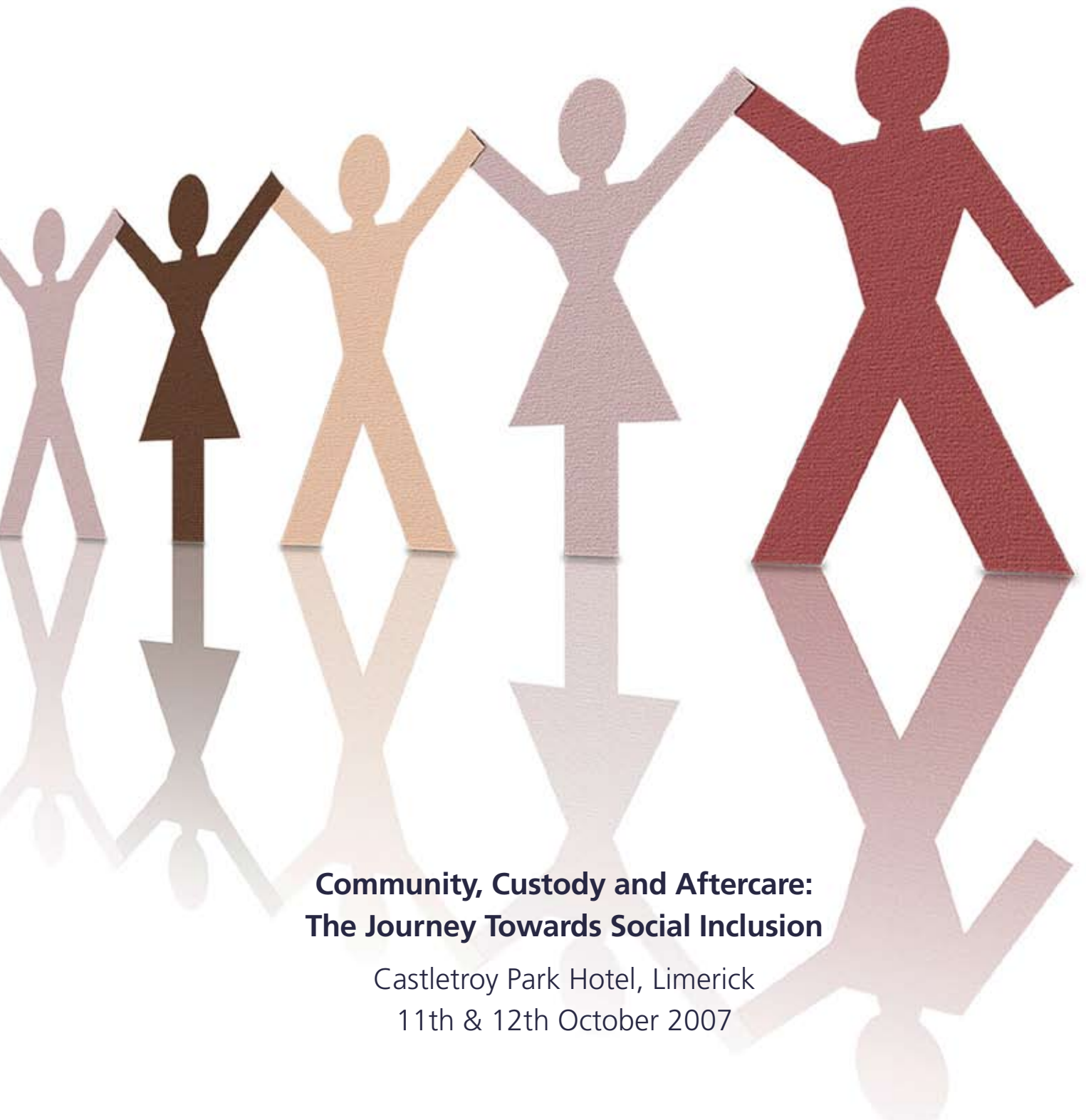




acjrd

Association for Criminal Justice
Research and Development Ltd

Tenth Annual Conference



**Community, Custody and Aftercare:
The Journey Towards Social Inclusion**

Castletroy Park Hotel, Limerick
11th & 12th October 2007

Association for Criminal Justice Research & Development Ltd
Formerly the Irish Association for the Study of Delinquency Ltd
Conference 2007

All papers and presentations are available to download
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WELCOME

Maura Butler, Chairperson, ACJRD Ltd

You are all very welcome to the tenth annual conference of our association. This has been a year of sad times and glad times: sad, as our beloved former chairperson, and co-founder, Martin Tansey, passed away in March 2007. We were all deeply shaken but were duty bound to continue with the mission which he had started with the now Secretary General of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Seán Aylward, who will formally launch this year's conference. Martin as captain of the ACJRD ship had overseen the change of the organisation's name from IASD (Irish Association for the Study of Delinquency) to the ACJRD. He passed away just six weeks before the launch by the then Minister for Children, Brian Lenihan (now Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform), of a most significant piece of research entitled *The Children Court: A National Study*. My colleagues on the Council of ACJRD had bestowed on me the great honour of taking over the chair of this organisation, and I like to think that Martin's presence got me through my first task as chair on that research launch date.

Moving on to the 'glad times', I am happy to report that *The Children Court: A National Study* has been very favourably received and is widely cited as the first national empirical study of its kind. Our Council has expanded and I am happy to announce today that two new Council members have agreed to join us: Kathleen O'Toole of the Garda Síochána Inspectorate who is here with us today as one of the conference speakers; and Professor Ian O' Donnell, Director of the UCD Institute of Criminology. I take this opportunity to welcome their erudite and international perspective, which will be of great benefit to the development of ACJRD.

This is a good opportunity to thank all Council Members for their dedication. In particular we thank Dr. Ursula Kilkelly, who has resigned from the Council and congratulate her on becoming Chairperson of the Irish Penal Reform Trust. Her dedication to the Council and her supervision of our research(ers) was integral to our development over the years. Members of Council attending this conference have agreed to chair our various workshops and this is the type of team spirit that we are blessed to be part of.

However such team spirit has to be nourished and supported as we embrace change in this organisation. With that in mind we had an 'away day' where we considered who we are, what we are about and where do we go from here. We look forward towards innovative and focused activity towards 'social inclusion' at community level – starting with this conference. So how inclusive is ACJRD? Who do we believe we are? We have an expansive membership which encompasses a broad church of judicial, public sector, NGO and individual members. We are rich with intellectual capital and experience from all quarters dealing with offending, its causes and consequences ranging from those on the ground to those at policy creation and implementation level. We are a 'safe' forum for exchanging views, moving towards an understanding of each other's perspectives. For example, Chatham House Rules apply at this conference, and all other ACJRD conferences, seminars and events, to facilitate that free exchange of opinion and ideas.

This Conference would not be happening without the generous participation of an array of distinguished speakers and workshop facilitators who give freely of their time because of a deep commitment to principles held dear by them and/or their association. Council Members have been generous in their commitment to the preparation for this conference as they brainstormed a theme; and then recommending speakers with a view towards incorporating and expanding the concerns of our diverse membership. It goes without saying that the consistently Trojan work of the Association's Manager, Geraldine Comerford, has been key.

The theme of this Conference was motivated, informed and inspired by the findings of *The Children Court: A National Study* and the desire to be 'inclusive' in its endeavour to provide a vehicle which appeals to our broad membership – and maybe tempt others to join us!

OPENING ADDRESS

Seán Aylward, Secretary General, Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform

Chairperson, delegates, fellow guests, I am honoured that you invited me to deliver the opening address at this the tenth annual conference of the Association for Criminal Justice Research and Development (ACJRD).

Martin N Tansey and ACJRD

In addressing you this morning I am remembering back to the start of this forum. It sprang, as many of you know, from the view of some of us at that time that we needed an arena, within the criminal justice family, where we could express views and share ideas around research, practical application of solutions and improvements generally that we could help achieve. As many of you will know, the late Martin Tansey was an important driving force in the work of the Association from the start. Somehow I think he probably is still watching down on us today with a beady eye as we gather to share ideas, debate issues and come away with new insights.

As we said in our tribute to him in the Irish Times: *'The work of the Service demands patience, humanity, courage, an understanding that there are competing human rights, and the capacity to balance those rights. Martin had these qualities in abundance, combined with a very considerable helping of common sense and native cunning'.*

I know from talking to Maura Butler, the new Chairperson, to whom the mantle of leadership has passed, that she will bring renewed vigour to the Association, aptly renamed the 'Association for Criminal Justice Research and Development'. I wish Maura well and know that she and her Council, along with the dedicated staff led by Geraldine Comerford, will work in a tireless way to further the work of the Association. It is important that we have fora such as this to facilitate lively debate and offer opportunities for a range of backgrounds, expertise and experience to meet and exchange ideas, which will ultimately inform change and improvement. It's very important that practitioners, policy makers and the research community have a safe place to dialogue.

Importance of research to the debate on crime

I am delighted that my Department is in a position to financially support the work of the Association. I am strongly of the view that we need good robust independent research in the criminal justice area to help us to identify trends and patterns and learn from best practice. I worry about some of the research data generated by campaigning organisations. I fear it can be loaded at best and unreliable at worst. That is why I am committed to developing a stronger research ethos in the Department and its agencies.

We must be prepared to continue to use taxpayer's money to commission research and look to best practice in order to best deal with the many faces of criminal behaviour in our modern world, from juvenile to gangland to white collar crime. I am particularly pleased that the Association undertook and published research earlier this year into the workings of the Children Court. That work has provided a wealth of data on offending patterns and important details on the background of offenders. This is a good example of the type of research which can inform policy in the criminal justice arena. Indeed, I should add that the Government has agreed increased judicial resources for the Children Court which, in part, was informed by the research findings.

The theme of this year's conference, *'Community, Custody and Aftercare: The Journey towards Social Inclusion'*, is very broad. I know that your guest speakers over the next two days will add to the debate across each element from the role of the community, to custodial interventions through to reintegration back to the community. For my part, I would like to share some thoughts with you that can, perhaps, feed in to your deliberations.

Partnership approach

I strongly believe that as a society we need to build and reinvigorate partnerships between communities and the Governmental and non-Governmental sector to meet the range of modern challenges in looking to tackle social inclusion, build stronger, safer communities, and

instil pride in our neighbourhoods. It is perhaps a cliché to say that no one grouping has all of the answers to crime but, working together, we can I believe help to build a better safer society. My Department is to the forefront in this process in the form of the Irish Youth Justice Service, COSC, the Probation Service and the work of An Garda Síochána. This fits into our official philosophy as a Government Department – *‘Helping to build a safer, fairer Ireland’*.

Sentencing options

As *‘custody’* is a specific part of the theme to the Conference and coming from the background of having been the Director General of the Irish Prison Service for a period, I would like to share a few thoughts with you on the whole debate of custody v non-custodial sanctions. I believe that public protection considerations demand that the courts must have the option of providing for a custodial sentence, where the facts of the particular case so warrant. That is not to say that custody should be the only option. On the contrary we need a wide menu of options. I believe that we do have a range of options, which our Judiciary can and do use. Certainly, in my experience, judges do not sentence anyone to imprisonment lightly. While I am not going to blind you with figures, the available statistics generally support the view that there is no excessive use of imprisonment as a sanction here. Of the 120,000 or so convictions in our criminal courts last year (2006), less than 10% resulted in imprisonment. 90% of people convicted were **not** sent to prison. Looking to other European countries our rate of imprisonment is lower than Germany, France, Italy, Sweden and the Netherlands and it is about half that of our nearest neighbours, the United Kingdom. Many vested interests suggest we have a mania for imprisoning people here. This is clearly not the case.

