

“Prison/Community Collaboration in Post conflict NI”
**24th Council of Europe Conference of Directors of Prison
and Probation Services**
21-22 May 2019, Ayia Napa, Cyprus

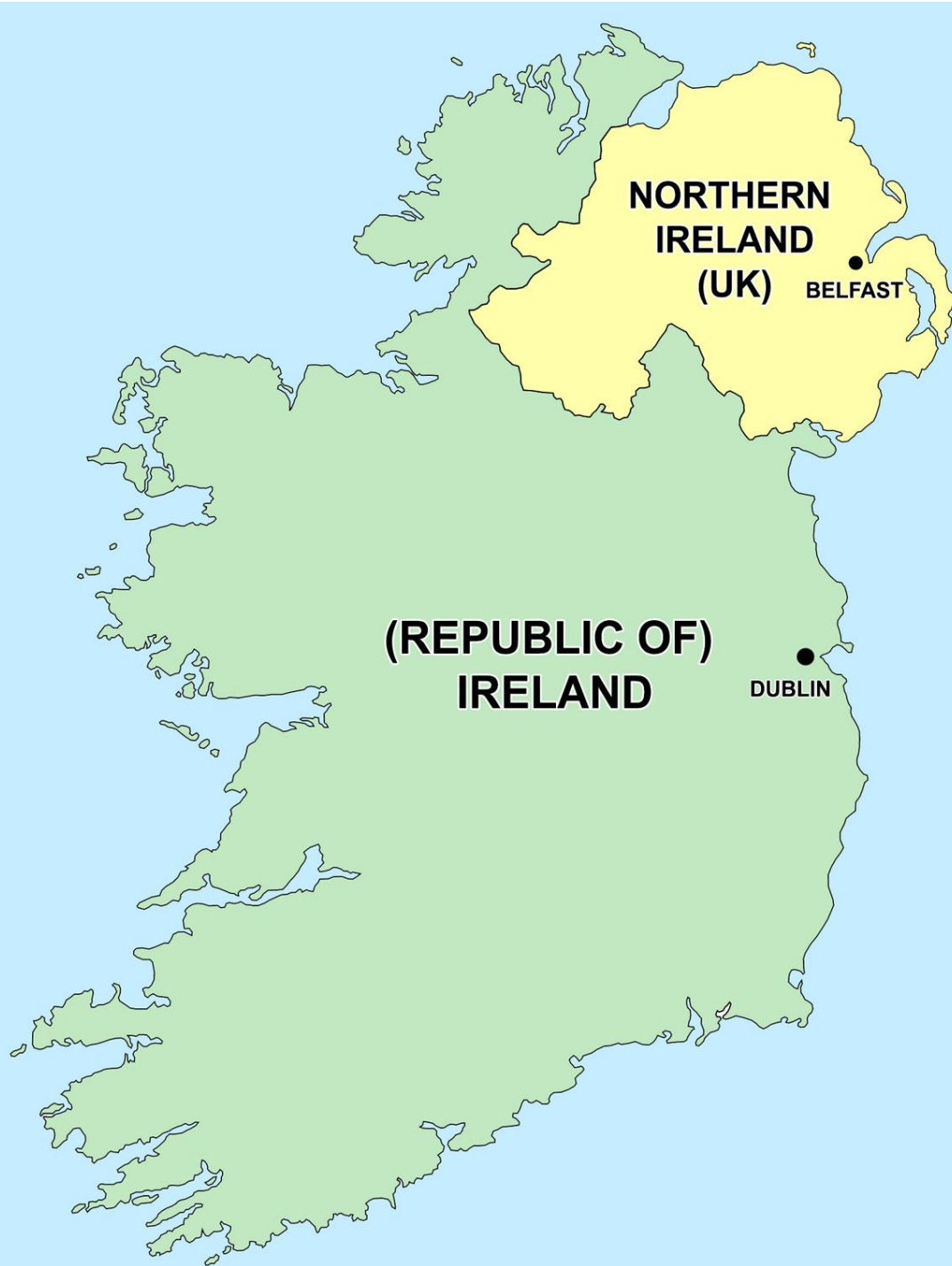
Dr Geraldine O’Hare, Director of Rehabilitation, PBNI
Paul Doran, Director of Rehabilitation NIPS



PBNI Probation Board
for Northern Ireland

NORTHERN IRELAND

PRISON  **SERVICE**



**NORTHERN
IRELAND
(UK)**

BELFAST

**(REPUBLIC OF)
IRELAND**

DUBLIN

Northern Ireland

- 1921 – Partition of Ireland and creation of Northern Ireland
- 1953 – Prison Act
- 1969 – Start of the Troubles
- 1982 – Probation Board for Northern Ireland established
- 1995 – NIPS becomes an agency
- 1998 – Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement
- 2000 – Criminal Justice Review
- 2010 – Devolution of Justice
- 2011 – Owers Review of NIPS
- 2019 - Joint Presentation to Council of Europe

