



CORPORATE PLAN **2023-26**

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FOREWORD FROM BOARD CHAIRMAN



I am delighted to present the Probation Board for Northern Ireland's Corporate Plan 2023-26. This Plan was developed following significant consultation with staff, stakeholders and the wider public. We held four internal staff engagement events and a virtual town hall.

Over 150 staff attended these events. We also held round tables with representatives from the community and voluntary sectors and our statutory partners. Importantly we also spoke to service users, those people directly using our services. We also received written responses from a range of interested parties. All the feedback and responses have been reviewed and have helped us to develop this document which we hope

will be meaningful to staff, service users, our partners and the wider public.

The challenges faced over the lifetime of the last Corporate Plan have been unprecedented. The pandemic and process of recovery has impacted upon service delivery across the public sector and increased demand for probation services. Communities are now facing a cost-of-living crisis which will adversely impact those who are already marginalised in society including PBNI service users. Likewise, many of our staff will be impacted by this crisis.

Probation's caseload has increased, and staff are working with people whose needs are becoming increasingly complex.

Many of those who are supervised by probation are suffering from poor mental health and addictions and this is likely to increase in the future. Many have experienced multiple childhood adversities and suffer from intergenerational trauma. Our operational staff have been trained to deliver trauma-informed practice and delivering this holistic approach on an individual basis takes significant time and effort.

There are significant workforce issues which will continue to be relevant over the coming Corporate Planning period. This includes the need for the organisation to have modern and fit for purpose pay structures to enable us to retain experienced social work staff. Current difficulties in retaining experienced social work staff, many of whom are responsible for managing our highest risk casework, are adversely impacting upon staff workloads and the delivery of services.

There is also political uncertainty and very real budget constraints in the period ahead which makes long term planning incredibly difficult. PBNI has received its budget for the first year of this Corporate Plan. Like all public services, probation is already impacted by high inflation, rising demands and pay pressures. This budget will not alleviate these issues, and will in fact detrimentally impact

the delivery of services and the continuation of some of our projects that have been making a positive difference to the lives of people in NI.

All of these challenges create a difficult operating environment, and this Plan aims to help probation staff address some of the challenges. It does so by streamlining our strategic priorities into four key areas and setting out four clear outcomes that we want to achieve to enable us to stabilise the work of probation, look after our people and focus on doing our core work well.

Despite the challenges, this Corporate Plan also sets out our desire to continue to be an organisation which is innovative, creative, collaborative and solution focused. That means working closely with staff and partners to implement learning and best practice that will enhance our service.

I want to pay tribute to our staff who have demonstrated immense dedication and commitment over the last number of years. Every day staff throughout PBNI support, hold to account and assist the people we work with to change their lives for safer communities. Through this strategic framework that work will continue and the lives of individuals, families and communities will be improved.

FOREWORD FROM CHIEF EXECUTIVE



Over the course of the last 18 months my priority as Chief Executive has been to listen to our staff and partners and to begin to put in place new structures that enable us to deliver the best probation service we can. Already we have reviewed and developed a new senior leadership structure. We have begun the journey of building an organisational culture that is fair and inclusive where everyone feels able to put forward their views and feels valued for their contribution.

We have carried out a number of internal reviews of practice and implemented recommendations to improve service delivery. Of course we have more to do.

This Plan, and in particular the four agreed strategic priorities and outcomes will enable us to continue our work to prioritise the development and wellbeing of our people, deliver effective services to reduce reoffending, focus resources on where they are most needed and prioritise our partnerships to keep people safer.

Our budget for the first year of this corporate plan has been reduced and this means we are operating in an incredibly challenging financial environment. There are some areas of our work that we will need to reduce or do differently in order to live within our budget. All the decisions we make to reduce or change service delivery will be assessed against the impact on staff, service users, the organisation and most importantly public safety.

Under the first strategic priority, 'Our People'

we will develop, support, and empower our staff to maintain effective service delivery. This means developing and helping staff progress across all grades within PBNI -both operational and corporate - to ensure we retain and use the very valuable skills that our staff have acquired to deliver effective services.