Today there is no doubt that we are faced with many challenges from the scourge of drugs to gangland activity which impact on the type and viciousness of crime. I always encourage people interested in the topic not to ‘talk up’ crime. I accept of course that we must be ‘alive’ to the serious challenges we face and confront them in a proportionate manner. Our legislators have provided for a range of sentencing options and this is correct – a prison sentence is but one option. There are also a number of non-custodial options such as fines,

community service, the Probation Act and suspended sentences available to the Courts for disposal of certain cases. An oft-forgotten statistic is that at any one time the Probation Service is supervising up to 6,000 persons in the community, which again goes to show that prison is by no means the only option being availed of by the Judiciary.

Change in the Criminal Justice Agencies

I think it is fair to say that Ireland’s criminal justice agencies are undergoing a process of vast change: take for example the case of An Garda Síochána with its new legislative framework, the Ombudsman Commission and the Garda Inspectorate. You will be hearing from Chief Inspector Kathleen O’Toole tonight, and I know she will have some insightful reflections for your consideration. In the prisons area, we are modernising our prisons and have introduced new regulations for the governance of prisons with the recently commenced Prison Rules. We are meeting the security challenges in our prisons with a mix of technology and additional resources. Another important element in meeting the individual needs of prisoners in our care is the implementation of an individual risk and needs assessment for our prisoners by the Irish Prison Service. The system is being piloted in two prisons at present and will be rolled out progressively thereafter. We have come a long, long way since I first stood in the circle at Mountjoy Prison with Governor Lonergan in February 1993.

Role of the Probation Service

The interface between the wider community and the Probation Service is an important and vital part of dealing with offending behaviour. Probation staff work in a collaborative way with community groups across the country with the aim of reducing offending, reintegrating offenders back into the community, and providing aftercare and support in the community setting, as well as support to prisoners in prison.

Nowhere has the change process been more apparent over the last 18 months than in the Probation Service. We now have a senior management structure leading change in how the organisation does its day-to-day business; supported by the establishment of dedicated specialist teams, such as Assessment Teams for the

provision of reports to courts, and the Young Persons' Probation Division to drive implementation of the Children Act. Of course this work is demanding and time consuming. That is why an additional 71 staff were sanctioned for the Probation Service earlier this year to target, in particular, juvenile offending. Just to give you a flavour of what the job of a probation officer entails: the job can range from assessing the danger a person poses to society by providing pre-sanction reports to the Courts with incisive and reliable advice and information; to assisting in sentencing decisions; to working with community groups.

Staying with the interaction between the Probation Service and community based organisations (many of which are represented here today), I want to publicly acknowledge the excellent collaborative work that goes on at the coalface. I am glad to say that this work is supported financially by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. This year funding of almost 21.5 million euro for community based organisations has been provided and distributed to 66 projects nationwide. These organisations support the probation service in the provision of a range of services to offenders in local communities.

Tackling offending behaviour early: the Children Act

Volumes have been written about the need for early targeted interventions to prevent and reduce crime. Nowhere is this more vital than with young people. In the Children Act, 2001 (as amended) we have, I believe, a wide range of innovative non-custodial measures.

The Act provides a statutory framework for the future development of the juvenile justice system in accordance with modern thinking and best international practice. The Act envisages committals to custody of young offenders being availed of only in situations where community-based options have actually been resorted to and have failed. The Act also introduced what are called 'Diversion Conferences', based on restorative justice principles as pioneered in New Zealand. It also provides for family conferences; the payment of compensation by parents for offences committed by their children; as well as curfews for children found guilty of offences.

My personal goal when becoming Secretary General was to help bring about better co-ordination of responses between Government Departments in respect of

children at risk of involvement in crime and other troubling behaviour.

We began the task in October 2004, with the setting up of an internal project team within the Department to examine the scope for rationalising and restructuring the delivery of the State's services in the area of youth justice, in accordance with the legislative basis provided for in the Children Act 2001. Publication of the Report on the Youth Justice Review was approved by Government in December 2005. The Government agreed to the implementation of the report's recommendations, in addition to a number of other youth justice reforms.

Among the reforms agreed was the establishment of the Irish Youth Justice Service, on a non-statutory basis, as an executive office of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. The Service has been established under the Directorship of Michelle Shannon and is focusing: on developing a National Youth Justice Strategy; achieving the full implementation of the Children Act 2001; has assumed responsibility for children's detention; and is actively working to improve the delivery of services for young offenders. Indeed, you will hear from Mary Geaney on some of their work tomorrow.

Conclusion

I hope I have given you a sense of the voyage of change that is underway involving the criminal justice family. We are ready to meet the challenges that crime and its causes bring. We will continue to work in a partnership manner with the wide range of organisations that are willing to give of their time, expertise and commitment. The ACJRD can continue to play an important role in this journey of discovery and development. As our Minister Brian Lenihan said in the Dáil recently and I paraphrase – we do not believe we have a monopoly of wisdom nor do we believe as used to be alleged of the Bishops in Maynooth *'that the truth being known, further enquiry is unnecessary'* - in contributing to criminal justice policy development. Working together we can succeed. I thank you for your continued collective engagement with the issues which confront us in the criminal justice field and, in conclusion, I wish you well in your deliberations at this conference.

A PSYCHOLOGICAL PROFILE OF YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ENGAGE IN CRIMINAL CONDUCT

Dr Jennifer Hayes, Senior Psychologist, Health Service Executive

This paper is drawn from the executive summary of the report *'Emotional intelligence, mental health and juvenile delinquency'* by Dr Jennifer Margaret Hayes and Dr Gary O'Reilly, published in 2007.

Research aim

The aim of this research was to describe young people detained by the Irish State for engagement in serious criminal conduct across a number of psychological domains. These domains included levels of criminality, psychological morbidity, cognitive functioning, trait emotional intelligence and ability emotional intelligence. This research also aimed to briefly identify family and school related factors associated with young people who have offending problems. To achieve this, their functioning was compared to that of young people referred to a psychiatry service and to that of young people from the general community who did not have offending or mental health difficulties.

Key findings

Young people detained by the Irish State present with complex and debilitating psychological difficulties across a number of different domains.

Criminality

Levels of criminality amongst young people in detention in Ireland are very serious. Results showed that a total of three hundred and thirty five crimes led to the detention of the thirty young people included in this research. About one in three boys in detention in Ireland are sentenced, at least partially, on the basis of at least one interpersonally violent crime. Other types of crime included acquisitive crimes, property crimes, driving offences, failure to comply with Gardaí or Court and other offences. Approximately two thirds of young

people in detention will have been incarcerated in a different detention school at a different point in time. These findings suggest that levels of criminality amongst young people incarcerated in Ireland are very serious and are likely to pose significant monetary and psychological costs to victims, to the legal system and to society as a whole.

Personal and family characteristics

Young people in detention in Ireland come from criminalised families. The vast majority of detainees have at least one family member who has a criminal conviction (97%) and a family member who has served time in jail (90%). Young people who are in detention have a history of behavioural problems that manifested themselves in school. Truancy, school suspension and expulsion are characteristics associated with young people residing in detention schools.

Psychological morbidity

Staff working in Irish detention schools should expect that approximately eight out of ten boys in their care will meet diagnostic criteria for at least one psychological disorder and that, for most of these boys, their mental health difficulties will be compounded by co-morbidity.

Approximately one-third of detainees will meet diagnostic criteria for a mood or anxiety disorder, two-thirds will experience an externalising or disruptive psychological disorder and approximately two-thirds will meet diagnostic criteria for a substance related disorder.

The level of drug use among detainees is a matter of grave concern. Results suggest frequent use of a wide range of substances, which are first taken in childhood. On average, cannabis use begins at nine years of age for those with a dependency disorder and at ten years of

age for those with a use disorder. The average age at which cocaine is first used by detainees with the above-mentioned disorders are 13 and 14 years respectively. Results suggest that, despite their incarceration, these boys have continued access to alcohol and drugs, probably accessed through home leave, which maintains their dependency and use difficulties.

Staff in Irish detention centres can expect that at any given time approximately one in every five boys in their care will be experiencing suicidal ideation and that a similar proportion will have attempted to take their lives on at least one occasion in the past.

Cognitive functioning

Over one-fifth of detainees have full scale IQ scores in the intellectual disability range and detainees as a group can be expected to have lower cognitive abilities than have adolescents referred to a psychiatry service and adolescents without offending or mental health difficulties.

Trait and ability emotional intelligence

Irish detainees, when compared with adolescents who are without mental health and offending problems, were not found to have different levels of adaptability or total trait emotional intelligence. However, young people detained by the Irish State experience significantly lower levels of ability emotional intelligence than those of young people who do not have offending or mental health difficulties. Detainees possess a reduced ability to perceive emotions accurately, to use emotional information to facilitate thinking and a reduced ability to regulate emotions. Detainees experience similar deficits in emotional competence to those of young people referred to a psychiatry service for mental health treatment.

Recommendations

There are a number of important policy development, service development and research implications stemming from the results of this research.

Policy development

There is a need for policy development to ensure that the psychological needs of young people in detention are met during their period of incarceration. Policies

should clearly specify the role that detention has in meeting the psychological needs of incarcerated young people. These policies should centre on the ethos that detention provides circumstances in which considerable opportunities for psychological treatment and rehabilitation could and should be exploited. Policies are also needed to set high standards that guide the types of assessment and treatment procedures implemented to address psychological need. Policy should highlight a commitment to evidence-based assessment and treatment approaches.

Policy development is also warranted to ensure that detention is viewed as an opportunity to assertively target factors that have contributed to a young person's criminality and to deconstruct factors that increase the likelihood of a young person re-offending following release. To achieve this effectively, policies which highlight the importance of evidence-based assessment and intervention methods for the assessment and treatment of criminality are required.

Policy development that highlights the important role of ongoing empirical research is warranted. This will ensure that our understanding of the needs of young people in detention continues to improve. This in turn will lead to an improvement in service delivery and improve our ability to meet the psychological needs of young people who are incarcerated.

Implications for service development

Assessment and intervention teams

The research findings detailed in this report show that young people in detention have serious levels of criminality, complex and debilitating psychological difficulties and deficits in IQ and in emotional intelligence. To address these issues adequately requires the development of multi-disciplinary assessment and intervention teams. These teams should be led by a senior clinician who is competent in the assessment, diagnosis and treatment of mental health problems among incarcerated young people. Teams should include input from clinical psychology, psychiatry, social work, family therapy, addiction counselling, probation and clinical nurse specialist.

Implications for assessment

Screening

All detainees should be screened for the presence of psychological disorders and intellectual disabilities on entry to detention.

Comprehensive multi-disciplinary assessment

Any young person identified as at risk of experiencing a mental health difficulty should receive a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary team assessment. This should follow best practice guidelines, result in a diagnosis and highlight key predisposing, precipitating, maintaining and protective factors associated with each young person's mental health difficulties. A formulation of each child's difficulties should lead to the development of evidence-based intervention programmes.

Every young person identified through the screening process as at risk of experiencing an intellectual disability should receive a full diagnostic assessment which includes an evaluation of their cognitive abilities and adaptive functioning. All young people, regardless of their mental health status, require a comprehensive, evidence-based, multi-disciplinary assessment to identify factors associated with their offending behaviour. The identification of precipitating, predisposing, maintaining and protective factors should lead to a formulation of their criminal problems and lead to the development of an intervention programme that aims to break patterns of offending behaviour.

Risk assessments

The findings highlighted in this report point to the need for specific psychological risk assessments on entry to a detention school. The aim of these assessments should be to estimate the level of risk of self-harm and/or the level of risk that the young person poses to harming others. Assessments are also required to determine risk associated with sudden discontinuation of illicit substances on entry to detention. This will ensure that substance withdrawal is both controlled and safe. Risk assessments should clearly specify the extent of risk and factors that can be targeted to reduce that risk. This information should then be used to guide interventions with a view to effectively reducing risk levels.

