

PROBATION NEWS

Magazine of the Probation Board for Northern Ireland • Issue 14 • Mar 2022



WELCOME to the Fourteenth 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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PROBATION CELEBRATES WORLD SOCIAL WORK DAY

Every year in March, World Social Work Day is celebrated to highlight the work of Social Workers throughout the different professions around the world.

All Probation Officers in Northern Ireland are Social Work qualified and registered with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council. Their Social Work values are important in Probation's approach to reducing reoffending within communities.

On celebrating the day highlighting Social Work, Amanda Stewart, Probation Chief Executive said "Our Probation Officers are social work qualified and professionally trained in the assessment and management of risk. I am very proud to lead what I consider to be an outstanding Probation service. I want to pay tribute to all the Social Workers in Probation who work so hard to deliver essential services to keep communities, families and individuals safe."

Gillian Montgomery, Director of Operations said: "Our Social Work qualified Probation

Officers support those they supervise on community orders or post release licence to have an opportunity to change their lives by taking a strengths based, person centred approach. They work with the Service User to help and support them make changes in their lives, make better and safer choices, break their cycle of offending and, where needed, address any addiction issues they may have. With its social work values and ethos, Probation is uniquely placed to assess and manage risk to change lives for safer communities."

Annie McAnallen said: "As a Probation Officer, my Social Work training helps me to connect with those I supervise, especially when challenging their behaviours and supporting them on their journey to change their lives around. Just because they have a history, doesn't mean they cannot have a future."



Chief Executive Amanda Stewart, Director of Operations Gillian Montgomery, Assistant Directors Aideen McLaughlin and Niall McEvoy along with Area Manager Deirdre Grant & Probation Officer Annie McAnallen highlighting the importance of Social Work to the work of Probation in Changing Lives for Safer Communities.



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DIARY

Chief Executive Amanda Stewart, Director of Operations Gillian Montgomery and Area Manager Paul Devlin with the Probation team in Enniskillen hearing about the work being carried out in local communities.

Welcome to this edition of Probation News. Over the last months, I have carried out a wide range of engagements with staff across probation teams and our partners in the statutory, community and voluntary sectors.

My vision for Probation in Northern Ireland is to bring it back to its roots in local communities. I want to ensure that Probation staff have strong relationships and contacts with local communities so that we can work in partnership to enhance community safety. I have seen at first hand the valuable work Probation is carrying out in local areas and I want to empower staff to build those vital local connections which brings us into the heart of communities. If we are to rehabilitate service users it is really important that we are able to link them back into local communities and assist them to find employment, training, adequate housing and support so that they can rebuild their lives and repair the harm done.

Last month I was really pleased to attend an event which brought together our staff

and service users in the Long Gallery in Parliament Buildings. Service users, who had been challenged but also supported by Probation staff spoke about how Probation not only helped them change their life but in many cases saved their life. It was an inspiring and hopeful event and I was delighted to see partners from the Prison Service, Department of Justice, NIACRO, Victim Support and others in attendance.

As well as external facing engagement, I have been working with the senior team to take forward organisational change. That includes building an organisation that is modern, agile and able to deliver vital public services in an effective and efficient way. We are carrying out significant work on developing a culture which is compassionate and supportive of staff.

We are working with the Department of Justice to take forward a programme of pay modernisation. We are also consulting on a Hybrid Working approach to ensure we optimise our learning through the pandemic.

I am very proud to lead what I consider to be an outstanding Probation service, with a social work ethos at its core. Like all public services we face challenges over the coming months, particularly in relation to budgetary pressures; however we also have many opportunities. I am looking forward to taking the opportunity to reset our priorities and build an organisation that delivers within every local area, changing lives for safer communities.

Amanda Stewart
Chief Executive



CHAIR INTRODUCTION

I was delighted to have been appointed Board Chair on the 1st March. The new Board is made up of individuals from across the community bringing valuable experience and expertise, which will assist in the delivery of Probation services.

For most of my professional career, I have worked alongside Probation staff and have always been incredibly impressed by how skilfully they are able to work with people to assist them to move away from offending behaviour. The non-judgemental, professional and individualised approach probation officers use with every person they work with is a critical part of assisting them to change their lives.

The Board has a number of objectives over the coming three years. We will shortly begin to develop the Corporate Plan, which provides the strategic direction for the organisation. This provides an opportunity for us to work with the Chief Executive and senior team to reflect on the learning from the pandemic, to consider trends in caseload, assess our budget allocation and then reset our priorities so that staff focus on delivering the services, which make most impact. In developing our plan we will consult with all stakeholders and ensure that collaboration and partnership is at the heart of our approach.