We will continue the pay modernisation programme to help ensure our terms and conditions are fit for purpose and that we can attract and hold on to qualified staff. Staff wellbeing will be a focus across all teams and we need to support our people, particularly those dealing with challenging workloads. The cultural issues identified by the Criminal Justice Inspectorate are being addressed. Changing an organisation's culture however doesn't happen overnight and it is something that needs to be continually worked at by everyone. We are at the start of that journey, and this Plan will enable us to continue that work.

Under the second strategic priority, 'Our Services'

we will deliver an effective, statutory probation service to reduce reoffending and protect the public. Probation's core work is to rehabilitate and reintegrate people into the community so that the public is protected from harm, crime is reduced, and fewer people become victims. Over the last year we have made real strides in improving our practice. For example, we established the Policy, Practice and Research Unit in 2020 as a response to recommendations made by the Criminal Justice Inspectorate and I have been really impressed with the organisational learning from this work over the past 12 months, ensuring we are delivering the very best service for the people we work with. We heard from staff during the consultation period that they wanted to continue to innovate and develop practice, and we will help enable staff to do that.

Under the third strategic priority 'Our Funding'

we will prioritise our budget and estate to maximise service delivery. This means that decisions on budget reductions will be tested against agreed principles, the most important of which is, mitigating the strategic risk to public safety. There is a need to continue to modernise and ensure our structures are fit for purpose. There are a number of key areas of work that will be reviewed over the coming three years to ensure we are efficient and effective. We will continue to work closely with the Department of Justice to ensure that we maximise efficiencies and we will continue to prioritise innovation.

Under our fourth strategic priority 'Our Partnerships'

we will develop our current partnerships and create new partnerships to help make communities safer. Moving forward into an uncertain future will require us to reach out to work in partnership with others. Probation's partnership working with prisons, courts and the police and our relationship with the community and voluntary sector underpins much of our work.

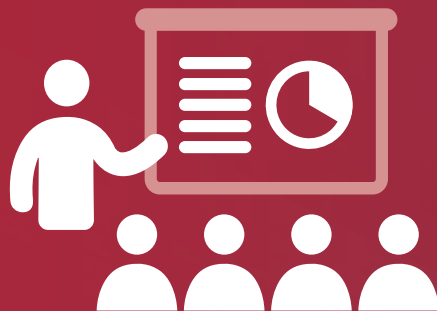
Throughout the consultation for this Corporate Plan we heard from partners who want to be collaborative, share good practice and work with us to find innovative solutions to problems. There is also a need to be collaborative across government departments including with health, education and others. Over the next years our priority will be strengthening our partnerships to ensure we have the vital support services in place that help reduce re-offending.

I do not want to underplay any of the issues that we face because they are significant; but I believe that this Corporate Plan provides a framework for us to develop our people and public services and move forward with confidence to ensure that we continue in our aim of changing lives for safer communities.

THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

Probation Board members, senior leaders and partners attended a facilitated workshop in June 2022 to begin discussion on the Corporate Plan for 2023-26. This followed a period on early engagement with partners on our draft strategic priorities. PBNI commenced its formal consultation for the 2023-26 Corporate Plan on 31 August 2022 for a period of 10 weeks. The formal consultation closed on 11 November 2022. We worked hard to be as inclusive as possible and put staff, service users and our partners at the heart of this consultation process.

HOW WE CONSULTED:



Held an initial workshop with senior managers, board members and external partners and provided an early draft document for comments to partners.



Wrote to over **600 stakeholders** providing consultation document.



Launched consultation on social media and publicised it regularly on Twitter/Facebook/Instagram during the consultation period.

HOW WE CONSULTED:



Published consultation to the PBNI website.



Used external and internal Probation News to highlight the consultation document.



Held a round table with representatives from the **community and voluntary sectors.**



Held a round table with representatives from our **statutory partners.**



Received **17** formal written responses.



Held **four** in person staff engagement events.



Held a virtual town hall event with staff.



Consulted through our service user forums.

THE ROLE OF PROBATION

Probation is a central part of the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland. It works to address the causes of offending to help prevent people coming back into the system again and protects the public from harm caused by re-offending. The services we provide enables individuals to change their behaviour which in turn reduces the likelihood of reoffending, reduces the numbers of victims, and makes communities safer.