Assessment of psychological needs prior to discharge

Each young person should be assessed prior to their discharge. This should aim to identify what steps are needed to ensure a seamless transition from structured life in detention to oftentimes a very unstructured and chaotic life post-release. Such assessments should also inform the identification of and referral to appropriate treatment services in the community and ensure continuity of care. Pre-release assessments should also aim to identify suitable educational or occupational placements within the context of each young person's cognitive ability and personal strengths. The identification of risk factors that are likely to lead to exasperation of psychological difficulties and/or to re-engagement in patterns of offending behaviour should also be identified. This information should lead to the development of appropriate interventions which serve to support each young person following their release.

Re-assessment

Regular re-assessment is required throughout each young person's period of detention, especially in times of increased stress. This will ensure that appropriate changes to each child's intervention programme are made in accordance with fluctuations and changes in their mental health needs.

Implications for treatment

Psychological disorders

The results of multi-disciplinary team assessments should inform the development of multi-disciplinary intervention programmes. Evidence-based therapies that have been scientifically shown to reduce criminality and to reduce psychological difficulties are the interventions that should be delivered to young people. There is a large body of scientific evidence which supports the effectiveness of specific therapeutic approaches for specific psychological disorders. This empirical literature should be used to ensure that effective therapeutic interventions are delivered to young people in detention schools. Therapeutic approaches should be individually tailored to each young person's level of emotional and cognitive competence.

Intellectual disabilities

The development of specially designed educational and intervention programmes is required to meet the needs of young people with intellectual disabilities who reside in detention schools. Additional supports from special educators and psychologists are also required in conjunction with supports to safeguard the rights of young people with an intellectual disability.

Skills-based intervention programmes

A number of evidence-based interventions should be automatically delivered to all young people in detention. Evidence based interventions that improve anger management skills, relaxation skills and cognitive thinking skills should be delivered. Skills based programmes to increase emotional competence should also be developed and delivered to every young person in detention.

Staff training / psychoeducation

Staff training and psychoeducation should be delivered to help staff recognise symptoms of psychological disorders and to understand the interplay between psychological difficulties and a young person's behaviour. Training to support staff in implementing strategies that will assist young people to manage their problems is warranted. Staff training on how best to manage difficult and stressful situations that arise as a result of a young person's emotional and behavioural problems is also needed. In addition, psychoeducation on intellectual disabilities and the management of problems associated with cognitive deficits is warranted.

Implications for early identification and prevention

Early identification of young people who are at risk of becoming involved and entrenched in patterns of offending behaviour is important. All young people who come to the attention of Gardaí as first-time offenders should be referred to community care psychology services for psychological assessment and intervention. Pupils who engage in truancy and display repeated behavioural difficulties in school should be referred by school principals to community care psychology services for assessment and intervention.

Implications for service monitoring and evaluation of service provision

Systems that evaluate the effectiveness of assessment and intervention procedures and that lead to audits of the mental health services provided to young people in detention are required. This will ensure that the psychological needs of children are being met effectively and that services are cost-effective.

Implications for research

Young people on the cusp of criminality

In the interests of early intervention and prevention, empirical research is required to identify the psychological needs of young people who are on the cusp of involving themselves in criminality. Research is needed to describe the function of such behaviour, to identify the factors that are likely to precipitate and maintain criminal behaviour and to analyse the psychological needs of such young people and their families. This will inform the development and delivery of community based interventions that are effective in reducing offending problems in the community.

Family characteristics

A comprehensive empirical research project that describes the family characteristics of young people who are in detention is needed. Identifying important family characteristics that are associated with a young person's offending and mental health problems will guide and inform the assessment and treatment of young people with offending problems within the context of their families.

Emotional competency

The development of skills-based emotional intelligence skills programmes are needed. This research should include an evaluation of the efficacy of such programmes in increasing the emotional competency of young people who are incarcerated.

References

Website: www.juvenilementalhealthmatters.com

'Emotional intelligence, mental health and juvenile delinquency'. Authors: Dr Jennifer Margaret Hayes, School of Psychology, University College Dublin and Health Service Executive – South; and Dr Gary O'Reilly, School of Psychology, University College Dublin.

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SOCIAL INCLUSION, SOCIAL CAPITAL AND REINTEGRATION

Dr Fergus McNeill, Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research

Social Exclusion and Prisoners

The evidence that prisoners and ex-prisoners have experienced and remain vulnerable to social exclusion is overwhelming. A study by the Social Exclusion Unit in 2002 found that prisoners were:

- 13 times more likely to have been in care as a child;
- 10 times more likely to have been a regular truant from school;
- 13 times more likely to be unemployed;
- 2.5 times more likely to have a family member who has been convicted of a criminal offence;
- 6 times more likely to have been a young father; and
- 15 times more likely to be HIV positive.

In respect of their basic skills:

- 80% had the writing skills of an 11 year old;
- 65% had the numeracy skills of an 11 year old; and
- 50% had the reading skills of an 11 year old.

In relation to health:

- 70% had used drugs before coming to prison;
- 70% suffered from at least two mental disorders;
- 20% of male prisoners had previously attempted suicide; and
- 37% of women prisoners have attempted suicide.

For younger prisoners aged 18-20 these problems were even more intense. Their basic skills, rates of unemployment and previous levels of school exclusion were a third worse even than those of older prisoners.

Why is crime linked to social exclusion?

But why is it that prisoners typically have these kinds of backgrounds? On the one hand, it is likely that people at the hard end of increasing inequality might be more tempted to engage in criminal activities. But on the other hand, it is also true that people in disadvantaged communities tend to be often over-policed as offenders,

while being under-policed as victims. Of course, once people come to be criminalised, once they become recognised as known offenders or as ‘the usual suspects’, they tend to be even more excluded from access to all sorts of social goods (employment, housing, health services, etc.) and even more heavily policed. These dynamics – of exclusion and inequality provoking crime, and of the already excluded being more criminalised and excluded, can result in a vicious cycle of social exclusion leading to crime; crime leading to criminalisation; and criminalisation contributing to further social exclusion.

Rather than seeking explanations of these dynamics in the characters of offenders or in their local cultures and subcultures, many criminologists recognise the profound influence of wider social structures, forces and pressures:

*‘Crime occurs where there is cultural inclusion and structural exclusion...crime is not the result of a lack of culture but of embracing a **culture of success and individualism**...it is not material deprivation per se, nor lack of opportunity which give rise to crime, but deprivation in the context of the ‘American Dream’ culture where meritocracy is exhorted as open to all’.*

‘Crime and intolerance occur when citizenship is thwarted; their causes lie in injustice, yet their effect is, inevitably, further injustice and violation of citizenship’. (Young, 1999)

Understanding desistance

So much for considering the links between social exclusion, crime and criminalisation; what do we know about ending offending? In contemporary criminology, there is much interest in ‘desistance’ from offending. Desistance can be defined as ceasing and refraining from offending behaviour. Maruna and Farrall draw an important distinction between ‘primary desistance’, which refers to any lull in offending, and ‘secondary desistance’, which involves the individual coming to see him or herself as an ex-offender or non-offender. In a

sense, secondary desistance is (or should be) the 'holy grail' of offender management.

What do we know about the process of desistance? Firstly, it is a process characterised by ambivalence and vacillation. It is not an event. Desistance may be provoked by ageing, by related life events and by developing social bonds, depending on the meaning of those events and bonds for the offender. Desistance may be provoked by someone 'believing in' the offender. Hope seems to be an important factor.

There is an important ongoing debate about whether or not desistance typically involves a change in narrative identities (or self-stories). However, it is likely that some form of narrative reconstruction is necessary for persistent offenders. Desistance seems to involve discovering (or developing) agency – the ability to make choices and govern one's own life. Persistent offenders tend to be fatalistic. For many desisters, desistance is about '*redemption*' or restoration; it often involves finding purpose through '*generative activities*'.

Understanding social capital

Different forms of capital, different types of resources on which people can trade, are significant in the desistance process. Desistance probably requires more than just the development of human capital (meaning capacities or resources that lie within the person). This suggests that '*offender management*' needs to be about more than sponsoring change within offenders. Social capital refers to the resources that inhere in our social networks and relationships. There are different types of social capital:

- Bonding social capital (horizontal): denotes ties between people in similar circumstances (families, close friends, neighbours). Strong ties (homophily), serving expressive purposes.
- Bridging social capital (horizontal): includes more distant ties (loose friendships and workmates). Weak ties (heterophily), serving instrumental purposes.
- Linking social capital (vertical): connects to unlike people in dissimilar situations, enabling access to a much wider range of resources, external to the community, serving instrumental purposes.

(see for example Putnam (2000); Woolcock (2001); Lin (2001))

Social capital, offending and desistance

Several studies have examined how social capital contributes to offending and the process of desistance. Among their findings are:

- Areas suffering from socio-economic decline and embedded disadvantage may have strong neighbourhoods with significant bonding social capital – but this tends to mean close ties but limited mobilities. Moreover, repeat offenders in such communities often experience diminishing and disrupted bonding social capital and are therefore driven back into problematic networks that frustrate desistance. (Webster *et al.*, 2006)
- More generally, it may be that offending and desistance are best understood as an age-related process of transition: offenders often begin offending in childhood, persist through 'youth' and desist as adults. One way of explaining this is to consider the differences in our abilities to accumulate and expend capital at different stages in the life cycle. The elongated youth-adult transitions typical of late-modern, post-industrial societies may frustrate desistance by limiting access to legitimate social capital and influencing young people to accumulate to expend illicit forms of capital. (Barry, 2006)

'Offender management' and social capital

What do we know about what probation and other services might do in order to assist offenders to desist?

- 'Indirect probation work' has been found to have an important effect through working on strengthening relationships and employment prospects. Probation officers could and should act as links to social capital and activators of social capital. Probation work with families (families of origin and of formation) was significant for probationers. Probation officers were also important in developing the work prospects of probationers via job creation schemes (social capital), as well as employability (human capital) work. (Farrall 2002, 2004)

- What kinds of support mattered to people on probation trying to address social problems? They value being listened to, talking about problems, receiving advice and guidance, working in partnership, and involving their families. To some extent the contemporary emphasis on offence-focussed work can marginalise such support, but such work matters in helping offenders to make links between interventions and wider processes of change in their lives. (McCulloch, 2005)

Giving up... and giving back (McNeill and Maruna, 2007)

Desistance also seems to be prompted by, or to involve, developing generative activities. Generativity can be defined as: *'The concern for and commitment to promoting the next generation, manifested through parenting, teaching, mentoring, and generating products and outcomes that aim to benefit youth and foster the development and well-being of individuals and social systems that will outlive the self'* (McAdams and de St. Aubin, 1998). In terms of the life course, generativity develops at the time that delinquency dissipates; generative commitments fill a void, making criminality pointless or too risky.

'Redemption scripts' are care-oriented, other-centred and focused on promoting the next generation: something to show for one's life; rewards, respectability, and recognition – all linked to generative pursuits. (Maruna, 2001)

There are four key implications in terms of using social capital to encourage desistance:

a) Reintegration and families of origin

We need to reassert the importance of:

- Engagement with families (of origin) through home visits and family work.
- Rebuilding and renewing positive family bonds, allowing access to the resources of bonding social capital.

