

Strategic Plan 2018 – 2020

One Vision, One Team, One Standard



LASTING CHANGE THROUGH OFFENDER REHABILITATION



Foreword



I am pleased to present the Probation Service Strategy 2018-2020: One Vision, One Team, One Standard. This Strategy builds on achievements to date, and is committed to the further development of a professional service that is effective in reducing the risk of re-offending. My vision for the future is that we will be the best probation service that we can be. Focused on our core task of offender rehabilitation, never being content to rest on our achievements, this Strategy provides the framework within which we will continue to strengthen the way we work, setting out ambitious yet achievable goals.

Five strategic goals are identified in this plan, all of which are interconnected. When linked to measurable outcomes, they provide a clear programme of work; promoting evidence informed practice, collaboration and connected working, as well valuing the importance of accountability, value for money and our commitment to continuous improvement.

Our Strategic Plan is focused on what we know works in reducing the risk of re-offending and, importantly, putting in place a framework for effective implementation and delivery. We must target our resources and deliver our services, interventions and programmes in a structured way, based on evidence-informed approaches. To this end, at the core of our strategy is the establishment of a comprehensive offender supervision framework. This framework is based on the principles of evidence-informed practice, which will be delivered by our dedicated, trained and skilled staff. A commitment to the continuous professional development of all staff as well as the further development of systems to make better use of evidence and data to inform our work are also priorities in the period ahead.

The Probation Service does not operate in a vacuum; at all times we seek to ensure that our priorities are aligned and integrated with those of the broader justice sector. With this in mind, we place a strong emphasis on continuing to

work closely with our partners. Working collaboratively, and strengthening multi-agency approaches to further improve outcomes in our shared objectives, remain a priority. We recognise that we also need to continue building close links with communities. As a community-facing organisation, we recognise the unique contribution the voluntary and community sectors play in supporting desistance from offending. We must continue to work together, being proactive in engaging and mobilising community support and resources.

We have set out what we want to achieve and, in doing so, we are committed to mapping our strategic goals to our operational activities, which in turn will be further developed and monitored through our annual work plans.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the on-going dedication and commitment of all our staff and stakeholders and I look forward to working with you in delivering on this Strategy. Working together we will, I believe, continue to make a difference in the lives of those with whom we engage on a daily basis, as well as contributing to the further development of a connected, effective and humane criminal justice system.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vivian Geiran".

Vivian Geiran, Director

The Work of the Probation Service

The Probation Service is an agency of the Department of Justice and Equality, committed to achieving the high-level objectives of the Department in working to reduce crime levels through offender rehabilitation, with a view to creating safer communities and fewer victims.

The Service has a national remit, with staff located throughout the country, providing a range of effective sentencing options to the Courts, at all levels, nationwide. The Service also supports the sentence-management and rehabilitation of offenders in custody, with staff based in each of the custodial institutions.