We are primarily responsible for the management of people on probation (those serving a community sentence or who have been released from prison subject to licence) and for preparing pre-sentence reports for judges and magistrates in the courts to enable them to choose the most appropriate sentence. Probation staff also work in prisons preparing people for release into the community and we provide an information service for victims of crime and restorative interventions where appropriate.

OUR RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE:

- **Supervising People on Probation:** We do this by assessing and managing individuals' risks, and planning interventions to seek to tackle the root causes of their offending behaviour. We take a trauma informed approach acknowledging that many of those who we work with will have experienced Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). Probation staff also hold people to account if they do not comply with the conditions of Court Orders or Licences and take enforcement action if needed to keep people and communities safe.
- **Preparing Pre-Sentence Reports:** Probation work with both Magistrates courts and Crown courts and prepare reports about the people charged with an offence. These are called Pre-Sentence Reports, or PSRs. They help the Magistrates and Judges decide on the most suitable and effective sentence to give. To do this a probation officer will consider the circumstances that led to someone offending and consider how likely they are to offend in the future.

- **Public Protection:** The Public Protection arrangements in Northern Ireland (PPANI) aim to provide a multi-agency, co-ordinated system of risk assessment and risk management that is effective in reducing the immediate and long-term risk of sexual or violent re-offending. Probation staff do this in conjunction with the Police, Prisons, Social Services and other Government and Voluntary organisations.
- **Programmes and Interventions:** Probation staff deliver accredited programmes that deal with offending behaviour including violent and sexual offending. We also deliver programmes and interventions to address domestic abuse and to support healthy relationships.
- **Working in Prisons:** Probation staff work in all prisons in Northern Ireland in partnership with prison staff to deliver resettlement services, which are a key element of reducing the risk of reoffending when someone leaves prison.
- **Community Service:** Those on community service pay back and make reparation to communities by providing unpaid work. The work undertaken helps improve the local environment, enhances public confidence in community sentences, and can be a pathway into employment for service users.
- **Providing an Information Service to Victims of Crime:** The PBNI Victim Information Unit manages three Victim Information Schemes which provide information about the Criminal Justice System at key stages of the individual's sentence, in a manner which is accessible, understandable, and supportive. Where appropriate staff also deliver restorative interventions to victims and survivors.

Our probation officers are social workers who are qualified and regulated by Northern Ireland Social Care Council and trained in risk assessment and management which are essential skills in this complex and challenging work. We also have staff who are psychologists, community service officers, probation services officers, and administrative staff in operational teams. We also employ finance, communications, human resources and IT staff to support front line staff and carry out our statutory duties. Every member of staff contributes to changing lives for safer communities.

THE OPERATING CONTEXT



On 31st March 2022, PBNI were managing 3,947 service users on a combined total of 4,970 orders, licences and sentences. There is an increasing upward trend in orders and licenses, increasing by 12% over the past year. Probation Orders continued to be the most common Order, accounting for 36% of the caseload, and on an upward trend, increasing by 22% over the past year. Determinate Custodial Sentences also are increasing by 20% since December 2020. Community Service Orders however are declining in number, with a reduction of 29% since December 2019. On 31st March 2022, 14% of licences were allocated to prison-based teams preparing for the prisoner release into community supervision.

The breakdown of caseload by gender has remained consistent in March 2022 compared with previous years, with males making up 88% of people on caseload and females accounting for 12%.

The most common age range of people on an order was 30 to 39-year-olds, with 34% of males and 33% of females belonging to this demographic.

The number of new registered victims has increased each year, which continued in 21/22 with 280 new victims registered, up by 8% from 20/21. Of the 496 victims registered at the end of 21/22, 69% are female.

As well as an increasing caseload, people are presenting with increasingly complex issues. This is borne out in the numbers of people requiring support with mental health and addictions. Many of those on the caseload are suffering from trauma and have experienced multiple childhood adversities. Front line staff need to invest more time in resources to support these individuals to comply with the court orders and build positive relationships.

The introduction of new domestic abuse legislation is also likely to lead to an increased workload in relation to the provision of court reports and supervision of orders and licences.