However, the suitability of this strategy depends on the age and stage of the offender, and the nature of the family and its dynamics.

b) Reintegration and families of formation

The significance of generativity suggests a productive focus for reintegration around new and developing relationships; parenting and preparation for parenting; and other potential generative activities, including civic volunteering. Such work may help ex-offenders to build new bonding social capital *and* to develop new bridging social capital, via new relationships and associations related to generative activities.

c) Reintegration and community development

Effective reintegration requires engaging communities in order to:

- Prepare (ex-) offenders for and assist them in accessing wider social networks, including through employment (bridging).
- Prepare communities (including employers and other agencies) for (ex-) offenders and support them in working with (ex-) offenders.

This mediation and advocacy is necessary in order to facilitate the development of bridging social capital within communities and in the development of linking capital across social groups and social hierarchies.

d) Reintegration and public attitudes

Developing the social capital of a vilified group is not easy in insecure, late-modern societies. It requires probation and other services to give some attention to community re-assurance and community engagement and to think about the signals that they send in terms of crime, justice and security (Innes, 2004). It is possible that communities that feel better protected will be more willing to reintegrate and include ex-offenders (Bottoms and Wilson, 2004). Community justice and reintegration agencies therefore need to send signals to the community to change public attitudes:

- control/protection signals that make communities feel safer;
- restitution/reparation signals that satisfy legitimate demands for justice; and
- reformation/redemption signals that promote belief that people can and do change and should be supported to do so, in all of our interests.

The success of such signals may have major consequences for the capacity of the criminal justice system to generate wider opportunities for the development of social capital, and with it reductions in re-offending.

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AFTER-DINNER SPEAKER

Kathleen O'Toole, Chief Inspector, Garda Síochána Inspectorate

Congratulations to the Association for Criminal Justice Research and Development. You've organised an extraordinary programme for your Tenth Annual Conference and I'm truly honoured to be included. Thank you, Maura Butler and Geraldine Comerford for inviting me to participate. I'm particularly pleased to be here in the company of Secretary General Seán Aylward, one of the founders of this association. But for Seán, I'd still be working away in Boston. It was his infectious passion for his work and commitment to reform that convinced me to move three thousand miles from home. No regrets whatsoever. This is an exciting, changing landscape and it's a privilege to be a part of it. As a relative newcomer to this island, I appreciate the opportunity to learn from all of you and I'm certain that I've gained more from this experience already today than I'll contribute.

While this is my first exposure to the Association for Criminal Justice Research and Development, it is clear to me, having reviewed some of your materials, that I'm in the position of preaching to the believers this evening. I've come to realise over the course of 28 years in policing, that a strong multi-disciplinary, collaborative approach is not only beneficial in the criminal justice arena – it is absolutely essential. It is clear from this group's track record and, indeed, from the agenda you've developed for this programme that we all share in this belief.

I'd like to touch briefly on three things this evening - first, the global change that has occurred over the past few decades in policing and criminal justice - second, the importance of collaboration and some real life examples of it. On these first two topics, I'll speak with the benefit of my experience in U.S. policing. In wrapping up, I'll cover a third topic - my first impressions of policing here in Ireland and some thoughts for moving forward.

A quick trip down Memory Lane

I started my police career at a very different place in time – when groups such as this didn't exist and collaboration was a word foreign to my vocabulary. While I'm not one

to dwell on the past, I think it's important to acknowledge the evolution that has taken place in the criminal justice arena since I first started in the police service many years ago.

While I have fond memories of my Boston Police Academy experience back in 1979, unfortunately, I can't say it sufficiently prepared me for the challenges I faced as a young patrol officer. In essence, I attended a military boot camp. No exaggeration. My physical training instructor was a former U.S. Marine. We spent an inordinate amount of time on drill and ceremony and little or no time on prevention and problem solving. We were encouraged to go out and fight the war on crime, the police vs. the community.

During those early days as a young Boston police officer, I never crossed paths with probation officers or parole officers. Social workers and health care providers operated in a different world. Occasionally, I did see a teacher, but only when delivering a truant back to school. NGO was a completely unfamiliar term and the private sector was not only a different world, but a different universe.

We drove fast cars with lights and sirens and chased Priority 911 calls. I made lots of arrests, saved some lives, delivered a few babies and loved every minute of it. It was all very exciting and we certainly worked hard. But unfortunately we failed. Crime rates in our neighbourhoods continued to soar and the quality of life in our city continued to deteriorate. Something was dramatically wrong with our policing strategy.

It wasn't until the early to mid-eighties that some of the more thoughtful criminal justice academics and progressive police managers in the U.S. started talking about a new paradigm – the birth of, or some would argue, the **rebirth of** community policing. It's a term that was very broadly used at the time to describe a variety of policing strategies that emerged. The definition usually differed from city to city, town to

town. In fact, it's a term that is still widely used, but seldom sufficiently or properly defined.

Fortunately, Boston was one of the first U.S. cities to embrace this new notion of community policing during the 1980s. While their intentions were good, our police leaders at the time debated how this new theory would apply in the real world. Differing opinions emerged. To their credit, at least they were willing to experiment and stuck to it.

In Boston, first, there were the newly designated *'community police officers'*. I remember being asked by my supervisor, Sergeant Celona, if I'd consider applying for the position. *'God no'*, I said, *'I'm a real cop. I'm not a social worker'*. It's frightening when I think back on it, but sadly, that was my response. I don't think anyone volunteered and those who were assigned were often taunted by their peers. In the eyes of the *'real cops'*, these community officers (a.k.a. social workers) only provided one benefit. They excused the rest of us from doing it. We wanted no part of it. We continued responding to our radio calls for felonies and life-threatening situations. After all, that's what we were trained to do. That's what policing was all about in our eyes – car chases, gunfights, felony arrests – the war on crime.

It took time for more effective community policing to take root in Boston. We eventually realised that our war on crime was getting us nowhere. Community leaders were angry and demanding more. We were desperate to stem the tide of violence and disorder that plagued so many neighbourhoods, especially those in our inner cities. Youth violence was of particular concern, with gang crime and teenage homicide rates growing at a staggering pace in the late eighties and early nineties. In retrospect, it was definitely that young bloodshed on urban streets that provided the catalyst for change. The police were key agents in that change process, but representatives from other facets of criminal justice were equally committed. We reached out to community leaders in the most challenged districts who, to their credit, stepped up and rallied their neighbours in support of collaborative initiatives to take back our city, block by block if necessary.

Solid partnerships were key to our efforts. We not only broke down turf barriers and learned to harness our criminal justice assets; we involved the department of education, the clergy, health services, mental health services, social services, NGOs, the private sector. You name it. If I've missed anyone, I apologise. We welcomed all honest brokers. We insisted that individual agendas be left at the door and gave everyone an equal voice at the table. Yes, there were some very spirited debates, but we worked through them. We had to. Our goal was too precious – to save our city, especially our children.

So began our new, sensible model of policing. Did we establish police states in our poor urban neighbourhoods? NO. Did we saturate the streets with riot police with automatic weapons? NO. Did we relentlessly harass young men of colour who were loitering on street corners because they were unemployed? NO. Did we establish curfews and arrest quotas? NO.

What did we do?

After breaking the turf barriers, we learned to better harness our resources. Using timely information and good technology tools, we focused our efforts with greater precision on impact players and key locations. Sure, we made life miserable for the thugs, the 2-3% of the population who were wreaking havoc for the vast majority - the decent, law-abiding people who had, unfortunately, been living in terror. For the good kids, or those on the edge, we provided opportunities: after-school programmes, summer camps, mentoring programs, part-time and summer jobs. We developed re-entry strategies for offenders who would inevitably return to our communities. We worked with politicians and the private sector to improve infrastructure and services, to regenerate neighbourhoods and address quality of life issues. We came to realise that prevention and intervention are as important, or should I say, **more** important than enforcement. We were determined to prevent the tragedies rather than pick up the pieces after the fact.

Community policing was no longer an assignment or a unit. It was the ethos on which everything else was built. And it wasn't left to the police alone. Every successful strategy was a holistic one, involving engaged and

committed community members and partner organisations. The *'real cops'* still raced to 911 calls from time to time, but finally understood that the Boston Police Department was a police service and not simply a police force. The *'same cop, same neighbourhood'* deployment strategy paid huge dividends, building trust and alliances between police on the front lines and those working and living in our communities.

The good news – success came quickly on the heels of our new model. In 1990, the worst year ever, there were more than 150 homicides in the City of Boston, most of them gang related, many victims young teenagers. In just a few years, we cut that number in half.

While Boston and many other U.S. cities remain much safer today than they were a decade or two ago, there is an unfortunate footnote to this story. U.S. Government priorities shifted at the turn of the millennium. The substantial federal policing grants of the nineties were slashed. Of course, these cuts particularly hit home in the urban centres, in the very areas where we were finally making progress. What did that mean to Boston, for example? No more same cop, same neighbourhood. We had 15% fewer police. Worse than that, many of the successful prevention, intervention, and diversion programmes that we'd worked so hard to develop suffered serious cutbacks. All of this in the face of a rapidly increasing juvenile population.

While it sounds a bit dire, most of us here have been in our respective positions long enough to have seen the fiscal pendulum swing from side to side. I'm the eternal optimist and can already see some light at the end of the tunnel for those in the U.S. There's now a political revolt and fortunately, police chiefs and other criminal justice professionals are not alone in leading the charge. The communities we worked so hard to engage are now standing shoulder to shoulder with their partners on the front lines demanding a return to the priorities of the nineties and early 2000s. And while fiscal times have been challenging, the relationships remain intact. We now know what does work - the strategies that are tried and true. Collaboration – Prevention – Intervention – and yes, when needed, focused, relentless, effective enforcement. All of this built on a solid foundation of community policing and human rights.

Ireland

If it works in Boston and New York and Chicago, will it work in Dublin, Limerick, and Cork? A bit about my first impressions of Irish policing. In my experience, there are many things that are universal to policing in democracies. Consider the Patten Report, issued in 1999. 175 recommendations, most of them general to policing in any democratic environment – only a few of them specific to the culture and unique challenges of Northern Ireland.

That's how the Garda Inspectorate will do its work here in Ireland. We will not reinvent the wheel. Under law, the Garda Síochána Act of 2005, our remit requires us to benchmark the Irish Police against best international practices – to bring greater effectiveness and efficiency to policing in Ireland. On the other hand, my colleagues and I recognise the need to culture proof our recommendations for the unique Irish environment. For instance, we have great respect for the fact that the members of An Garda Síochána police their communities while routinely unarmed. We hope that will always be the case.

First impressions of Ireland

Here is a quick synopsis of my first impressions of policing in Ireland.

The landscape is changing rapidly and new challenges have emerged. Guns, gangs and drugs are more prevalent (fortunately, not as prevalent as in the place I came from).

There is no reason to reinvent the wheel. Strategies that have worked elsewhere can be fine-tuned for the unique Irish environment.

The good news: the vast majority of Irish people still support An Garda Síochána. I've spent lots of time talking to police on the front lines over the past year, but I've spent equal time talking to the people they serve. Yes, with recent tribunal reports, confidence has been shaken, and rightfully so.

There must be an acknowledgement of the mistakes of the past and a plan to ensure that the problems do not resurface.

Yes, the Irish people are looking for reassurance, they are demanding more visible and effective service, but they still stand firmly behind their police.

Also, on a positive note – the vast majority of police (with few exceptions) recognise the need to embrace change – they want to be a professional, modern police service. They are willing to consider new ideas and have welcomed outside input.

I must say that the quality of personnel here is excellent, better on average than the police agencies I've worked in or studied.

There are many intelligent and committed individuals throughout the ranks. That bodes well for the future.

Most important, it's time to move on. While acknowledging the past, we can't dwell on it. There is too much at stake – our cities, our towns, our rural communities, our children.

Now is the time to concentrate on the future – for all of us to better collaborate, to harness resources, to focus our efforts and to create a model of community policing and community justice second to none.