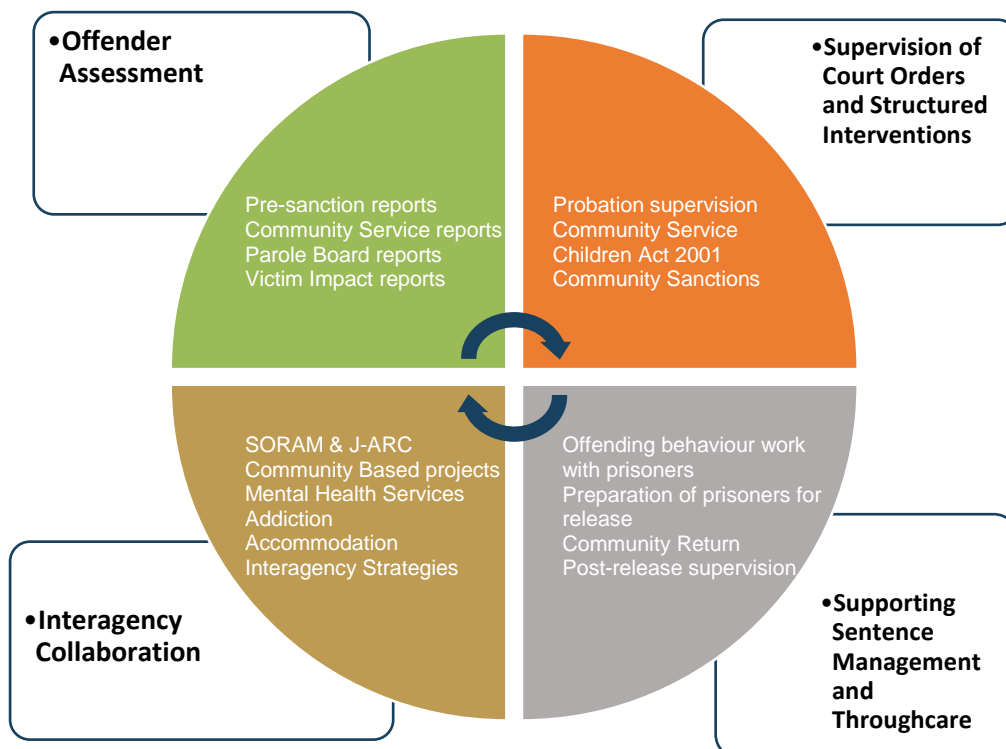
The Probation Service works to reduce the risk of reoffending and harmful behaviour by motivating offenders to change, increasing their ability to change and facilitating improved opportunities for change. We also hold offenders to account for their behaviour and actively challenge any behaviour or attitudes that might indicate a return to offending ways. Probation staff utilise a range of targeted programmes and innovative interventions that have been demonstrated, by research, to be effective in addressing offending behaviour.

In essence, the role of the Probation Service is to contribute to public safety by:

- Ensuring Court orders are implemented,
- Reducing the likelihood of re-offending,
- Reducing the risk of harm to the public,
- Making good the harm done by crime, (Reparation and Restorative Justice)
- Facilitating the re-integration of ex-offenders into the community.

The Probation Service works closely with a wide range of partners including the Irish Prison Service, the Court Service, An Garda Síochána, the Irish Youth Justice Service and the Parole Board, as well as a number of other public sector bodies. Furthermore, because offending is a complex societal challenge necessitating a holistic response, the Probation Service also collaborates extensively with the community and voluntary sector

The primary areas in which the Probation Service delivers services are:



LASTING CHANGE THROUGH OFFENDER REHABILITATION

OUR VISION, MISSION and VALUES

Our Vision

Safer and more inclusive communities where offending, and its causes, are effectively addressed.

Our Mission

Offender rehabilitation and reintegration through respect, accountability, restoration and social inclusion.

The following Values and Behaviours will be evident in our interactions with all our stakeholders

Professional and Ambitious	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement evidence-based practice and deliver high quality services • Focus on continuous development and innovation • Encourage all those with whom we engage to achieve their potential and be the best they can be
Respectful Relationships	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise people's capacity to change, supporting and challenging service-users to make necessary changes • Build trust through active collaboration and respectful communication • Remain responsive and supportive in our interactions with service-users, staff and all stakeholders
Empathetic and Caring	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek to understand others' perspectives and situations • Display kindness, compassion and concern for others • Act with integrity and sensitivity
Diversity and Equality	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an inclusive culture that promotes equality and respects diversity • Maintain an environment of equal opportunity • Recognise difference and respond to people's unique needs
Transparent and Open	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be open to new ideas and the opinions of others • Share our knowledge and welcome involvement • Be accountable for the work that we do and the decisions we make
Committed	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honour our commitments to all our stakeholders • Take the initiative and implement our decisions • Display courage and make a difference in all that we do

Our Operating Environment

The Probation Service is a national service delivered locally, providing a service to Courts, custodial institutions and communities across the country. Our primary goal is to contribute to public safety, which we achieve by working with service-users to reduce re-offending, promote pro-social behaviour and support social integration. Our dedicated staff have specific expertise in working with offenders, in assessing and managing risk, and in intervening effectively in the lives of service-users to enable and support sustained desistance from offending. Probation practice is delivered, informed and underpinned by social work practice.

The Probation Service, as an Agency of the Department of Justice and Equality, is an integral part of the Criminal Justice system. We work very closely with the Irish Prison Service, An Garda Síochána, the Irish Youth Justice Service, the Courts Service, the Parole Board and a range of statutory and non-governmental agencies, including Community Based Organisations that we fund. We work to combine our efforts to develop multi-agency approaches to offender management. The Joint Agency Response to Crime (J-ARC) is one example of this multi-agency approach.