COST OF LIVING CRISIS

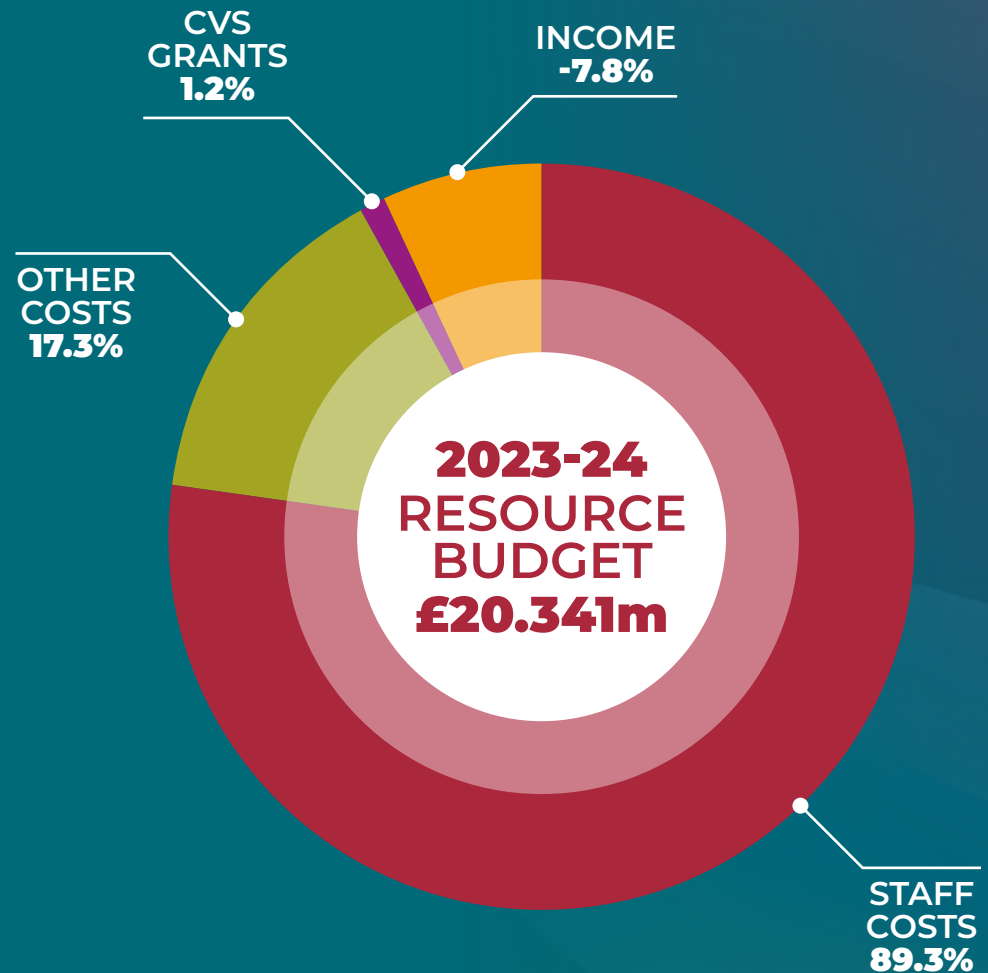
We know that many of PBNI service users have been adversely affected by the economic impact of the pandemic and are now facing the consequences of a cost-of-living crisis. A recent report found that people who have been subject to probation orders earn up to 30% less than other workers. Many other service users are not in the workforce. Is it likely that PBNI's caseload will be impacted by the current economic difficulties in terms of the types of crime being committed and the impact on rehabilitating people by supporting them into employment.

BUDGET 2023-24

The opening PBNI budget for 2023-24 is £20.341m. Further funding is anticipated in relation to Fresh Start -Tackling Paramilitary Activity of £1.66m.

£18.1m of PBNI allocation is spent on staff costs, including pensions costs. Ensuring appropriate levels of social work trained and support staff is key to the delivery of PBNI business objectives.

£2.5m of other costs are dedicated to maintain the PBNI Estate and IT infrastructure, to support staff and enhance the efficiency of service delivery.



PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS

OUR CORPORATE PLAN HAS BEEN INFORMED BY THE FOLLOWING ASSUMPTIONS:

BUDGET

As public services respond to a cost-of-living crisis, increased inflation, a rise in energy costs and the impact of the pandemic, budgets across all Government Departments will be under extreme pressure. A reduced budget will significantly impact upon probation and how it delivers services.

