



An tSeirbhís Phromhaidh
The Probation Service

Community Service & Community Return



Dermot Lavin Senior Probation Officer
Community Sanctions & Community Service Unit
16th October 2023

Dublin Community Service Team

Who we are.....

- 1 Senior Probation Officer
- 5 Probation Officers
- 12 Community Service Supervisors
- 2 Administrative Support Staff

Dublin Community Service Team

What we do.....

- Community Service takes place at over 20 locations across the Dublin area. Within this we have fixed sites with CSS supervisors at;
- 5 School based sites
- 1 Youth Project
- 1 Equine Centre/Community Project
- 1 GAA club
- 1 Community Based Probation Project premises
- 1 Charity based residential project
- Three mobile buses work at a number of locations such as schools, sports clubs, hospitals, public parks, and at various locations in relation to graffiti removal.
- There are established CS projects at three Probation funded CBOs in Santry, Tallaght, and Dunlaoghaire.



Overview of Community Service

- Community Sanction – direct alternative to custody
- Must be 16 years or over
- Between 30/40 and 240 hours can be imposed in any 12 month period
- Aim to be completed within 12 months
- Assessment of suitability carried out by Probation Officer
- Offenders consent needed
- Work available in the Community



Legislative Basis

1. Criminal Justice (Community Service) Act 1983
2. Criminal Justice (Community Service) (Amendment) Act 2011
3. Fines (Payment and Recovery) Act 2014

1. Criminal Justice (Community Service) Act 1983

- The Probation Service must carryout an *assessment of suitability* to work, prior to an order being imposed
- It is an offence to fail to carry out the order of the court
- The Probation Service can prosecute for failure to complete a CSO
- Allows for the revocation, extension and variation of CSO

2. Criminal Justice (Community Service) (Amendment) Act 2011



Legislative Basis contd.

3. Fines (Payment and Recovery Act) 2014

Aim – to reduce the numbers of people going to prison for non-payment of fine

- Community Service Orders – can be made in all cases of default where the Judge deems it inappropriate to make an Attachment or Recovery Order
- District Court – 30 to 100 hours
- Circuit Court – 40 to 240 hours
- Where more than one CSO is imposed, the total number of hours shall not exceed 240 hours at any one time (S.5(1) of 1983 CJ Act)
- Imprisonment should only arise if it is not possible to make a CSO or for failure to comply
- Fines Act cases can be re-entered to the Court under the provisions outlined in Criminal Justice (CS) Act 1983



Community Service – Why?

- **Alternative to Custody & Cost Effective** - cost of CS placement can be as low as 11% of the cost of custodial sentence
- **Reduces Recidivism - CSO Probation Reoffending Statistics 2013, 2014, 2015 & 2016 Cohorts:**
 - 72% did not re-offend within 1 year of a CSO being imposed (2015 & 2016)
 - 63% did not re-offend within a two year period of a CSO being imposed (2014)
 - 58.4% did not re-offend within a three year period of a CSO being imposed (2013)
- **Supports desistance** – opportunity for prosocial influence, productive, integration, contribution
- **Benefits to Community** - work done on numerous community projects – 203,206 hours of CS in 2021
- **Reparation/Restoration**—activities are “for the community” & in the community
- **Benefits to person** - skills, structure, routine, sense of purpose, self esteem



Community Service – Key Stakeholders

- **Probation Officer** - Assessment; Induction; Supporting CSS; closure of order/revocation
- **Clerical Officer** - Manages paperwork; supports information sharing
- **Community Service Supervisor** - Group & Site management; “Face of Probation”; Host engagement; records management; work & site sourcing
- **Host Organisation** – provides work site; may manage the actual CSO (individual placements); engages with CSS & Probation staff
- **Community Based Organisation** – work placements; Integrated Community Service; development opportunities
- **Communities** – benefit, work done in public spaces
- **Person subject to CSO** – opportunity for redemption, remains in community



Community Service Processes

Court Referral



Assessment Process

(Same day assessment or adjournment)



Induction Process



Managing the Community Service Order



Successful Completion or Revocation



Assessment Process

1. Same Day Assessment Report

Assessment undertaken by Court Duty Probation Officers where available.

2. Adjournment for Community Service Report

4 weeks required; may be a Same Day assessment where more information is required

Community Service	Considerations & Suitability Criteria
Person is motivated	Person is physically able
Person is stable – mental health	Person is stable – addiction/substance misuse
There are no safety issues that would impact on site/other participants	Availability – person & suitable Work Site
Person consents to the order	History of compliance with community sanctions



Community Service Sites

- **160+ sites** – Nationwide – includes group & individual placements & CBO's
- **Types of Sites** – homeless hostels; schools; charities; graffiti removal; horticultural projects; community centres & clubs; churches
- **Types of Work:** - painting, decorating, gardening, landscaping, planting and growing, general maintenance, site clearance, graffiti removal, shop work, kitchen duties, clerical work





Integrated Community Service (ICS)

- Introduced Integrated Community Service (ICS), in 2014. ICS combines site work with a rehabilitative/developmental element.
- Introduced as a pilot project, rolled out nationally, and is now adopted as an integral part of Probation Policy supporting the management of CSO's.
- 33% or 50% of the CSO hours can be awarded for participation in education/training/counselling/treatment.
- ICS can be awarded when two-thirds of the CSO is completed
- CBO's, community based services
- Evidenced