Conflict



Impact of conflict

- Nearly 4,000 people murdered from 1969 to 2019
- 31 Prison Officers/Staff murdered from 1974 to 2016 (including 10 in 1979)
- 1981 – Hunger strikes
- 1983 – Maze breakout
- 1998 – Release of conflict related prisoners
- 2015 – Bomb attack on PBNI office in Derry/Londonderry
- 2017 – Increase in threat level to PBNI
- 2019 – Reduction in threat level to PBNI

2000 Criminal Justice Review

- NIPS and PBNI to remain separate organisations
- Prisons had had become highly contentious battlegrounds over the course of the 'Troubles'.
- Community ethos and credibility achieved by PBNI would be at risk if amalgamation took place.
- Noted the NIO Policy of criminalization had removed 'Special Category' status of prisoners convicted of conflict-related offences.

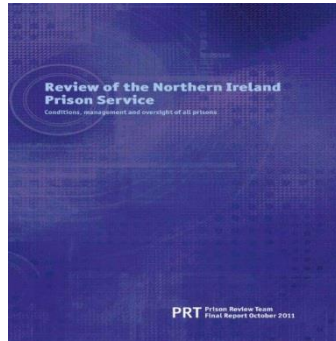
Recommendations

- Greater co-operation at management level, staff interchange, joint training programmes and offending behaviour programmes.
- Acknowledgement that Northern Ireland has different characteristics from other jurisdictions (2003 Carter Report & establishment of NOMS in England & Wales)
- PBNi to become an agency when NI Executive has responsibility for Justice.

Post-Conflict

- Period of transition from conflict has seen ongoing process of 'Normalisation'
- 1996 – Criminal Justice Order – both organisations moving towards public protection function & multi-agency approach.
- 2003 – Murder of Attracta Harron
- 2008 – Criminal Justice Order – establishment of Parole Commissioners, Public Protection Sentences & concept of 'Whole Sentence' tariff (Custody & Community – removal of automatic 50% remission.

Review of NI Prison Service 2011 – Dame Anne Owers



Five High Level Recommendations

1. Agreement & ownership of the vision – safer society – international best practice and human rights/Council of Europe rules
2. Properly resourced Change Programme.
3. Governance, Accountability & Performance measures
4. Staff Development Package – Early Retirement Scheme, Recruitment and Progression, External Training.
5. Improved and consistent procedures – focus on dynamic security.

“The Prison-Probation partnership can and should develop much further without threatening the operational independence and different traditions of the two services”

40 Recommendations

30 – Prisoners to have personalised sentence plan based on needs, strengths and risks.

31 – NIPS & PBNi to undertake joint work to plan and deliver integrated services.

32 – NIPS to recruit a Director of Rehabilitation (incorporating education, work and skills training).

Main focus on the pressing need for prison reform – seen as costly and over-securitized.

Expansion of PBNI Role

- Practice Standards and need to balance public protection and professional judgement /discretion.
- Retention of social work as core qualification for Probation Officers
- Importance of community based Board & partnerships with Voluntary and Community Sector.
- Leadership of cross-border Public Protection Advisory Group

Recent Examples of Innovation

- Victims and Restorative Interventions
- Enhanced Combination Orders – alternative to short prison sentences.
- Problem Solving Justice – Substance Misuse, Domestic Violence & Mental Health
- Use of technology including PBNi mobile phone app made available to prisoners on release & those in community

Challenges for prison service

'Severe' threat to lives of serving prison officers in Northern Ireland

Complaints to Prisoner Ombudsman for Northern Ireland triple

Maghaberry Prison 'not safe' says chief inspector

Child killer dies in prison

Belfast's Hydebank Wood prisons 'not good enough'

Challenges for Probation

- Funding for projects on short term basis
- Increase in complexity of cases including rise in complexity of mental health issues
- Lack of legislative assembly and NI executive

Lessons Learned

- History of Northern Ireland
- Importance of relationships, responsibility and respect
- Risks from terrorism/politically motivated offending/radicalisation
- Learning from others – PPAG, Council of Europe & CEP

NI Programme for Government 17-21

- Outcome 7 – To create a safer Northern Ireland where we respect the law and each other.
- Prisons 2020 document acknowledges unique partnership between NIPS & PBNI – revised language ‘People in our care’
- Recent Inspections have highlighted excellent joint working (Resettlement May 2018 and Maghaberry Prison November 2018)
- Learning from others – PPAG, Council of Europe & CEP

Collaboration not Competition

Further opportunities in;

- Resettlement
- Programme work to address offending behaviour
- Partnerships with the Community and Voluntary sector
- Work with Victims
- Psychology Services
- Secondments and Mentoring
- Joint Training and Presentations(!)

Q & A

Dr Geraldine O'Hare, PBNI
Paul Doran NIPS

Thank You

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