The Probation Service is fully committed to the Public Service Reform Agenda. The Service will continue to participate in this programme for change, focusing on outcomes, developing our staff and building capacity for data driven decision-making. Our work over the period of this strategy will be influenced by this change agenda, the Department of Justice and Equality Strategy Statement, the third Joint Irish Prison Service & Probation Service Strategy 2018-2020, the Joint Strategy on the Management of Offenders, as well as our partnership programmes with other Criminal Justice Agencies and those of our international colleagues.

Consistent with our core values, the Probation Service is committed to meeting our obligations

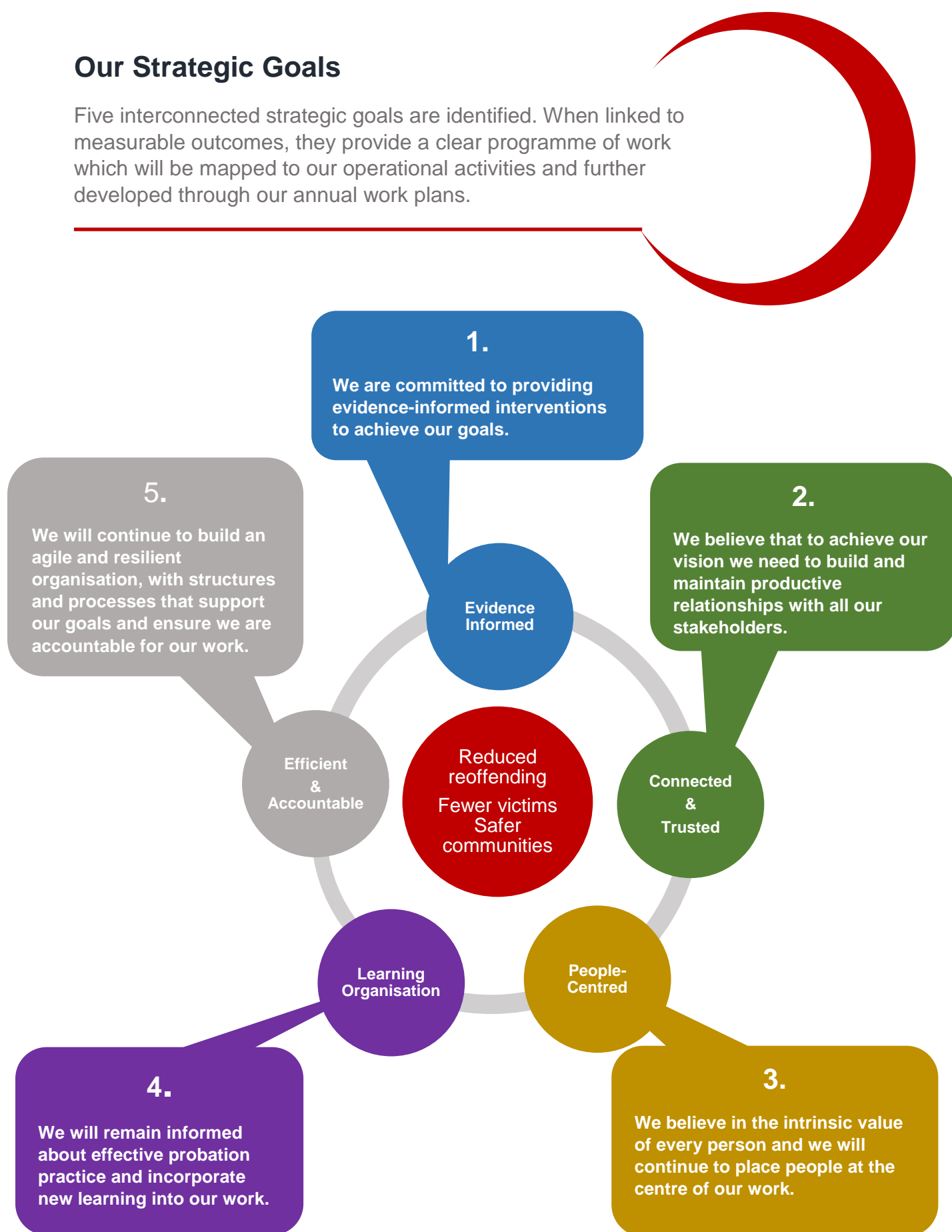
under the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act, 2014. Section 42 of that Act establishes a positive duty on public bodies to promote equality, prevent discrimination and protect the human rights of all those with whom they engage - staff, service-users and stakeholders alike. The Probation Service, embracing this, is at an early stage of engaging with the Irish Human Rights Commission. Additionally, there are a number of other key directives, regulations and statutes that will drive particular areas of change over the course of this Strategy. These include the Criminal Justice (Victims of Crime) Act 2017, the Fines (Payment and Recovery) Act 2014, the Children First Act 2015, as well as the General Data Protection Regulation.