HOMELESSNESS AND OFFENDING: MARGINALISATION, SEGREGATION AND THE CHALLENGES TO SOCIAL INCLUSION

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The link between re-offending, reintegration and housing problems has been identified in previous research (Farrall, 2002; Social Exclusion Unit, 2002). However, beyond an acknowledgement of the relationship between offending and homelessness, there has been little exploration in the criminal justice literature about the context and experience of homelessness or how it impacts on attempts at reintegration. This paper begins by examining the definition and conceptualisation of homelessness before going on to examine the pathways into and through homelessness and the barriers to reintegration as identified from the prisoners' perspective. These pathways and perspectives provide some insight into the relationship between homelessness, problems with reintegration and re-offending. The findings suggest that contrary to common stereotypes of homelessness, the experience is diverse in terms of the cause, length of time, location of homelessness and experience of institutionalisation. The paper concludes by suggesting that individuals demonstrate some capacity to 'manage' their homelessness, from considerations relating to disclosure of their homeless status to decisions about homeless accommodation – the implications of these are discussed within the context of reintegration.

This paper is based on findings from questionnaire based interviews with a sample of 241 prisoners across all of the seven institutions of the Irish Prison Service in Dublin; official court records of individuals [9,794 cases] (excluding summons) appearing before the District (including the Children and Drug Treatment Court) and Circuit Courts in the Dublin Metropolitan area and all referrals to the Probation Service over a six-week period.

Defining and Quantifying Homelessness

Homelessness is diversely explained as a situation characterised by poverty, social exclusion, disengagement and isolation. It may be 'visible' in the form of individuals living in public places or 'concealed' in cases where individuals stay temporarily with family and friends because no other housing alternative exists or is accessible to them. The problem of defining homelessness is compounded by the manner in which the concept is interpreted. A study of young homeless people for the Three Cities Project (Carlen, 1996) found that although all participants were sleeping rough, staying in homeless hostels or in temporary accommodation at the time of interview, only 67 per cent described themselves as homeless. This was due to some participants interpreting homelessness only as the notion of sleeping rough and not if they had some form of accommodation, however unstable, such as a hostel bed. Others did not consider themselves homeless because they were employed or enrolled in education. Such differences in the interpretation of the concept indicate that the term homelessness is 'encrusted with layers of other significations relating to (lack of) social ties and (lack of) social respectability' (Carlen, 1996:104).

Quantifying the number of individuals in the criminal justice system with housing difficulties is equally problematic. In the UK, it is estimated that in the region of one-third of individuals are not living in permanent housing prior to imprisonment (Social Exclusion Unit, 2002). Fearing that disclosure of their homeless status

will increase the likelihood of being sent to custody, or reduce their chances of temporary release, it is not uncommon for homeless offenders to provide a previous address or a family or friend's address to the courts or prison authorities (Baldry, 2001). As a result, official statistics are likely to under-represent the actual number of homeless individuals in the criminal justice system. In the present study, it emerged that only 1.6 per cent of individuals appearing before the courts in the Dublin Metropolitan area and 9.3 per cent of cases referred to the Probation Service over a six week period were identified as homeless. In contrast, self-report data gathered from questionnaire based interviews with prisoners found that 25 per cent reported being homeless at the time of committal to prison on the current occasion.

Pathways into Homelessness

Almost two-thirds (64%) of all prisoners with a current or previous history of homelessness stated that their first homeless experience occurred before or during their teenage years (13-19 years). While the reasons for homelessness were diverse, the factors most commonly associated with the first homeless event were related to family rows/relationship breakdown and/or alcohol and drug problems. Research presented in a report by CASE (2000) suggests that family conflict is one of the strongest triggers for youth homelessness in the immediate term and it is also linked to an increased risk of homelessness in the future. Furthermore, in line with previous research (Randall and Brown, 1999), over one-third of prisoners homeless on committal reported that they had spent time in residential care as a child. When asked about their perceptions of family contact and support before, during and after imprisonment, homeless prisoners also reported lower levels of family contact than the remainder of prisoners in the sample.

Given the early age of entry onto the homeless circuit it is perhaps to be expected that prisoners were unlikely to identify *'leaving prison'* as the reason for first becoming homeless. Only 7% of those with a history of homelessness identified *'leaving prison'* as the reason for *first* becoming homeless. Rather, it appeared that for those with experience of homelessness before committal to custody, imprisonment was potentially a *'trigger'* for subsequent episodes of homelessness. The time of

release from prison has been identified as *'a trigger that leads directly to the streets'* (Greater London Research Authority, 2000:7). This may be due to factors such as prisoners losing their local authority tenancy or private rented accommodation on committal to prison, and/or a breakdown in family or partner relationships, amongst other factors. Without adequate planning prior to release, to arrange accommodation and welfare payments, prisoners can find themselves with few alternatives to homelessness.

The evidence suggests that those with vulnerable personal circumstances at the time of entry to prison are most at risk of homelessness on release - in a study by the Greater London Research Authority (2000) it emerged that those with supportive family and other inter-personal relationships were returning to their previous home whereas those with unstable housing arrangements prior to imprisonment were being released into similar circumstances. These findings are supported in the current study where it was found that 80 per cent of homeless prisoners compared to only 27 per cent of the remainder thought housing would be a problematic issue on release. There were, however, a number of prisoners who had never been homeless prior to committal to prison on the current occasion, but considered that housing would be a problematic issue for them on release. Almost one-third of those who had accommodation prior to imprisonment reported that they were unable to, prohibited from, or chose not to return to their accommodation, and were therefore potentially at risk of homelessness. These findings reflect similar patterns from studies of homeless prisoners in the UK (Carlisle, 1996; Paylor, 1992) and indicate that homelessness is a considerable problem for many individuals leaving prison.

The Homeless Process and the Criminal Justice System

A growing body of literature on homelessness in the general homeless population (Anderson & Tulloch, 2000; Fitzpatrick *et al.*, 2000) identifies homelessness as a process rather than a static situation. It is described as *'the notion that individuals and households may move between being homeless, poorly housed and*

adequately/well-housed' (Anderson & Tulloch, 2000:4). An added dimension to the '*homeless process*' for those who come into contact with the criminal justice system is the possibility of moving into the prison system. The majority of homeless prisoners in this study had a diverse and lengthy history of both homelessness and imprisonment prior to their current committal.

Overall, the diversity of the homeless experience for prisoners could be categorised under a number of headings including the episodic nature of homelessness; length of time homeless; location of homelessness and institutionalisation (imprisonment).

Episodes of Homelessness

A majority of individuals moved in and out of homelessness from the time of first entry. Just over 40% experienced homelessness as one continuous period; in contrast, almost 60% had been homeless two or more times over their homeless '*career*' (of those 25% had been homeless 10 or more times). For this latter group, homelessness was a pathway from where one diverted intermittently onto a non-homeless route by virtue of returning to the family home, co-habiting with a non-homeless partner and/or accessing independent housing.

Length of Time Homeless

Homeless prisoners were not only likely to have experienced homelessness from a young age, but they had already spent substantial periods of time homeless in their lives. The majority of those homeless on committal to prison on the current occasion (88 per cent) had been homeless for more than six months and 58 per cent had been homeless for three years or more. The implications of these findings are important especially in the context that the longer individuals are homeless, the more difficult it is for them to reintegrate into mainstream society (Homeless Agency, 2001).

Location of Homelessness

The diversity of the homeless experience was reflected in the range of locations where individuals stayed. All of those who were currently or previously homeless were asked to identify the range of places they had stayed while homeless. The most common arrangements were staying temporarily with family and friends (75%),

sleeping rough (64%), staying in a car (63%), in a hostel (56%), in a B&B (56%) in a squat (48%), in transitional housing units (6%), and/or in long term supported housing (2%). Other places individuals recalled staying in included hotels, housing associations, a tent, a garage, the back of churches, fields and caravans.

Almost two-thirds (64%) of all prisoners with a previous or current history of homelessness had slept rough. Over half of those who provided reasons said it was because they did not like hostels. Prisoners were most critical about the use of hostels as a form of accommodation, describing the sense of institutionalisation, routine and rules associated with such arrangements. One of the main themes that emerged was the reluctance of prisoners to use hostels if attempting to stay off drugs:

If you want to better yourself you can't be put back into the same type of environment with drug addicts and drunkards. There is no point in releasing a prisoner into a hostel, it's like releasing someone from one prison to another. Every bloke you meet in the hostel you meet in here. A month or two months later, you're back, it's a dead end situation (Male 235, Remand prisoner, Cloverhill, Aged 45, staying in a homeless hostel on committal).

Institutionalisation

Carlen (1983) argues that homeless people are over-represented in the prison population for two main reasons. Firstly, they have a higher reconviction rate than domiciled offenders and secondly their housing status may be instrumental in a court's decision to remand them to custody and sentence them to imprisonment. An analysis of Dublin District Court records of homeless offenders suggests that homeless offenders have a higher number of charges against them than domiciled offenders (4.5 versus 1.5 charges). However, in the majority of cases the nature of the crimes are relatively minor in nature e.g. theft, public order etc. Snow *et al.* (1989) also outline a number of processes by which homeless people and rough sleepers in particular are more likely to commit an offence. These include engaging in criminal behaviour to survive on the streets; the criminalisation of street life including drinking in public; and the stigmatisation of street homelessness whereby their visibility may mean that they are more likely to be formally processed for offences that might otherwise be ignored.

As mentioned earlier, institutionalisation was a feature of the homeless process for many homeless prisoners. Over 90% of those cases who were homeless on committal to prison and where the information was available had been in prison in the previous five years. The majority (69%) had been in prison between one and five times in the previous five years and almost one-quarter (24%) had been in on six or more occasions within the same timeframe.

Prison appeared to represent more than a punitive institution for some homeless prisoners. According to their accounts, it was a place to receive medical attention, respite from the harsh conditions of the streets, a bed, a designated space, regular meals and a routine; constituents of which were largely absent in their homeless existence on the outside. In negotiating the pathways of homelessness, prison appeared to be another stop on the institutionalised circuit of homelessness:

I have nowhere to live, at least if I commit crime I've a roof over my head in prison and a bed to sleep in. I completed a ten year sentence in October 2002 and I got released onto the streets. I had nowhere to go and I just went back to crime. Prison is keeping me alive. Only for prison I'd be dead long ago. I'd be sleeping on the streets and with the virus (HIV) I wouldn't last long. (Male 229, Aged 32, Remand prisoner, Cloverhill, sleeping rough on committal)

Barriers to Social Inclusion

A number of issues emerged in relation to both prisoners' experiences of leaving prison and the necessary strategies required to alleviate difficulties for those homeless or at risk of homelessness on release. These included the need for pre-release planning and support, information about the process of accessing accommodation, improved housing provision and follow-up support on release.

Pre-release Information, Planning and Support

Prisoners articulated the view that information about how to access housing and welfare benefits was necessary prior to release. Those who were previously homeless were most reflective about the need for this information to be provided to homeless prisoners:

The blokes that are homeless don't have a clue what to do or where to go. They need more information about what to do and where to go they don't even have basic information - a booklet should be put together. (Male 066, Sentenced Prisoner, Aged 27, Training Unit, living with girlfriend on committal)

In addition to information provision, prisoners identified the need for pre-release work to access housing and other support:

Somewhere set up before you leave, somewhere to get sorted, you won't get it just going straight to sleeping rough, somewhere where a person can help themselves, a base to work from. (Male 031, Sentenced Prisoner, Aged 44, Mountjoy, sleeping rough on committal)

Overall, a number of potential strategies were proposed by prisoners to improve information and support prior to release – these included the provision of information points within the prison, pre-release programmes and day release to access accommodation.