WORKLOAD

Currently there are over 4000 individuals on PBNI's caseload. There has been an increase in the numbers of service users on our caseload and the complexity of cases PBNI deals with and an increase in the vulnerability of service users, for example there are more people presenting with addictions and poor mental health. There has also been an increase in the number victims on the caseload.

WORKFORCE

PBNI is having significant difficulties in retaining social work staff. We have lost a number of experienced staff due mainly to the pay differential between social workers within probation compared to other sectors. This is having an adverse impact on staff workloads, how we deliver probation practice and critically the loss of experienced staff who are responsible for managing our most complex and highest risk casework.

INNOVATION

PBNI is committed to continuing to innovate and implement best practice and local and international research on probation practice. Over the coming three year period we will review and implement learning from the pandemic to ensure our structures and systems support our staff, and enables us to work most effectively.

OUR AIM, VISION AND VALUES

OUR AIM

PBNI's aim is:

***‘Changing
lives for safer
communities’***

OUR VISION

We will reduce reoffending by working together to tackle the complexities associated with the root causes of offending behaviour and rehabilitating people and reintegrating them into their communities. We will be collaborative and transformative to reduce the number of victims of crime and build safer communities.

OUR VALUES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Our organisational values are key to our way of working and outline how members of the public, service users and staff can expect to be treated when engaging with PBNI. Our values are supported by guiding principles. Our values act as the foundation for our principles. Board members and staff also adhere to the ‘Nolan principles of public life’ which are the basis of the ethical standards Board members and those employed in probation are expected to adhere to. Social work staff also adhere to social work standards.

VALUES

Respect - We will treat everyone with respect and dignity at all times and value diversity and differing viewpoints.

Integrity - We will act in a way that engenders trust with all. We will be honest in what we say and do.

Openness - We will encourage people to speak up and make suggestions about practice and we will be open about our decision making.

Accountability - We will be accountable for our decisions and actions.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Recognising and encouraging people's capacity to change - We believe all people, given the right circumstances and support have the ability to change their lives.

Partnership and Collaborative Working - We value partnership and collaboration across statutory, community and voluntary sectors and where appropriate the private sector.

Empowering and Innovating - We are committed to empowering our staff to look for solutions and be innovative in developing policy and practice.

Equality and Diversity - We recognise, understand and respond to peoples unique needs.

Professionalism of Staff - We will carry out our role professionally adhering to professional standards and do our jobs effectively.

Using Resources Effectively - We will use our limited resources effectively and decisions on budget reductions will be tested against the need to maintain our practice standards, to mitigate the impact on our service users and the risk to public safety.

PRINCIPLES OF TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICE

In light of the prevalence of adversity and trauma among our service users we wish to ensure there is proportionate support for both our service users and our staff therefore this Plan will also take account of the principles of trauma informed practice which are:

Safety; fostering psychological and physical safety in staff and service users.

Trustworthiness and transparency; across systems to promote a sense of fairness.

Peer support.

Collaboration and mutuality; a shared vision where everyone has a role to play.

Empowerment, voice and choice; service users as key stakeholders influence key decisions.

The recognition of the cultural, historical, and gender issues (including sectarianism) which impact on service users.

(adapted from SAMHSA [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Support Administration] 2014)

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND OUTCOMES

In developing our strategic priorities we reviewed all consultation responses and have considered how PBNI aligns with the Department of Justice priorities in its

Corporate and Business Plans 

and in particular supporting the work of our partners including the prison service, the police service and the courts service with the overall objective of having fewer victims of crime. In this plan therefore we are setting out four clear strategic priorities and linked to each priority four outcomes:



OUR PEOPLE

1



We will develop, support, and empower our staff to maintain effective service delivery

OUTCOME:

Our people are supported through a positive and inclusive working environment to deliver an effective and stable probation service.

OUR SERVICES

2



We will deliver an effective, statutory probation service to reduce reoffending and protect the public

OUTCOME:

We have a safer community through the delivery of high-quality, effective probation services.

OUR FUNDING

3



We will prioritise our budget and estate to maximise service delivery

OUTCOME:

The Probation Service is sustainable, adaptable and prepared for future challenges.

OUR PARTNERSHIPS

4



We will develop our current partnerships and create new partnerships to help make communities safer

OUTCOME:

We have developed partnerships to help make communities safer.

