

High Level Taskforce on Mental Health and Addiction Challenges of persons interacting with the Criminal Justice System

Subgroup 1: Diversion

Meeting Tuesday 8th February 2022 11am-12pm

Attendees:

- Chair – Chief Superintendent Gerard Roche, An Garda Síochána
- Dr Eamon Keenan, National Clinical Lead-Addiction Services, HSE
- Inspector Andrew Lacey, An Garda Síochána
- Eoin Ryan, Regional Manager with responsibility for prisons regions, Probation Service
- Michael Murchan, Assistant Principal Officer, Department of Health
- Deirdre O’Flaherty, Administrative Officer, Department of Health
- Brendan Sheehy, Assistant Principal Officer, Community Safety Policy, Dept. of Justice
- Secretariat – John Dunphy, Oonagh Ffrench and Kerrie Keegan, Dept. of Justice, Penal and Policing Policy

Apologies:

- Seamus Hempenstall, Principal officer, Department of Health
- Enda Kelly, National Nurse Manager, Irish Prison Service
- Tony O’Donovan; Dept. of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Principal Officer, Child Welfare Advisor, Children Detention Unit

Guest speaker:

- Emily Sheary, Restorative Justice, Nenagh, Co Tipperary

Agenda:

1. Minutes of last meeting 09.12.21
2. Restorative Justice in the Community (RJC) project
3. Final report
4. AOB

1. Minutes of last meeting

- 1.1. The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed everyone, thanking all for their continued work
- 1.2. Minutes dated 09.12.21 were approved

2. Restorative Justice in the Community (RJC) project

- 2.1. A presentation was given on restorative justice in the Tipperary, Laois and Offaly areas
- 2.2. The scheme operates on a Court referral mechanism and only after guilt has been established at the pre-sanction stage. Restorative Justice has been in Ireland since 1999
- 2.3. The offender must show accountability and responsibility for their actions
- 2.4. The process is very structured and works in a phased approach – focusing on a community based reparation panel
- 2.5. Offenders are assessed on their suitability and victims needs and expectations are managed carefully. The current scheme in operation is generally not suitable for domestic violence or sexual abuse
- 2.6. There had been a high level of referrals from 2018-2021 with high numbers of offenders between the ages of 18-24 years
- 2.7. There is strong partnership between the Probation Service, D/Justice, Judiciary and Gardaí
- 2.8. There is also a Traveller Mediation Service that supports mediation within the community
- 2.9. The capacity of the offender is assessed to make sure they are able to make decisions
- 2.10. It was raised whether this is a form of civil sanction. It was advised that is not a civil sanction
- 2.11. The older members of the community are normally volunteers on the reparation panel

3. Final Report

- 3.1. The SG1 final report has been shared with members and has included input from various groups which will be integrated into the report.

4. AOB

- 4.1. There was a meeting in Derry attended by Chief Superintendent Roche and Inspector Andrew Lacey with the PSNI to review the CAST hubs model which proved very beneficial. Inspector Lacey will prepare slides on same and give a presentation at next SG1 meeting
- 4.2. The next meeting will be held in Templemore on Wednesday, 9th March from 11am – 3pm

Actions:

- Secretariat to seek inputs for final report
- Secretariat will share the presentation on Restorative Justice with the wider group