Housing Provision

Prisoners were uniform in their views that more accommodation was required but the types of housing they identified reflected the diversity of housing need amongst prisoners and appeared to be based on individual circumstance and life experience. Identified housing need therefore varied from single occupancy units to shared housing and supported group housing schemes:

I think there should be a lot more help for prisoners, a lot of lads go out to nothing, they've nothing to look forward to, they need help, it would benefit them and benefit society itself because they wouldn't be re-offending (Male 159, Sentenced Prisoner, Wheatfield, Aged 27, renting from a private landlord on committal).

A half way house to get started would be good (Male 186, Sentenced Prisoner, Aged 33, Wheatfield, living temporarily with family and friends on committal).

Prisoners also identified the need for improvement within the current system of emergency accommodation provision:

The hostel scene is very bad, you're treated very bad, you don't want to go to them (Male 010, Sentenced Prisoner, Aged 28, Mountjoy, living in transitional/ supported accommodation on committal).

Lack of Follow-up Support Services

Previous research has highlighted the necessity of developing policy and practice to assist prisoners maintain their housing tenancies while in custody, to support family relationships and to prepare individuals for release in order to avoid homelessness and facilitate reintegration (Haines, 1990; Howard League, 2005). However, it is clear that assistance with this should extend beyond the prison environment. Prisoners identified the need for follow-up support on release from prison particularly in relation to drug treatment:

There is no follow-up service for homeless people ... the longer they're in the homeless circle, the greater the likelihood you'll end up on drugs and committing crime. (Male 055, Aged 50, Sentenced Prisoner, Mountjoy, living in short term hostel accommodation before prison).

This would appear to be particularly important given that 90 per cent of prisoners, homeless on committal, reported that they used drugs and of this group the majority (82 per cent) said drug taking caused problems in their lives including family relationships, crime and an inability to maintain employment or stable accommodation.

Representations of Homelessness: Implications for Reintegration

While acknowledging that homeless prisoners often have few choices about their housing circumstances, a common theme underlying their accounts is the way in which they 'manage' their homeless experience. The absence of appropriate accommodation and the manner in which the system provides for homeless individuals ensures that they are often processed through a circuit of poor quality, temporary accommodation. However, it

seems that homeless individuals exercise some level of autonomy over their existence by virtue of not disclosing their homeless status, sleeping rough rather than accessing hostel accommodation and sometimes committing crime with the intent of being committed to prison, to escape the harsh conditions of the street. Furthermore, it is apparent that prisoners have a structurally differentiated perspective about their housing requirements ranging from the need for single occupancy units to group and shared housing; they also clearly identify and articulate the need for a range of strategies to improve the likelihood of successful reintegration on release e.g. information about applying for welfare entitlements, day release to access housing, etc.

The rationale presented and the agency executed by homeless offenders to choose sleeping rough over hostel living can often be dismissed by authorities as individuals *passively* existing through life on the streets rather than an acknowledgement of the inappropriate, unsuitable and often poor nature of the accommodation offered. This conceptualisation of homelessness allows any potential for reintegrating homeless individuals to be rejected on the basis that such individuals are *beyond redemption*. It is further intensified by the perception of *dangerousness* associated with homeless people generated by their presence in public space. Overall, the combined outcome of these constructs of homeless individuals as both *passive* and *dangerous* is that they provide a justification for excluding them from housing and support services. At the same time, the absence of a strategy, pre and post custody, to provide information and support initiatives to assist prisoners access welfare payments and housing, leaves them with few options but to exist within the homeless-imprisonment circuit. This coupled with inadequate service provision in key support areas – such as drug treatment – and the wider structural issue of limited housing options provides a poor framework to tackle social inclusion and promote reintegration.

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IRISH DETENTION SERVICES FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Mary Geaney, National Manager, Detention School Services, Irish Youth Justice Service

Preparing for this conference made me consider so many things which I take for granted in relation to the criminal justice system.

It is important to note that exclusion can arise from systemic and/or structural failures – youth justice policy and practice straddles both youth justice and childcare policies.

- How can the criminal justice system contribute to social inclusion in any way?
- Surely this is a system which promotes 'exclusion'?
- After all, this is a system which is about punishment, community safety and ultimately depriving children of their liberty?
- Can the detention school service promote or enable social inclusion?

I also want play with the word '*inclusion*' and refer to the IYJS approach to working with key stakeholders, which is one of '*inclusivity*'.

Background – Youth Justice Taskforce

A Youth Justice Taskforce was established in 2004 to review the existing arrangements for dealing with youth justice and children and young people who offend. The Taskforce reported in December 2005. The key findings were of a system that was fragmented, lacked strategic leadership and lacked data. The Review highlighted the fact that there were three key Government Departments working in the youth justice sector i.e. the Departments of Health and Children; Education and Science; and Justice, Equality and Law Reform. There were also several agencies working with children in the youth justice system i.e. the Probation Service, An Garda Síochána, Courts Services and the Health Service Executive; but there did not appear to be an integrated approach across agencies.

Establishment of IYJS

The Irish Youth Justice Service (IYJS) was established in December 2005. The IYJS is an executive office of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. In May 2006, Ms. Michelle Shannon was appointed as the National Director of the Irish Youth Justice Service. The service has been allocated a staffing complement of 30 staff – at this point in time 23 staff have been recruited.

It is important to note that the IYJS has responsibility for overseeing the entire youth justice system i.e. from the time a child comes to the attention of the Gardaí, enters the courts or is in receipt of community sanctions, to when he/she enters or leaves a detention school.

Role of the IYJS

The IYJS is a small organisation, a young organisation in terms of organisational theory, and is actively establishing and building relationships across the youth justice and children services sectors. We are also liaising with voluntary organisations that work with children.

The IYJS is charged with providing leadership and assisting in the better integration of services and agencies. We also have responsibility for developing policy and ensuring the strategic development of services. The IYJS also has responsibility for ensuring the national development of new community sanctions being delivered by the Young Peoples' Probation Division.

The IYJS took over responsibility for the detention schools on 1st March 2007 – formerly they were the responsibility of the Department of Education and Science.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to '*create a safer society by working in partnership to reduce youth offending, through appropriate interventions and linkages to services*'.

This mission statement provides a clear steer as to how a criminal justice agency has a role to play in social inclusion. The focus on partnership working highlights the importance of us working with other Departments such as Health and Education. It also highlights the need to ensure that children access appropriate services to address the risk factors associated with their offending. For example, if a child is truanting from school, he/she is at greater risk of being exposed to anti-social or offending behaviour. Similarly if he/she is involved in substance misuse, the risk of criminal activity increases. Treatment and support services are needed to ensure that the young person is included in their community in a positive and meaningful way.

Office of the Minister for Children

The Office of the Minister for Children (OMC) is a very exciting development in Government. It has responsibility for the delivery of the National Children's Strategy; for establishing coherence in policy for children; and for the co-ordination of the work of Departments working with children. The latter point is very important as for the first time there are plans to co-locate the three Departments with lead responsibility for children i.e. Health, Education and Justice. We have a Minister for Children, Mr. Brendan Smith, T.D. He is a Minister of State, who attends Cabinet meetings to promote an integrated approach to children's policies and services.

Youth Justice Continuum

The responsibilities of the IYJS span from preventative services and diversion projects, through community sanctions, detention and aftercare. I think it is important to highlight the fact that the majority of children and young people are law abiding and never come to the attention of the criminal justice agencies. The 2006 Census states there are in the region of 445,000 children in the State. In 2006, approximately 20,000 children were referred to Garda Diversion Projects. At present the detention schools have a bed capacity to accommodate 77 children, 12 of which are to accommodate girls. This highlights the low numbers of children who are detained by the courts.

The Youth Justice continuum identifies the key stages where it is possible for criminal justice agencies, *in partnership with other agencies*, to intervene in

children's lives to support them away from criminal activities. It is at these different stages that we can and must promote social inclusion by ensuring appropriate referrals to training programmes, family therapy, education, anger management programmes, etc.

Children Detention Schools

We are responsible for four detention schools:

- Finglas Child and Assessment Centre – 15 beds;
- Oberstown Boys Schools – 20 beds;
- Oberstown Girls School – 12 beds; and
- Trinity House School – 24 beds.

We have recently re-commissioned and refurbished a unit, which had been built in 2002. This now accommodates girls under the age of 18 years. It is important to note that since 1st March 2007 there are no longer any girls detained in the Irish Prison Service facilities. Boys aged 16 or 17 will continue to be remanded or committed to St. Patrick's Institution until new facilities are built on the Oberstown Campus near Lusk.

Each of the four schools has been designated by the Minister as a fit and suitable place to accommodate children remanded or committed by the criminal courts. The four schools offer a range of services on a 24-hour basis.

Future Planning

The Irish Youth Justice Service's mission is to create a safer society by working in partnership to reduce youth offending through appropriate interventions and linkages into services. This highlights the importance of a multi-disciplinary response to remanded or committed children; to address their needs and risk factors associated with offending. The principle of inclusion will underpin all services. This will be manifested through disability access and interpretative facilities for non-Irish nationals to ensure diverse needs are addressed and met.

An Expert Group was established in 2006 to oversee the planning and development of new facilities to meet the future detention requirements of offending children under 18 years, who are remanded or committed by criminal courts.

The Group is multi-disciplinary in composition with representatives from IYJS, Office of Public Works, Department of Education and Science, Irish Prison Service, and Detention School Directors. The first report was presented to the Minister for Children in December 2006, with an updated report presented in September 2007. The Expert Group will present its final report with recommendations to the Minister in December 2007. The Government will then decide on the future development of the detention school service.

The development of the new facilities is a major project and will be developed in line with Department of Finance *'Guidelines for the Appraisal and Management of Capital Expenditure Proposals in the Public Sector'* (2005). There is a total capital allocation of €143m to fund this development, which has been sourced through the National Development Plan. It is expected that the overall project will take up to four years to complete once the building work has commenced.

Vision for the Future

The Detention School Service aims to provide children remanded and committed by the Courts with a safe, secure environment. Individualised education, training and rehabilitation programmes will be offered to all children under the age of 18 years within a care-focused ethos. Each child will be allocated a key worker from the time they enter the detention school. This person will be professionally responsible throughout the child's remand or period of committal. All programmes and interventions will be tailored for each child, to reduce the risk of re-offending, and to promote their positive law-abiding reintegration back into their community. This approach is aimed to promote social inclusion, and will only be successful by involving health and social care agencies.

Both the physical buildings and operational policies will be underpinned by principles of flexibility, responsiveness, safety, security and future-proofing.

We are committed to working with all key stakeholders, developing a professional workforce, and ensuring an appropriate balance between rights and responsibilities in the detention schools.

A key factor to ensuring social inclusion is a better alignment between justice and childcare policies.

Irish Youth Justice Service Co-ordinating Group

The IYJS will establish and chair a co-ordinating Group to ensure that capital and operational developments occur in a systematic and integrated manner. This Group will have a key responsibility in setting up a range of working groups to address all aspects of the development of the detention school service.

There are currently eight different groups being proposed which will cover all aspects identified in delivering the new vision. The IYJS will be represented on each group in some capacity and will provide secretariat support. The groups range from children and staff services; support services; security; health and safety; to programmes for children; visiting services; and workforce planning. Each group will have a chairperson and formal terms of reference. The groups will be time limited and tasked to achieve a specific objective. These proposals provide clear evidence of the IYJS commitment to ensuring that all services which need to be in place to promote social inclusion and address offending behaviour will be in place.

Workshops will take place with staff across the four detention schools to further expand the thinking around each working group and identify any gaps.