Our identification as a professional social work agency, and taking steps to support and embed that, is an important part of the increasing professionalisation of the work of the Service.

The capacity to build on our existing services, incorporating the full change agenda, will be dependent on continued recruitment, and the professional development of existing staff, over the course of this new Strategy.

Our Strategic Goals

Five interconnected strategic goals are identified. When linked to measurable outcomes, they provide a clear programme of work which will be mapped to our operational activities and further developed through our annual work plans.



Goal 1: Evidence - Informed Practice

The Probation Service is committed to providing the best evidence informed interventions to reduce reoffending, protect the public and enable sustained desistance from offending.

KEY STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

1.	We will establish and implement a structured offender supervision framework, addressing all elements of the service-user's probation journey.
2.	We will consolidate and further develop our risk-based approach to the supervision of offenders, ensuring interventions and resources are targeted to where they have greatest effect.
3.	We will ensure the continued availability of innovative and effective direct alternatives to custody.
4.	In co-operation with the Irish Youth Justice Service, we will strengthen how we work with young persons, extending this approach to young adults.
5.	We will continue to develop targeted interventions to address the needs of specific offender groups subject to probation supervision.
6.	We will further develop our services to victims by establishing a dedicated Victim Service, incorporating restorative justice principles, while continuing to ensure the victim perspective informs our assessments and interventions with offenders.
7.	We will enable and advocate for opportunities for service-users to increase positive social participation.

Goal 2: Connected and Trusted

The Probation Service recognises that to achieve our vision of a safer and more inclusive Ireland we need to work with a range of stakeholders, including probation colleagues, criminal justice partners, service-users, and the wider community.

KEY STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

1.	We will continue to strengthen our engagement with the judiciary and the Courts Service, seeking out new opportunities for further development.
2.	We will continue to deliver, and further develop, the operation of the Joint Agency Response to Crime (J-ARC) initiative with our key partners.
3.	In publishing our third Joint Irish Prison Service & Probation Service Strategy 2018-2020, we will continue to strengthen our collaborative arrangements with the Irish Prison Service to improve integrated sentence management and through-care of prisoners into the community.
4.	Following the lead from the Department of Justice and Equality, we will participate in the fulfilment of actions under the Joint Strategy on the Management of Offenders.
5.	We will engage with the wider community in delivering our services, recognising its unique contribution in supporting desistance.
6.	We will continue to promote awareness of the work of the Service, and contribute to the on-going development of penal policy, promoting the value of community sanctions as an integral part of an effective and just penal system.
7.	We will work with our international probation and criminal justice partners, to further develop good practice and identify opportunities for collaboration.

Goal 3: People Centred

The Probation Service is a people-centred organisation that believes in people's capacity to change their behaviour; with our knowledgeable, skilled and engaged staff acting as change agents, we can achieve better outcomes for service users and the wider community.



KEY STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

1.	In our relationships with service-users, we will provide opportunities for meaningful behavioural change while holding service users to account for their behaviour.
2.	We will promote human rights and equality across all aspects of our work, including the design and delivery of services and business processes.
3.	We will respond to the many complex challenges service-users present with, including mental distress, domestic violence, homelessness, trauma and alcohol and drug misuse.
4.	We will support the effective participation of service-users in the development of services and the formulation of policy.
5.	We will continue to develop a workforce that is valued and supported, by strengthening staff engagement and participation in the development of services.
6.	We will foster a culture of effective communication throughout the organisation, and with our external partners and stakeholders.