We are committing through this strategy to providing an outcome focussed approach to our work with an emphasis on quality assurance. An annual business plan with indicators of success will flow from this Corporate Plan. We will use all available data from our caseload analysis, evaluations of projects and local and international research on probation practice to help inform our decision making and measure how we are making a difference.

OUR PEOPLE



We will develop, support, and empower our staff to maintain effective service delivery

OUTCOME:

Our people are supported through a positive and inclusive working environment to deliver an effective and stable probation service.

We will develop, support and empower our staff to provide effective, supervision in line with practice standards and maintain effective service delivery.

Over the coming three-year period we will continue our work on pay modernisation; agree a workload measurement tool; introduce a hybrid working model; and focus on staff wellbeing, professional development and career progression.

We will continue to develop our culture and enhance staff engagement. This will enable us to benchmark employee engagement and in response to the survey findings develop our People Strategy. We want to have a skilled, competent and confident workforce in place able to deliver safe, high quality service delivery.

OUR SERVICES

2



We will deliver an effective, statutory probation service to reduce reoffending and protect the public

PBNI has a clearly defined 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. This has resulted in staff spending more time on an individual basis with service users in order to support them and assist them to access support services.

The numbers of victims registered with the Victim Information Scheme has increased over the last Corporate Plan period which can be attributed

OUTCOME:

We have a safer community through the delivery of high-quality, effective probation services.

to the fact that staff contacted victims directly by phone to explain the role and benefits of registration.

PBNI are committed to hearing and recognising the voice of the victims – this is done through our daily contact with victims and through encouraging victims to share their stories as evidenced in the PBNI publication ‘Victim Stories’ booklet. PBNI hope to develop this work through further story-telling projects in partnership with the Quakers Service.

PBNI are keen to hear of victims’ experience of our service and value the feedback from evaluation post contact and Victim Service User groups.

We have significantly developed our restorative approach. This is an area we will continue to develop.

OUR FUNDING

3



We will prioritise our budget and estate to maximise service delivery

There will be significant pressures on PBNI's budget over the coming three-year period. Reductions in our budget will impact upon our work in reducing reoffending and protecting the public and will lead to increased pressures on our staff, on other parts of the justice system, and wider public services.

OUTCOME:

The Probation Service is sustainable, adaptable and prepared for future challenges.

A key focus for PBNI is prioritising our limited resources to maximise service delivery. Decisions on budget reductions will therefore be tested against agreed principles. These are the impact on the organisation, staff, service users and most importantly public safety. We will continue to work closely with the Department to ensure that we maximise efficiencies through the introduction of new IT systems, our Estates and workforce modernisation and do our best to mitigate risks to service delivery.

OUR PARTNERSHIPS

4



We will develop our current partnerships and create new partnerships to help make communities safer

OUTCOME:

We have developed partnerships to help make communities safer.

PBNI'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 and courts as well as the large network of voluntary and community groups across Northern Ireland.

If we are to be effective in preventing people from reoffending we need to intervene at the earliest opportunity and that means working alongside a range of partners including within health, education, employment/training and housing to support people into education, employment and appropriate accommodation.

If we are not in a position to intervene at the earliest opportunity we will simply push the problem further downstream at a greater cost. Over the period of this Corporate Plan we will develop our current partnerships with statutory partners, the community and voluntary sectors and within PCSPs as well as seeking to develop new partnerships.

HOW DO WE KNOW WE ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE?

We will measure our impact and progress against outcomes through the annual business planning process and have a number of indicators and measures that flow from our outcomes.

We will use a range of surveys and data to measure our effectiveness. For example, we will use and analyse the annual statistical study of re-offending provided by the Department of Justice. We will also use annual 'completion' studies to show levels of successfully completed periods of supervision. We know that when people complete orders during their period of supervision they are less likely to reoffend.