Oversight Board

The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform has established a high-level governance structure to oversee the development of all large capital projects in the criminal justice system. The D/JELR is the sanctioning authority for the development of the detention school service, and has provided the necessary funding for the new capital programme. This Oversight Board is chaired by the Minister and the National Director of the Irish Youth Justice Service is a member of this Board.

Project Board

The Irish Youth Justice Service is the sponsoring agency for the new capital programme. It is intended to establish a Project Board to ensure robust governance arrangements for the successful delivery of the new detention school service. The Project Board will be responsible for full oversight of the successful execution

of the project and for reporting back to the D/JELR Oversight Board. The Project Board must ensure:

- the systematic co-ordination of all work related to the successful achievement of the project;
- effective communication and reporting arrangements to ensure the project is delivered on time, within budget and to standard;
- effective management and monitoring arrangements of the total budget and cash flow;
- effective management and monitoring arrangements of progress on the project;
- effective control systems and a risk register; and
- a post-project review.

The Project Board is the key decision making body and is responsible for the success of the project. Formal terms of reference surrounding the Board will be established as will roles and responsibilities.

Social Inclusion: possible and achievable

I started by posing questions on how a criminal justice agency could promote social inclusion or if it had any role in doing so. I have shown that the Children Act 2001, by extending the children detention school model to all children up to the age of 18 years remanded or committed by the criminal courts, places reintegration into the community on a statutory footing. This requires a multi-disciplinary response to addressing the risk factors associated with offending behaviour; through appropriate access to child, health and social care services, as well as education and training or employment opportunities. In my opinion, re-integration and social inclusion are almost interchangeable terms.

I believe that the Irish Youth Justice Service has a key role in ensuring social inclusion and that this is achievable as long as it is done in partnership with other key stakeholders.

GOVERNMENT THINKING IN NORTHERN IRELAND ON SOCIAL INCLUSION AND THE WAY FORWARD UNDER A SHARED FUTURE

Brian Rowntree, Chairperson, Northern Ireland Housing Executive

This conference is extremely timely and I am delighted to provide a viewpoint from north of the border on the topic of social inclusion, which is fundamental to the criminal justice agenda.

In October 2006, the Housing Executive handed over the first shared housing scheme in Northern Ireland. We did so in the hope that Northern Ireland would have its own Assembly with local politicians working collectively and making decisions about important local issues. Our dream is now a reality. Now our Assembly members are willing and committed to our future, to the promise that it will be brighter than our dark past. This new dispensation is expected to deliver better engagement between Government Departments, public bodies, the Third Sector and importantly the private sector. Most importantly it will deliver a sustainable future for Northern Ireland. 2009 will most probably see devolution of criminal justice powers to our new Northern Ireland Assembly – a significant development in the history of this island.

Throughout the long years of the Troubles, we all lived in a world of depressed expectations and low aspirations. And for some it was worse: lives and livelihoods lost; whole communities ripped apart by violence and intimidation. The Housing Executive, as the main landlord in Northern Ireland, dealt with the sections of the public and those areas most affected by the Troubles.

Since the ceasefires and the Agreement, things have changed for the better. We now have a growing economy with rock-bottom unemployment; confident communities and a society that people from right across the globe want to come to – and stay! An influx of

people wanting to come here to live and work marks Northern Ireland's transition from a divided backward-looking society to one that is modern and enjoying the benefits of a growing economy.

With devolution restored, Northern Ireland has the opportunity to build on this progress. Not only can we build a better society, a more welcoming and diverse society, but we can use this to help heal the deep divisions within Northern Ireland and build good relationships where these have not existed before.

Building on a raft of anti-discrimination, equality and human rights legislation, the primary policy instrument for achieving this is 'A Shared Future'. This is Government's vision for the future of Northern Ireland – a peaceful, inclusive, prosperous, stable and fair society firmly founded on the achievement of reconciliation, tolerance and mutual trust and the protection and vindication of human rights for all. These objectives have been broadly endorsed by all sections of the community and the vision for 'A Shared Future' is being accepted as a common sense approach impacting positively on the lives of everyone. It is being delivered by way of practical actions by Government Departments, local councils and agencies.

As an example, the Housing Executive, of which I am chairman, is developing the programme of mixed community social housing or *Shared Future* housing which I referred to earlier.

Northern Ireland is characterised by polarised communities, particularly in the social housing sector. As a way of contributing to 'A Shared Future', we are developing a programme of social housing schemes which are aimed at people from different religious and

political backgrounds who have chosen to live in harmony with their neighbours. Each of these tenants signs up to a voluntary charter which promotes mutual respect and understanding between them. We are also developing a community based approach to support local communities who wish to designate their own housing estates as *'Shared Future Neighbourhoods'*. All these approaches are supported by staff working on the ground in these communities to ensure sustainability and develop empowerment.

As the strategic housing authority for Northern Ireland, we proactively seek opportunities to develop *Shared Future* housing schemes within large scale urban regeneration sites, such as the new Titanic Quarter, a major new development site in Belfast, to contribute towards shared space and a shared city. Here we hope to grow an integrated approach to community living in a safe and welcoming neighbourhood. We are in the business of developing homes that knit together to form vibrant, safe and progressive communities.

There are many other examples of how *'A Shared Future'* is progressing. Good relations impact on every aspect of life in Northern Ireland: policing, community safety, schooling, housing, health, sport, urban and rural renewal, culture and arts, and how our workplaces function. Work is ongoing in each of these areas.

But how does *'A Shared Future'* promote social inclusion?

Many people see it as merely targeting the twin evils of sectarianism and racism. This is true, in that targeting these issues are key features of the approach, but equality is indivisible. You cannot have it for some; it must be extended to all. In recognition of this, Government continues to consider those groups or individuals that may have experienced exclusion by targeting policies, strategies and action plans. Each public body understands its position and duties in relation to each of the Government *'equality'* strategies. Public bodies in Northern Ireland are therefore currently developing policy and delivering services in the context of:

- A Racial Equality Action Plan, which is aligned to *'A Shared Future'* but challenges racism.

- Section 75 and the duties to promote equality of opportunity and good relations, which is similar to your Equality Act. It includes a positive duty to proactively target inequalities and remove the barriers that exclude people.
- Lifetime Opportunities which targets deprivation and puts an onus on Government Departments to demonstrate that they are targeting groups of people, individuals or areas that are most in need.
- Disability Action Plans which seek to improve attitudes to disabled people and encourage their participation in public life. This includes people within the criminal justice system who may for example have mental health problems.
- Children and Young People policies which consider the protection of children, their right to be consulted and to have targeted services provided to them. This is clearly an area for the criminal justice agenda.
- Ageing in an Inclusive Society, which looks at older people, their contribution to life, the family, the economy and society generally.
- The Sexual Orientation Action Plan, which recognises the exclusion, discrimination, harassment and violence experienced by gay and lesbian people and their friends, and proposes an agenda to challenge this.
- Government has also set out Gender Action Plans and policies that *'care for carers'*. Specific social inclusion reports are imminent on disability and lone parents.

Equality, good relations and social inclusion are essential to our future, and are inter-dependent. We cannot achieve a society that is shared, but unequal. After all, good relations cannot be built on unequal foundations. Allowing or ignoring inequality will only breed resentment and perpetuate division. It is impossible to build a cohesive society that ignores the needs of small or excluded groups or that does not uphold the rights of minorities or that is not sensitive to change. The value of equality, good relations and promoting social inclusion is recognised in the structures that have been put in place to uphold them.

The Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister holds ministerial responsibility for equality. Independent institutions have been established to advance equality, good relations and social cohesion. My own organisation has established an equality and rights division and a separate community cohesion unit. The Equality Commission, Human Rights Commission and Community Relations Council each work towards forging a successful, cohesive and equal society. We have to acknowledge also the risks taken by and the contribution made by those people, politicians and others, from both sides of the border.

In conclusion, I think it is important to highlight that, in spite of the right legislation, the right structures and institutions, we can neither achieve a shared future, or sustainable communities, without the commitment of government and our community leaders. Much work remains to be done to promote equality, build relationships, include the excluded and empower our communities. The important point to note is that for the first time we have something that previous generations did not have: the chance to deliver change and forge a new future.

Recipe for a bright new future called hope

First we need a large helping of

Good will and trust to start

Throw in mutual respect

An open mind and heart

Mix with love and determination

Success is a wonderful sensation

Hope will rise like a cloud

Sometimes dark and threatening

Then a gesture of good faith

Comes to brighten our day

Remember a little hope and

Trust can go a long, long way.

Lily Fitzsimons, Belfast

From *You Can't Eat Flags for Breakfast: Poets, Politicians, Public Reflect on the Troubles*; edited by Joseph Sheehy and Joshua Schultz; Eason & Son, 2001

A COMMUNITY RESPONSE – MOVING FORWARD STEP BY STEP

Elaine Slattery, Céim Ar Chéim

Introduction

Céim ar Chéim, (Step by Step) is a community based Probation Project based in the Moyross Community of Limerick in Ireland. This project provides education & training for young offenders after custody on probation or at risk of offending within their own community. The project works with the young person, their family and other relevant community organisations that may be working with the family. Moyross is classified as a designated disadvantaged area. It is a local authority housing estate on the north side of Limerick City with a population of over 4,500.

Funding

Céim ar Chéim is funded by the Probation & Welfare Service of the Department of Justice Equality & Law Reform, assisted by FÁS & Limerick City Vocational Educational Committee (V.E.C.).

Background of Project - Survey of Community Needs

Céim ar Chéim began in May 2000 as a consequence of an analysis of needs carried out by the Probation & Welfare Service in conjunction with the local community. This analysis was of people between the ages of 15 – 25 in the community of Moyross, some of whom would have been engaged in crime, others on the fringe of crime and many at risk.

The following statistics emerged from the findings:

- The referral rate to the Probation & Welfare Service was 76, with the majority aged between 16 & 25 years old.
- Early school leaving was a primary concern in the Moyross area. There is one primary school which caters for over 600 children and there is no secondary school.

- In 1996, 44% of young people from the area left school aged fifteen years or younger. Of those who progressed to second level education, a substantial number, estimated at 48%, left in the first year.

The unemployment rate was 71%. The unemployment rate and the inability to access employment and or education and training was due to some of the following factors:

- Early school leaving (some as early as 7 years).
- Lack of motivation, concentration & social skills.
- Reluctance to leave Moyross (did not know how to survive outside of their own turf).
- Socialisation was also a main issue effecting these youth, for many of those who joined the project – their job placement or first employment was, for many, the first time they had ventured out of Moyross and into employment.
- Alcohol & drugs were major features of their lifestyle.

Day Programme

Céim ar Chéim officially opened in July 2000, under the auspices of the Probation Service. A board of directors comprising of representatives from the community of Moyross along with voluntary and statutory sectors guide the project. The project employs a staff of 8: a manager; a support worker; 3 outreach workers; an administrator; a housekeeper and a bus driver/caretaker.

The project is assisted by the city of Limerick V.E.C., who provide 12 trained tutors, and F.Á.S., who pay the participants allowances and assist in childcare payments.

Referrals

Participants may be referred to the project through a variety of channels:

- a young person may be referred through the courts and probation services;
- temporary release prisoners;
- young offenders who may be referred by their Probation Officer;
- contacts with HSE and Home School Community Liaison Officers;
- community Gardaí or Juvenile Liaison System; and
- some self-applicants interested in the educational programmes available.

Mission

- To offer a safe and challenging environment for participants to explore their potential.
- To provide choices to enable participants to take responsibility for their future.
- To provide appropriate training for participants' lives and future employment.

Target Group

The target group for Céim ar Chéim are young people aged between 15 and 25 who may be:

- clients of the Probation & Welfare Service and those at risk;
- temporary release prisoners;
- those who wish to re-engage in education and/or training;
- early school leavers who are not involved in any other programme; or
- people who are long-term unemployed.