Probation Board Chair Max Murray CBE, Assistant Director Aideen McLaughlin and Area Manager Lorraine McKenna in partnership with Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council attending a recent community event in Hillsborough giving children bird boxes made by Service Users on Community Service.

We will also work with Department officials to confirm our priorities take account of wider justice issues.

While the Board is there to ensure accountability and strategic direction, we will also provide support to the Chief Executive as she works to take forward a programme of organisational development and change. We will monitor progress on addressing issues identified in the culture survey. There are pressures in the organisation around attracting and retaining social work staff. This is an issue which is high on the Board's agenda. Work is underway to develop an organisational culture, pay framework and structure, which is modern and fit for purpose. This is a significant piece of work, which will help us build capacity to deliver effective services to all communities here and ensure we can continue to change lives for safer communities.

Max Murray CBE
Board Chair

CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICER TALKS TO PROBATION STAFF ON WORLD SOCIAL WORK DAY

To celebrate World Social Work Day, which took place on 15th March, an online staff seminar was organised to bring together staff from across the organisation. The seminar was to highlight Social Work as a value-based profession. Social Work forms Probation's core values which includes treating people with respect and dignity, seeing the person as a whole person, and having a fundamental belief in an individual's capacity to change.

The key speaker at the seminar was Sean Holland, the Department of Health's Chief Social Work Officer. Probation was delighted that he spent more time online than expected as he engaged with staff questions and paid tribute to the work Probation Officers do to change lives for safer communities.

Within the Justice sector, social workers perform a key role in challenging and helping people to change their offending behaviour which helps create safer communities. In Northern Ireland, all Probation Officers are qualified Social Workers who work at every stage of the Criminal Justice System: in courts, in the community, in prisons and with victims.

The aim of each Probation Officer is to help rehabilitate the individual they are working with, to help reduce the likelihood of



Staff were delighted to have Chief Social Work Officer, Sean Holland, as the key speaker at the online seminar celebrating World Social Work Day.

further offending (thereby creating fewer victims) and to support the individual on their desistance journey. It is essential that Probation Officers are appropriately skilled to fulfil the variety of responsibilities they have.

Due to their Social Work training, Probation Officers have the ability to adopt a person centred approach when working with those who have offended, identifying the causes of their offending behaviour and considering the context of their life situation as a whole. Probation understands the importance of the professional working relationship that the Probation Officer has with their service user in terms of reducing re-offending, what social workers refer to as the 'therapeutic alliance'. Establishing this working relationship is a core social work skill and value which will help people to change their lives and create safer communities.



WORLD SOCIAL WORK DAY
15TH MARCH 2022
#WSWD2022



NEW PROBATION BOARD HOLDS FIRST MEETING

The Probation Board has held the first meeting of the new Board in the Ulster University, Belfast. Board Chair Max Murray and the newly reconstituted Board met along with Chief Executive Amanda Stewart and members of the Senior Leadership Team to discuss priorities for the next three years.

Probation's Board members are Max Murray CBE (Board Chair), Patrick Barnes OLY, Neil Bodger, (not pictured), Maureen Brunt, Dr. Jonny Byrne, Brian Ingram OBE, Jackie Johnston CBE, Kieran Donaghy, Dr. Maurice Keady, Angela Lloyd-Stevens, Catherine Magee, Bria Mongan, and Eileen Patterson.





PROBATION CONNECTS SERVICE USERS TO CHANGE LIVES

Watch Gillian Montgomery, Director of Operations explain about the Connect Newsletter

As part of a new approach to service user engagement PBNI has launched a newsletter in March developed and written by people on probation. The service users, who are all part of the Probation Board for Northern Ireland's Service User Involvement groups, have designed the magazine for other people on Probation to provide them with information and support and give a first-hand account of how they have changed their lives. The launch took place in the Long Gallery, Parliament Buildings.

Speaking at the event PBNI Chief Executive, Amanda Stewart welcomed the initiative and said; "Probation's aim is 'Changing Lives for Safer Communities' and for me 'CONNECT' is a reminder that when we work collectively with service users we can change and improve their lives. People who have lived experience have a lot to contribute to helping us create a system that can reduce the number of victims of crime and make communities safer."

Some of the service users who attended the event today said of their experience so far;

"...it helps you, the Service User, on your journey to avoid re-offending.."

"Slowly but surely I made steady progress by engaging with all services..."



Gillian Montgomery, Director of Operations also spoke at the launch: "Service User Involvement, and getting the first-hand experiences of Service Users is hugely beneficial for service providers and involving Service Users in an organisation's work brings unique insights. We get to hear what works, and importantly what doesn't work in terms of supporting someone on their desistance and rehabilitative journey. The 'CONNECT' Newsletter is one example, and a great example of putting the concept of Service User Involvement into practice".