Goal 4: Learning Organisation

We will remain informed about the best empirical evidence of what is effective probation practice, and take appropriate measures to incorporate new learning into our work, creating a culture of continuous learning and reflective practice.

KEY STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

1.	We will keep abreast of best practice developments in offender rehabilitation and management, ensuring our supervision of offenders is evidence informed.
2.	We will design and deliver an annual training programme for staff, reflecting our strategic priorities as well as integrating new and emerging practices.
3.	We will generate and implement a research strategy to inform future developments and support evidence-informed decision making.
4.	We will engage in a continuous process of professional and career development for all our staff, developing skills and building capability to deliver better services.
5.	We will consolidate and build our identity as a professional social work agency operating in the criminal justice context.
6.	We will foster and support the on-going development of leadership competencies across all levels in the organisation.

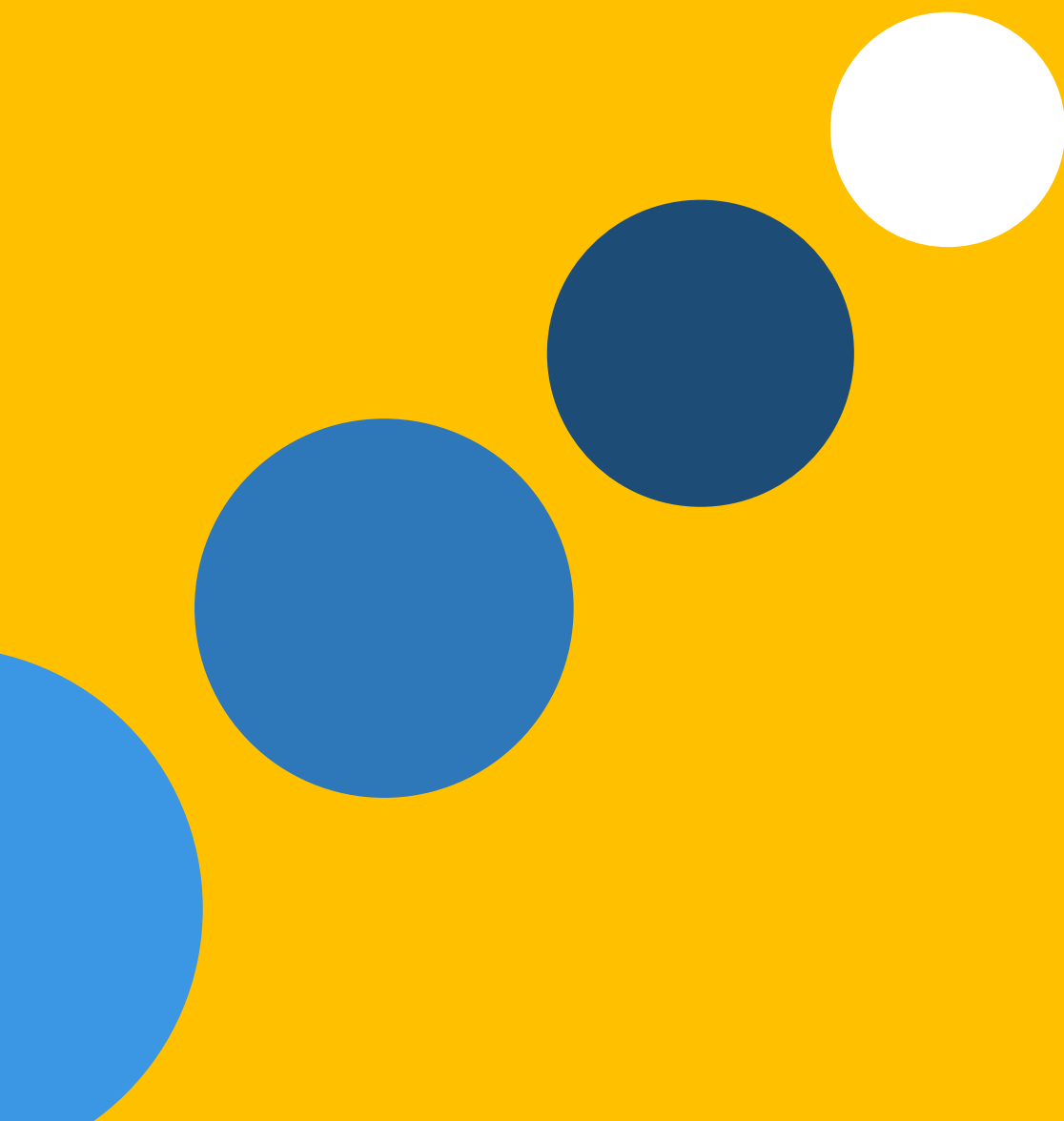
Goal 5: Efficient and Accountable

The Probation Service is an agile and resilient organisation, with structures and processes to support the attainment of organisational goals, promote good governance and ensure we remain accountable for the work we do.

KEY STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

1.	We will ensure our business processes remain fit for purpose, supporting frontline service delivery while advancing our organisational priorities.
2.	Maintaining our commitment to continuous improvement, we will progress the development of practice standards, reviewing and updating practice policy and guidance documents accordingly.
3.	We will ensure that robust and effective systems of accountability are in place, maintaining the highest standards of corporate governance.
4.	We will further develop our data infrastructure to support data-driven and evidence-informed decision-making in our work.
5.	We will develop systems to support compliance with relevant legislation and further develop our risk management capability, across all aspects of our work.
6.	We will ensure key information and data is available and accessible to our stakeholders and the wider public.

Appendices



Developing our Strategy

In developing this Strategy we recognise that we are building on the achievements of the Service to date, and that we are continuing the progressive strategies of the last decade in particular. The core purpose of the Probation Service remains to contribute to a safer Ireland; we achieve this by delivering the best evidence-informed interventions with offenders to reduce reoffending and the harm caused by crime to individuals, families and communities.