Programme Content

The programme runs from Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The core skills programme includes modules such as: communications; literacy & maths; computers; personal & interpersonal skills; personal effectiveness and presentation; preparation for work; vocational

preparation and guidance; Safe Pass and the Driving Theory Test.

Other modules include: catering (hotel catering and tourism); Irish, Spanish and French; dance and music; visual arts; social education; craft ceramics; art and design; woodwork; health related fitness and outdoor pursuits; and support and awareness programmes appropriate to the individual participant's needs. Counselling is made available to participants where needed.

Accreditation

All training modules are certified by the following bodies:

- FETAC (Further Education & Training Awards Council);
- GAISCE – Presidents Award;
- Leaving Cert Applied (Department of Education & Science);
- Irish Canoe Union of Ireland in association with University of Limerick.

Daily Timetable

There is a social hour each morning from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. This involves breakfast, reading newspapers and general conversation. This hour provides the staff and tutors the opportunity to interact and assess each participant's behaviour and general mood. This allows the staff to alter the programme to suit the individual if so needed. As a project we aim to provide each individual with structure and support. The programme starts each day at 9 a.m. Participants clock in as they would in regular employment. There is a reduction in allowance for timekeeping or absence without medical certification.

Newspapers are introduced before breakfast each morning. This stimulates social discussion and allows participants with reading difficulties to learn what is happening around them. It also allows them to become involved in discussion on events in the news throughout the day. Classes begin in the mornings at 10 a.m. Participants are divided into groups of no more than five.

Each day ends with a meeting with all staff, tutors and participants to discuss the day and to ensure that participants and tutors have the opportunity to comment on their day and raise any issues they may have.

Participants are involved in groupwork and discussion sessions in areas such as: offending behaviour; the Copping On programme; drug and alcohol awareness; dealing with conflict; domestic violence; community awareness; and any particular area of interest to participants.

Each week following group work all participants go on a social outing. This can vary from horse riding, sailing, canoeing, rock-climbing, cinema, visiting museums, art galleries etc. Tutors try to ensure that there is ongoing interaction between subjects. Cross-curricular integration is particularly visible in the Leaving Certificate Applied subjects.

The project uses an asset-based model of education, which involves the family and other relevant community groups in the development of each student's individual education and personal development plan. There are small group numbers, which allows tutors to take the time required with individuals who need more attention. The project provides as many opportunities as is possible to allow the participants maintain a sense of ownership. Participants chose colours of building, furniture, equipment etc. The sanctions policy was also drawn up in consultation with staff. All staff use same behaviour modification & management techniques to ensure consistency.

Daily Evaluation

Participants are evaluated on a daily basis in each subject. If an incident has occurred in class, it is recorded on the evaluation sheet. This report allows the manager to approach the participant, and it makes the participant responsible for their actions at all times and ensures that they are accountable for these actions. Participants' placements are reviewed on a bi-monthly basis, reviewing timekeeping, attendance, social, personal and academic development. Participants are involved in daily self-evaluation; they take part in a meeting at the end of each day to look at the day and reflect on their learning.

Céim ar Chéim Linked Work Experience

Once a participant has completed their programme of accredited training and personal development they can be offered a further programme called Linked Work Experience. The project will place an individual in suitable work placement for a period of six months. Participants who are ready and suitable for Linked Work Experience have completed the FETAC Foundation Certificates and/or the Leaving Certificate Applied.

Participants are supported by the staff of Céim ar Chéim, before and during their placements, in order to help them to adjust to their new work environment. Support is also available to employers in dealing with any initial problems they might encounter with the participant and throughout the period of their employment.

The project continues to offer support to all students who move onto further training and employment as long as support is required.

Evening Programme

The Céim ar Chéim evening programme is run four nights per week for three hours per night and caters for 12 to 17 years old defined as at risk. It offers alternative diversionary activities for: young offenders from the juvenile justice system; early school leavers; and also supports young people at risk who are in school to stay in school.

WORKSHOP DISCUSSIONS

Workshop A: Reaching the potential offender through education

Co-ordinator: Tim Desmond; **Chair:** Noreen Landers;
Rapporteur: Jacinta Cuneen.

This workshop focused on whether it is possible to identify a potential offender, and if so, how can we, through the medium of education, prevent this person from becoming an actual offender.

Who is the potential offender?

- Potential offenders can be identified as early as infancy, or even pre-birth, based on the social, economic and educational circumstances of their parents.
- Potential offenders are recognisable in different scenarios, including the community, school and legal system.
- Recognisable characteristics include poor literacy and numeracy skills; bad mixers; low self-esteem; no sense of discipline and no respect for people or property.

What needs to be taught to potential offenders, and by whom?

- A multi-disciplinary team approach is required to educating potential offenders:
- Parenting skills – public health nurses; childcare organisations;
- Literacy and numeracy skills – schools;
- Citizenship norms and values – schools, sports and community organisations;
- How the criminal justice system works – community Gardaí and schools; and
- Social skills – family, schools, sports organisations and community and voluntary groups.

Role models

Positive role models can provide potential offenders with valuable learning experiences:

- Community Gardaí – how to live within the law;
- Prison officers – what happens in prison;
- Ex-offenders – consequences of crime;
- Sports people – leadership skills;
- People in employment – work skills.

Barriers to education

- A lot of government funding being poured into *'bricks and mortar'* only.
- Intervention strategies are often implemented from top-down rather than bottom-up.
- Staff funding is minimal.
- Lack of guidance around developing strategic programmes and evaluation for community groups.
- Insurance costs high or unattainable.

What educational approach works best?

- Positive reinforcement and feedback;
- Recognition of achievements and of efforts;
- A structure; within the family and within the community;
- Good communication – informing people of what help is available;
- A co-ordinated multi-disciplinary approach;
- Use of community health services;
- Follow up on teacher recommendations, especially in relation to learning difficulties;
- Family Resource Centres – a one-stop shop, with a multi-disciplinary team located in community.

Recommendations

A more holistic multi-disciplinary educational approach should be taken, involving parents, school, community involvement and work experience. It should be based at local level. Participants should learn from and communicate positive as well as negative experiences. Parents should be drawn into the education of their children, and provided with opportunities to educate themselves. Training should be provided for volunteers in communities. In extreme circumstances, multi-disciplinary team of professionals should consider the long-term good of the child – and radical intervention might be required.

Workshop B: Participation in the labour force – challenges for ex-prisoners

Co-ordinators: Paul Bailey and Brian Friel;

Chair: Brendan O’Callaghan;

Rapporteur: Geraldine Cleere

This workshop focused on the barriers facing ex-offenders when trying to access employment, and how these barriers could be overcome.

Links with available services

- Prisoners might not know what services are available – a Director of services should be appointed within prisons to advise and liaise with those approaching release from prison.
- Form filling can be difficult, especially for those with literacy problems – help needed with job applications, etc.
- Lack of co-ordination between agencies providing services – inter-agency co-operation across geographic and other boundaries is important.

Behaviour management

- Alcohol and drug misuse pose major barriers in terms of accessing employment – addiction counselling and one-stop shops needed for addicts seeking help.

- Learned negative behaviour and negative peer pressure – counselling could improve stress management and behaviour management skills.
- Mental health problems – access to counselling and to drop-in centres could promote positive personal development.

Accommodation

- Prisoners often have no accommodation arranged on leaving prison - planned release could help with this. Halfway housing can be a useful first step – it must be well organised, well run and drug-free.
- Many released prisoners don’t want to go home – family liaison officers would be useful in maintaining and re-building family relationships.
- Ex-offenders tend to have short tenancies due to disputes with landlords – a tenancy sustainment officer could help to avoid disputes.

Education

- Ex-offenders may feel excluded from both mainstream and further education – need encouragement both inside and outside prison.
- Learning disabilities and literacy problems – need extra support and tuition, using new learning methods.
- Negative self image and peer pressure – positive peer mentoring could help ex-offenders and encourage them to form new peer groups.

Employment

- Disclosure of criminal record can lead to discrimination – equality legislation and expungement laws could address this problem.
- Prejudice – should be addressed by Government, leading by example. Fears about ex-offenders should be addressed.
- Social welfare rules can create a poverty trap where the person is better off not working – this should be addressed by initiatives like *‘Fresh Start’*, where welfare payments continue when a person returns to employment.

Workshop C: Voices of the families of prisoners

Co-ordinators: Larry de Cléir, Marie O’Shea;

Chair: Finbarr O’Leary; **Rapporteur:** Sarah Adamczyk

Larry de Cléir is the Director of the Bedford Row Family Project in Limerick. The project works to provide support, information, training courses, counselling and outreach to families affected by imprisonment. Marie O’Shea has been involved with Bedford Row for several years. This workshop discussed the difficulties faced by families of those in prison and how they could be helped.

Problems faced by families

- **Shame and embarrassment:** It is often difficult to talk about a family member’s imprisonment, particularly with the usual contacts of friends, neighbours and even extended family. The Bedford Row Family Project works to put families in touch with one another so that they realise they are not alone and can see that others may be in comparable circumstances.
- **Honesty with children:** The group discussed what to tell children when a parent goes to prison. It was agreed that it is best to tell children since they will probably find out anyway and, if they learn that their caregivers are lying to them, they will have even more problems trusting. When one parent is sent to prison, it is essential that children maintain a high level of trust with the remaining caregiver.
- **Powerlessness:** Families may feel powerless for a variety of reasons, including lack of information and difficulties visiting prison. They may also experience emotional problems when visiting and seeing that the imprisoned family member is still using drugs in prison, or continues to struggle with depression or suicidal thoughts.

Helping families of prisoners

The group talked about how to actually measure success when working with families of prisoners and what success may mean for each family. Success in this sense may be deeply personal, vary on a case-by-case basis, and is likely different for each family.

Overarching goals include awareness-raising so that, through programmes such as Bedford Row Family Project, there is more attention focused on the impact on families and the key role families will play in reintegration and rehabilitation.

There should be a greater focus on the assets families bring to the reintegration of ex-offenders. There is often a focus on the role of family background in contributing to offending. However, it is also important to take a positive approach and see how families can be helped to provide the strength and support which will be key to an offender’s recovery.

Workshop D: Coping with exclusion – the journey of a survivor

Co-ordinator: Gerard Mannix Flynn;

Chair: Norah Gibbons;

Rapporteur: Katharine McGillicuddy

This workshop drew on the co-ordinator’s own experiences of social exclusion, detention and taking control of his own life. The group discussed issues contributing to social exclusion and made recommendations on helping people to take charge of their own lives.

Issues relating to social exclusion and offending

- **Humanity:** It is important to remember that offenders and ex-offenders are human beings. Their choices in life may have been severely affected by their family circumstances.
- **Language and labelling:** Terminology can label people and make them reluctant to make changes in their lives. For example, labelling an area as ‘disadvantaged’ or ‘crime-ridden’ could make people living there feel that the situation is outside their control, and that there is nothing they can do.
- **Limitations:** There are limits on what can be done to help another person – the person him/herself needs to want to change. Some serious offenders may be beyond help; whereas less serious offenders may respond well if they are helped with addiction or

mental health problems. Using an example from a battlefield, it sometimes makes more sense to rescue those with lesser injuries than those who are very seriously injured.

Recommendations

- Professionalism: People involved in helping to rehabilitate ex-offenders or divert potential offenders need to have both skills and humanity.
- Early intervention: Intervention should take place as early as possible, at primary school or pre-school age.
- Long-term solutions: There is a need to recognise that change takes a long time. For example, a person being released from prison may need supervision over a long period of time before he/she takes ownership of their own action and is ready to make a real change.

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