Gillian continued: "We believe that the effectiveness of Probation in changing lives for safer communities will be enhanced through the involvement of service users in the planning, developing and evaluating of services delivered."

Gillian paid tribute to all of the service users who have contributed to the newsletter and to others who have been instrumental in CONNECT's production; Professor Joe Duffy from Queens University who provided guidance on service user involvement, and Fred Caulfield and Pamela Brown, from the Prison Arts Foundation for all their assistance with the editing and formatting of the Newsletter. In addition Jane McCullough and Chris Millar from the Regional Local Engagement Partnership who provided funding support.

Professor Joe Duffy, Queen's University and Fred Caulfield, Prison Arts Foundation both spoke at the event. Professor Joe Duffy said; "Service user involvement, when approached in the right way, can indeed change lives. The launch of CONNECT today by PBNI shows how this can have a transformative impact on how others understand service users issues."

9 - 20 MAY 2022

insights22

Learn Share Connect Celebrate

Probation taking part in HMPPS Insights22 Festival

Probation is delighted to be presenting an online seminar at this year's Insights Festival on 12 May 2022 titled "Tackling Domestic Abuse: The Experience in Northern Ireland and Lessons from the Pandemic". The Festival runs from 9th May to 20th May.

The seminar will include speakers from across Criminal Justice along with Chief Executive of Belfast and Lisburn NI Women's Aid in NI to discuss the partnership approach taken to tackle domestic abuse. Northern Irish academic Professor Monica McWilliams will also be joining the panel. Professor McWilliams completed a major study detailing the experiences of women abused through domestic violence in NI.



Director of Rehabilitation Dr Geraldine O'Hare and Assistant Director Stephen Hamilton with Professor Monica McWilliams, who will be speaking at the online Probation seminar on Domestic Abuse during the HMPPS Insights22 Festival.

Probation Board and Probation Service sign Memorandum of Understanding

Director of the Irish Probation Service, Mark Wilson joined with Chief Executive of PBNI Amanda Stewart to sign the Memorandum of Understanding on the sharing of information to help continue essential cross border co-operation on Justice matters. The sharing of information is critical to manage risk and keep communities safe.



CROSS BORDER PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Probation Board and Probation Service Senior Management representatives meeting in Belfast to discuss areas of joint interest and share best practice.

HYBRID WORKING IN PROBATION

Catherine Sweeney
Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development

Like so many organisations during the pandemic, Probation had to adapt its working practices in order to continue delivering essential services within local communities in a safe manner. Probation's Senior Leadership Team updated staff on a regular basis of any changes in Government advice and how Probation were responding to it. Senior Leadership understood the organisation would have to embrace a new way of working.

This new way of working was for staff to mix their time working from their office and their home as well as using more online video meetings. This approach was new to many and it was a testament to the adaptability and resilience of staff who quickly adjusted their working practices to continue delivering essential Probation services.

In December 2021, Probation's Communications unit organised a Virtual Town Hall Event to allow staff to discuss their experiences of remote and hybrid working during the pandemic. A number of polls were held and found that 89% of participants said they enjoyed Remote Working during the pandemic; 93% said they were supportive of Hybrid Working in the future; 86% said that they thought Hybrid Working would have a positive effect on staff wellbeing; and 71% said that Hybrid

Working arrangements could be agreed locally in teams.

Based on staff support for the initiative, Probation formalised a new Hybrid Working Policy setting out Probation's commitment to supporting an approach that combines working from the workplace and the home and/or any other location. The focus is now less about location and more about connection.

Probation is currently undertaking a six month pilot of this new approach to assess the impact on staff and the services Probation delivers. Probation will also be seeking feedback from individuals and partner organisations in the community, voluntary, health and government sectors on the impact of hybrid working, to ensure this new approach is working for everyone.



PROBATION BOARD REACHES 40TH ANNIVERSARY IN 2022

In December 2022 the Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI) will have been in existence for 40 years. This is an important opportunity to mark and celebrate 40 years of achievement by Probation staff. It presents a chance to increase public awareness about the role of Probation and to highlight how the organisation values its staff.

Chief Executive Amanda Stewart said; "A lot has changed over the last 40 years: but the common threads that have made Probation work, have stayed the same. Our staff remain dedicated and committed to going the extra mile to help people change their lives. Our focus is on working within local communities. Indeed, I believe that the heart of PBNI's work must lie in the community. Partnership is at the core of everything we do – both with our statutory partners and the community and voluntary sectors.

"We have achieved a lot but we have much more to do. My focus over the coming years is on building an organisation that values and looks after its people so that it can be effective in reducing reoffending, reducing the number of victims and changing lives for safer communities."