The extensive consultation conducted in the preparation of this strategy began in August 2017 when we held a strategic planning workshop with the Senior Management Team. This was followed by five focus groups, which took place in Dublin, Cork, Portlaoise and Sligo, to which staff from all sections of the Service were invited and attended. We also had participation at the focus groups from staff of many of the community based projects that receive funding from the Service. The focus groups provided a rich vein of knowledge and experience and the level of positive engagement in this process was very valuable.

From December 2017 to early February 2018 submissions from the public, and from other interested parties, were invited via the website and other social media outlets. In addition, letters of invitation to make submissions were issued to our key criminal justice partners.

Two further focus groups were conducted with service-users in Cork and Dublin. The attendees at these groups gave valuable insights, from their unique perspectives, into how the Service could be improved and developed.



Legislative & Regulatory Framework

The work of the Probation Service is an integral part of the criminal justice response to those who commit offences and is defined and imposed by law. The Probation of Offenders Act (1907) provides for statutory supervision in the community and is the foundation for probation work in Ireland. This Act is augmented by other legislation, with the most relevant outlined below:

Probation

- Probation of Offenders Act 1907
- Criminal Justice (Administration) Act 1914

Community Service

- Criminal Justice (Community Service) Act 1983 (as amended)
- Criminal Justice (Community Service) (Amendment) Act 2011

Temporary Release (supervised)

- Criminal Justice Act 1960 (as amended)
- Criminal Justice (Temporary Release of Prisoners) Act 2003

Prisoners

- Transfer of Sentenced Persons Act, 1995
- Transfer of Sentenced Persons (Amendment) Act, 1997

Suspended Sentences (supervised)

- Criminal Justice Act 2006
- Criminal Justice (Suspended Sentences of Imprisonment) Act 2017

Children YPP

- Children Act 2001(as amended)

Sex Offenders

- Sex Offenders Act 2001
- Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017

Misuse of Drugs

- Misuse of Drugs Act 1977 (as amended)

Fine default alternatives

- Fines (Payment and Recovery) Act 2014

Spent convictions

- Criminal Justice (Spent Convictions and Certain Disclosures) Act 2016
- Section 258 of the Children Act 2001