We will survey our staff on levels of engagement through the NISRA 'People Survey'. We will also survey our service users and stakeholders to assess feedback regarding the services we provide.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS 2020-23

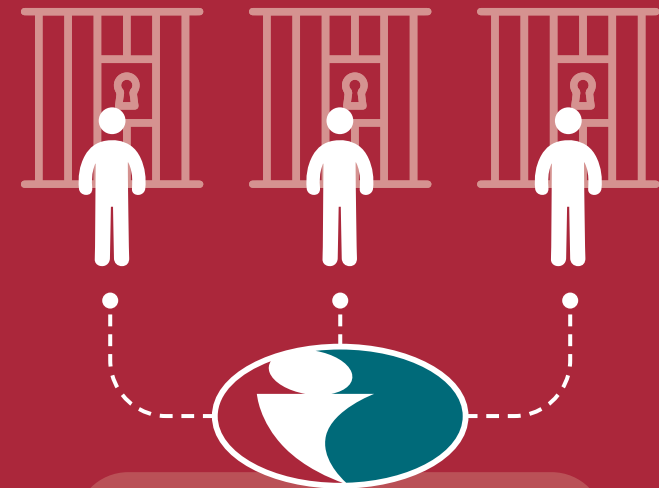
HOW MUCH WE DID



We supervised **8449** people subject to a community sentence or licence. Through the supervision process, staff support and hold people to account in order to prevent reoffending.



We supported and provided information to **496** victims and survivors who have registered with the Victim Information Scheme.



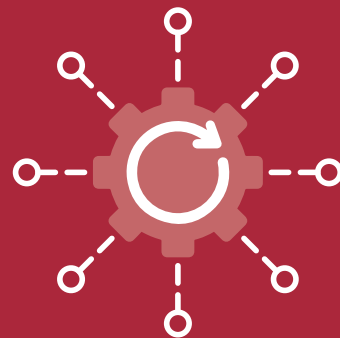
We provided staff to all three prisons to assist in the resettlement of those leaving custody and returning to the community.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS 2020-23

HOW MUCH WE DID



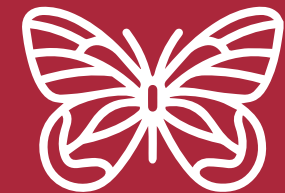
We provided **11,272** reports to assist Judges make sentencing decisions.



We developed a restorative practice framework.



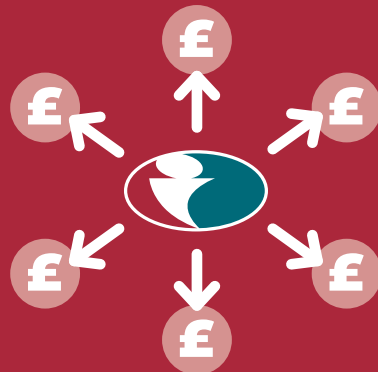
We established a Performance, Practice and Research unit to improve probation practice.



We commenced a cultural transformation programme.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS 2020-23

HOW MUCH WE DID



We provided funding to over **100** community and voluntary organisations to assist probation deliver our core task of reducing offending.



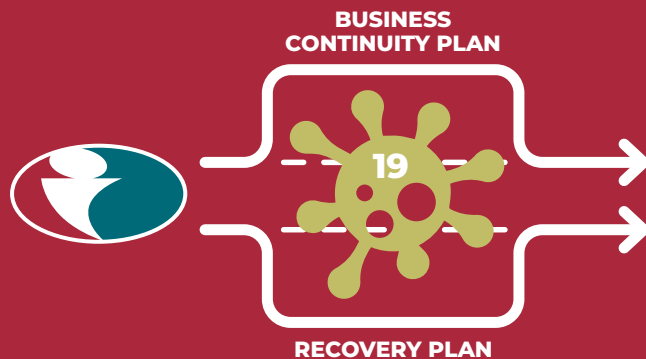
We contributed to a range of partnerships including the Public Protection Arrangements Northern Ireland, Policing and Community Safety Partnerships, Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences, and Domestic Homicide Reviews.



We launched our first service user newsletter enabling those who are on probation to have a voice and help us improve service delivery.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS 2020-23

HOW MUCH WE DID



We developed and implemented a Business Continuity Plan and Recovery Plan to ensure that service delivery continued in response to the Covid 19 pandemic.



We delivered a new IT infrastructure project and ensured all relevant operational and corporate staff have laptops, mobile phones and wifi enabled office space.