To celebrate and mark 40 years, Probation will be looking back at the milestones, achievements and staff experiences of each decade since 1982, but also looking forward by holding a staff event to recognise the efforts and commitment of our people, old and new. Various competitions and activities will take place throughout the year including a social media campaign, a special anniversary magazine and a series of video memories will be filmed.

In February we held an internal competition amongst staff and service users to design a 40th anniversary logo, which you can see above. We are very proud to display this logo throughout the anniversary year on all of our publications.

Watch Chief Executive Amanda Stewart's video on 40th Anniversary on YouTube.

Watch Area Manager Paul McCusker's video on 40th Anniversary on YouTube.

COMMUNITY SERVICE HELPING ACROSS COMMUNITIES

GRAFFITI REMOVAL SCHEME

The Graffiti Removal scheme squad has been out in Belfast helping local communities to clean up their local areas. Local residents and business owners continue to give wonderful feedback and thanks for the work being carried out.



NORTH WEST COMMUNITY SERVICE

Even with the reduced numbers, Community Service Squads are still out and working hard to give back to the local community. Squads have continued to attend Clarendon Shelter, Termonbacca Monastery, St Columb's Park House, Limavady Community Development Initiative and the Men's Shed. The work has involved painting and decorating, building tables, grass cutting and tidying walkways.





KELSEY ON THE BALL WITH DUKE OF EDINBURGH

Chief Executive Amanda Stewart and Probation's Duke of Edinburgh officer Claire Forsythe along with Kelsey as she told her story at an event in Parliament Buildings.

Kelsey is a female service user who has taken part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme.

Kelsey said of the Award scheme: "Before I started the Duke of Edinburgh Award I didn't really have much interest in anything and my mental health was bad. I started getting into trouble and due to this; I was referred to Claire to do the Duke of Edinburgh Award. She asked me what my interests were and I said sport and football. I was referred to the IFA programme 'Stay on Side'. I was contacted by Mark at the IFA and asked me to attend a coaching day in Hollywood that Sunday! I attended and that was the start of my journey.

From then I have started working towards my coaching qualifications. Out of this, I got to play ice hockey with the Belfast Giants, watched matches at Windsor Park, and been to my first rugby match.

This gave me confidence to apply for a full time job in JD Sports. The IFA wrote me a reference and I ended up getting the job, which I love. This has boosted my mental health by getting out of the house, making new friends and gaining new skills. I would recommend the Duke of Edinburgh Award and the Stay on Side programme.

I can now say I am excited to see what the future holds."

Probation holds the licence for the delivery of the Duke of Edinburgh Award and the Gaisce President's Award for the Justice System within Northern

Ireland, including the Youth Justice Agency and NI prison service. It is the leading youth achievement award recognised by employers and further education establishments worldwide. There are upwards of 900 young people at any one time engaging in the award across the Justice System in the UK.

Probation also offer the Endeavour Award, which is unique to Probation and recognises personal achievement in those aged 25 years and up, unlike the Duke of Edinburgh Award which targets 14 to 25 year olds.

The award supports personal development including confidence, self-belief, and skills in various subject areas. This promotes the desistance journey of the participant and reduces likelihood of further offending behaviour.



Area Managers Colin Duffy and Emer Loughran with Chief Executive Amanda Stewart as they received their Lord Mayor's certificate for their contributions to Belfast.

PROBATION STAFF RECOGNISED FOR THEIR WORK IN NORTH BELFAST

Area Managers Emer Loughran and Colum Duffy were recently awarded the Lord Mayor's Certificate in recognition of their leadership of the North Belfast team.

The North Belfast area faces a number of challenges and complexities, including serious substance misuse, mental health difficulties, suicide, community divides and an intergenerational legacy issues resulting from the Northern Ireland troubles with high unemployment and crime rates. The pandemic also created many challenges for the team, as it has for Probation as a whole, and the North Belfast team worked collectively to continue to provide a high level of service to service users.

Colum Duffy said: "It was a privilege to be nominated for the award and to be recognised within Probation and by the Lord Mayor."

Emer Loughran said: "We are delighted to see the Lord Mayor's interest in the work of Probation within the North Belfast community and to promote it so publically."

Amanda Stewart, Chief Executive said: "Congratulations to Colum, Emer and the North Belfast team for this acknowledgement of the work carried out in North Belfast. It is encouraging to see the Lord Mayor of Belfast recognising the impact of Probation's work carried out every day to change lives for safer communities."

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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

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North Belfast and South East Antrim

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

South and East Belfast

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330 Ormeau Road, Belfast, BT7 2GE 028 9054 1444

Down and Ards

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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

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Rural South

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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

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2 Feeney's Lane, Dungannon, BT70 1TX 028 8775 4848
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www.pbni.org.uk/contact/
and on “**Changing Lives**” app

