offenders (IASIO).	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service
6.5	We will seek to develop a joint protocol with Intreo Services in order to ensure a seamless transition from training and employment supports in prison to Intreo employment services.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service

STRATEGIC ACTION 7

Engaging service users.

We will work in partnership with service user organisations to provide opportunities for peer led improvements to our service delivery.

Actions	Responsibility
7.1 We will enter into a joint Service Level Agreement with the Irish Red Cross to progress the Community Based Health & First Aid (CBHFA) programme both in prisons, and in transitioning into the community, with accompanying governance structures.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service
7.2 We will work with the Irish Red Cross in delivering on an expanded curriculum to help create reduced reoffending and a safer community	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service
7.3 We will scope the possibility of grant funding a co-ordinator to progress the IRC 'Prison to Community' initiative	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service
7.4 We will co-facilitate offender rehabilitation programmes with ex-offenders from the Brio programme in the Dochas Centre.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service
7.5 We will support the non-statutory sector in providing opportunities to prisoners for meaningful reparation.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service

STRATEGIC ACTION 8

Promoting research and evaluation.

We will continue to promote research and evaluation to ensure evidence informed practice in our joint work.

Actions		Responsibility
8.1	We will jointly commission research to examine best practice interventions in working with female offenders, both in the community and in custody, to reduce offending, minimise use of custody and promote positive living.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service
8.2	We will identify areas for conducting joint research with Life Sentenced Prisoners to inform enhanced sentence management both in custody and in the community.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service
8.3	We will scope research possibilities with regard to the provision of rehabilitative interventions, both within the prison estate and in the community with persons convicted of perpetrating sexual violence.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service
8.4	We will identify other areas for conducting joint research with prisoners and ex-prisoners to enhance our understanding of desistance from offending, with a view to achieving better outcomes.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service
8.5	We will support research into the impact of the CBHFA Programme on offender desistance.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service

STRATEGIC ACTION 9

Improve the provision of Drug & Alcohol Services in Prison and the Community.

We will work together to increase equity of access, choice and person-centred treatment and intervention options. Co-ordination of Services will enhance clear treatment pathways. The experience of prison will be seen as an opportunity to address addictions with a focus on outcomes.

Actions	Responsibility
9.1 The Irish Prison Service & Probation Service will jointly implement the recommendations of the “Review of Drug & Alcohol Treatment Services for Adult Offenders in Prison and in the Community 2016”.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service
9.2 The Irish Prison Service & Probation Service will jointly implement the recommendations of the National Drug & Alcohol Strategy, “Reducing Harm and Supporting Recovery 2017-2025”.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service
9.3 The Irish Prison Service will continue the surveillance of and education on the use and effects of New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) within the prison estate and the management of related health issues.	Irish Prison Service
9.4 The Irish Prison Service & Probation Service will develop appropriate working systems with partner agencies to establish a pathway of care for those in our care who present with co-morbidities (dual diagnosis).	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service
9.5 The Irish Prison Service & Probation Service will redesign and review the content of the National Drug Treatment Programme to further develop the range of service specific problem substance use interventions in line with best international practice.	Irish Prison Service & Probation Service