Data Protection

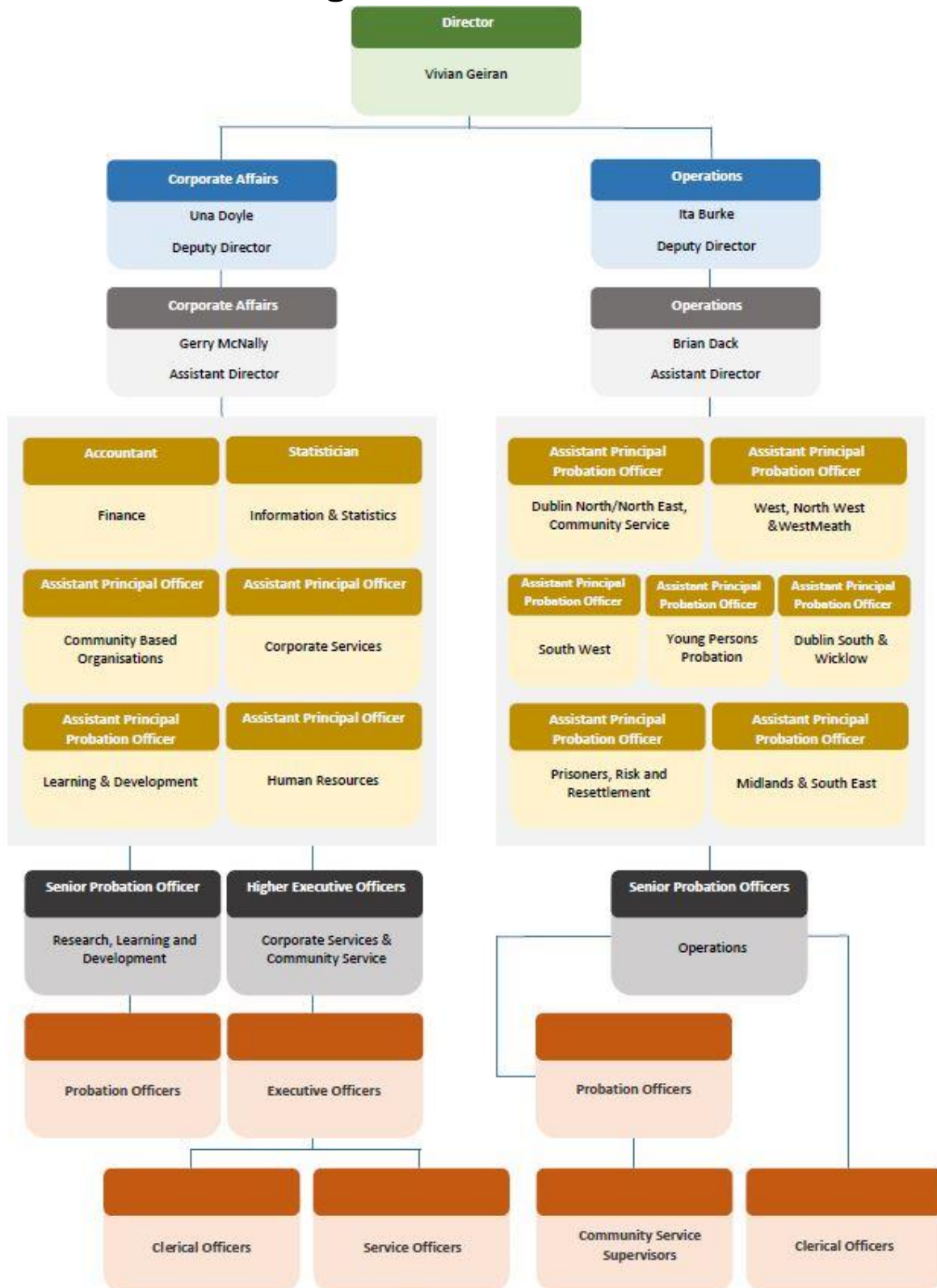
- Freedom of Information Act 1997 and Freedom of Information (Amendment) Act 2003
- Data Protection Act 1988 and Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003

Note: Full text of all legislation can be accessed at <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/>

In addition to the legislation probation practice is guided by National and International Rules and Recommendations:

- Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the Council of Europe Probation Rules
- Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec (2017)3 on the European Rules on community sanctions and measures
- Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2008)11 on the European Rules for juvenile offenders subject to sanctions or measure
- United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for Non-custodial Measures (The Tokyo Rules) 1990
- United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules) 2010
- United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (The Beijing Rules) 1985
- CORU Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Social Workers (2010)

Organisational Chart



LASTING CHANGE THROUGH OFFENDER REHABILITATION



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