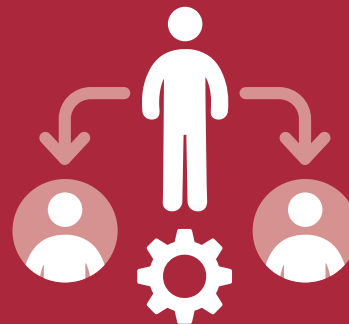
We delivered a new Electronic Case Management System to support and assist probation staff.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS 2020-23

HOW MUCH WE DID



We established a team briefing system and virtual town hall events to enhance internal communications and engagement.



We developed and delivered our first leadership development programme for new middle managers.

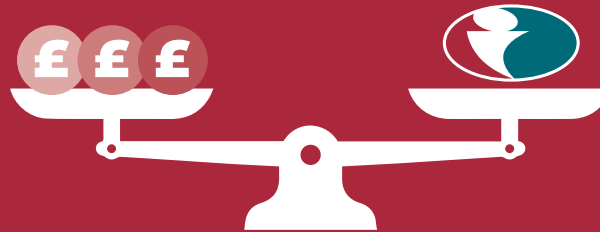


We continued our partnership work across these islands and within Europe to share best practice and keep people safer.

HOW WELL WE DID IT



We delivered on all of our business plan objectives.

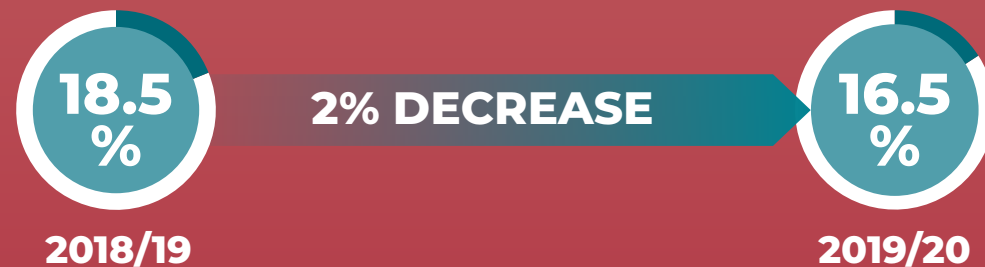


We delivered our services within available budget.



The level of successfully completed orders / licences was 82%.

OVERALL REOFFENDING RATE



The 2019/20 overall reoffending rate, published in November 2022, was **16.5%**. When compared to the previous year, it represents a **2.0** percentage point decrease in the rate of reoffending. Probation supervision had a reoffending rate of **29.9%** from the 2019/20 cohort, the largest reduction in all reoffending down 4% when compared with 2018/19.

IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?

BELOW IS THE FEEDBACK AND TESTIMONIALS WE HAVE RECEIVED FROM SERVICE USERS ABOUT THE IMPACT OF OUR SERVICE.

“I’ve currently been on probation for over a year and a half; I got a 3 year order so I’m currently at the half way point. While being on the order I have done so many beneficial things and met great people along the way. **They’ve help me beat and manage addictions**, talk about things I never thought I could ever get off my chest and feel better in myself. I now believe that I can do things that I always thought would be impossible. **The support is absolutely incredible** and support is always a call or text away. I’ve currently done my Duke of Edinburgh Bronze, battled an addiction, resolved my problems, got a healthy baby on the way, and currently working thanks to Probation.”

“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.”

“Thank you to the Victim Liaison Officer for being so caring and explaining things clearly to me. She helped ease the stress of everything.”

“I would have died without the Substance Misuse Court. I know that for 100%. I think that drug testing and attending court were the number one thing for me. Seeing Probation and how they can do well motivated me to get my life back on track and get work or training. **They believed in me.**”

IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?

“I wanted to get in touch and say thanks again and to let you know what’s happened with me since I finished Probation. Over the last loads of months I have just stuck my head down and worked as hard as I could. I got an award in work and being put through training because they say I have everything to be a team leader and should be one within a few months. I got myself a new car and also got engaged. If it wasn’t for you I really wouldn’t be where I am now and it’s the happiest I’ve been.”

“This helped me more than I could have ever imagined. You all treated me like a person, you’s make it a lot of easier. Glad it was the length it was as if it was shorter it may have gone a different way, longer got me where I needed to be especially with my partner and now baby, that wouldn’t have been that way if I hadn’t have changed.”

“My experience with the staff at the Portadown office has been amazing. I cannot commend but 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 shown me at every stage of my rehabilitation.”