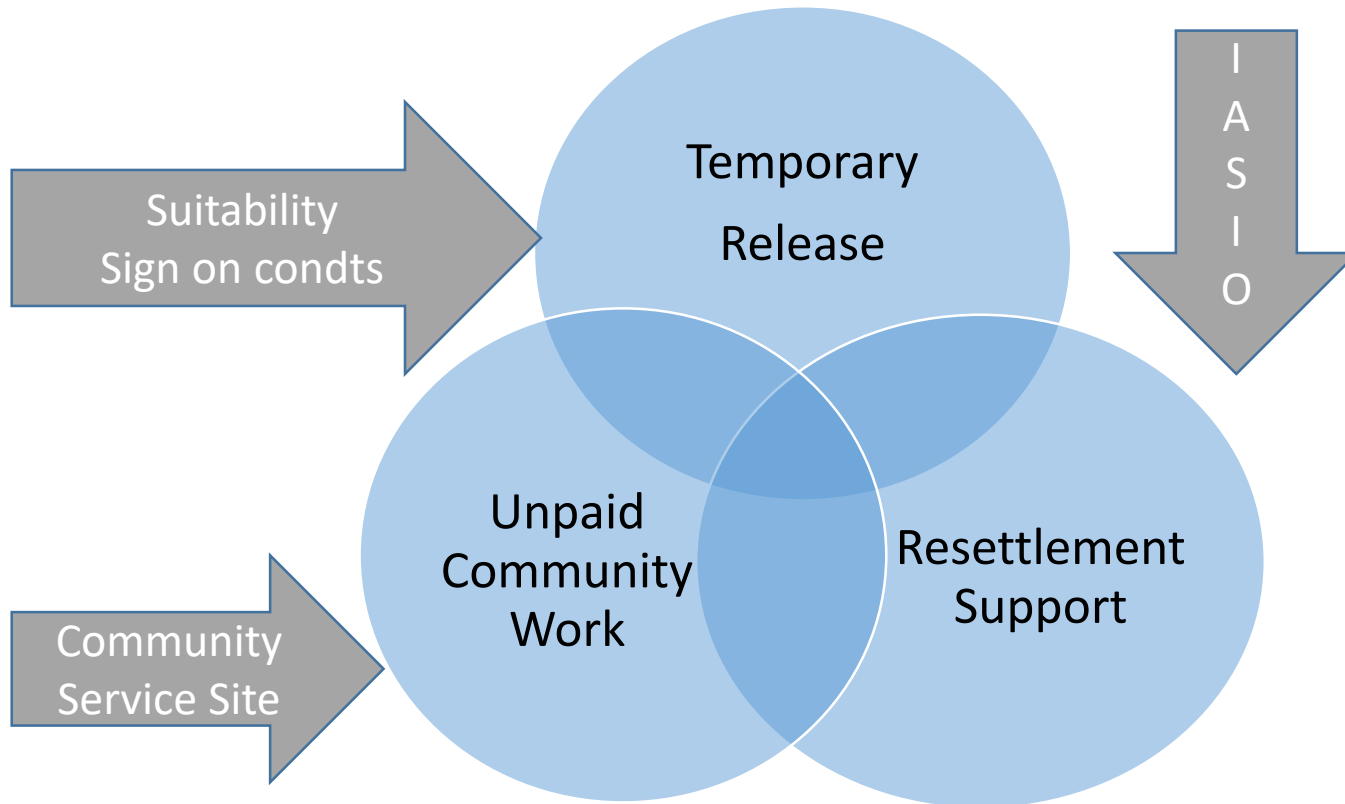
Working with Females on Community Service

- Probation Policy Document – Guidelines for the Assessment of Female Offenders referred for Community Service (CS)/Community Return (CR) - June 2016
- Females do better in a gender responsive environment
- Carer responsibilities explored and considered
- Considerations: employment/education/ clinic appointments/social work appointments/ access with children in care/medical issues/pregnancy/mental health/relationships and childcare.
- Individual placement ?
- Mixed gender site ?
- Community Based Organisation ?
- Balance & flexibility



Community Return Programme

Partnership between Irish Prison Service & Probation Service





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Community Return Scheme (CRS)

Objectives

- Reparation & Reduce Reoffending
- Structured Release
- Improved Resettlement Outcomes
- Opportunity for Integration
- Inter-agency Co-operation
- Reduce Prison numbers
- Incentivise behaviour in prison

2021 – 218 people placed on CRS



Recidivism & Re-imprisonment Rates persons on Community Return 2014 Evaluation

Recidivism

- Central Statistics Office/Irish Prison Service study
- Recidivism rate of 51% within 3 years
- 33% re-offended within 6 months
- 40.4% offended within 12 months

Re-imprisonment

- Sample of 232 completions released in first year of scheme
- Sample tracked up until end of 2013
- 20 persons returned to prison on new sentence
- 6 of these were as a result of non-payment of court ordered fine
- 91% had not returned to custody

Community Service Projects

Current

- PACE Workshop- Santry
- Raheny Tidy Towns
- St Mary's Holy Faith School, Killester
- St Mary's Secondary School, Baldoyle
- Mobile Unit- Santry pick up

Prior

- Northside Homecare, Sybill Hill Road
- St Benedicts and St Mary's National School, Kilbarrack Road
- Raheny Scout Den



Primary School – Library Revamp





Mobile Unit – Park Clean Up



Get in touch.....

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Thank you

Questions?