



Amelia House



The Northern Ireland Association
for the Care and Resettlement
of Offenders

Corporate Plan

2006~2009



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working to reduce crime and its impact on people and communities



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INTRODUCTION

NIACRO President Lord Hylton, Chair Richard Buchanan and Treasurer Patrick Farry at the 2005 AGM



There is no single perfect model for a corporate plan, no 'one size fits all' for every organisation. This corporate plan, in terms of both contents and layout, reflects perfectly the culture of our organisation – it is sharply focused on the pursuit of key strategic priorities that are in total harmony with our Mission and Vision. It will, like its predecessor, remain a 'live' document, guiding the work of the organisation over the next three years. But for us, it is not just the outcome of the corporate planning exercise that is of value, but the process itself. Our approach generates a synergy within NIACRO – among the staff, the volunteers and the Executive Committee – and beyond the organisation, among those with whom we engage on a daily basis.

The process of planning has given NIACRO another opportunity to gain feedback on the impact of our work involving service users, volunteers, staff, funders, and organisations and individuals with whom we work. We have been engaged in shaping a plan **"to reduce crime and its impact on people and communities"** into the future.

The plan is in a familiar layout, identifying the key areas where the organisation intends to focus its energy. While our vision and mission statement have been confirmed for a further three year period, we have undertaken a major exercise in reviewing and revising our values involving all our staff and volunteers. The strategic objectives are again supported by rationale and statements indicating our intended outcomes. These have been developed from a set of critical assumptions and reference to the criminal justice system in which we are operating.

The plan will be supported by annual business plans which will set smart targets against which we will monitor progress on a quarterly basis. We have also taken account of factors which affect our unique role in the criminal justice system.

- The range and quality of the partnership arrangements that facilitate service delivery.
- The opportunity to engage in policy discussion highlighting issues of concern.
- The opportunity to develop new models of work and to innovate.

These roles are very much in line with those developed in the Department of Social Development publication “Positive Steps”. We believe that the outworking of the Review of Public Administration will create further opportunities for organisations like NIACRO, who are in the business of frontline delivery, to continue to develop services that are relevant and valued by the people we seek to serve.

Richard Buchanan, Chairman
Olwen Lyner, Chief Executive

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VISION STATEMENT

NIACRO’s vision is to be acknowledged as making a unique contribution to the development of a society in which the rights and needs of everyone, including offenders, are equally respected.

MISSION STATEMENT

NIACRO - working to reduce crime and its impact on people and communities.

VALUES

JUSTICE

This means that we believe that everyone in society, including offenders and victims, has the right to be treated fairly.

- Northern Ireland's criminal justice system and other relevant agencies must adhere fully to international human rights standards.
- We oppose the death penalty.
- A custodial sentence should be the penalty of last resort and be proportionate to the offence.
- We advocate the restorative justice approach to dealing with crime.
- We advocate the development of reintegration strategies and services.

DIGNITY

This means that we respect and value the worth of every individual.

- We will protect and promote the dignity of the individual in all our activities.
- No-one will be obliged or coerced to use our services; they choose whether or not to work with us.
- We value the contribution made to our work by staff, volunteers, service users and other stakeholders.
- Public policy and practice must ensure that offenders and (ex) prisoners are protected and that they are not unfairly discriminated against.

CITIZENSHIP

This means that we recognise that members of society have both rights and responsibilities.

- We will support people in making informed personal choices.
- We will support communities to develop in ways which reduce crime and the fear of crime, and protect the dignity of their members.
- All offenders are citizens, and must be allowed to retain their rights.
- We are committed to the realisation of social inclusion.

NON-VIOLENCE

8 This recognises that violence and the threat of violence still permeate many communities and stakeholder groups in Northern Ireland.

- We will support and promote non-violence as a standard in our own work and in society.
- We will support and deliver services and initiatives which work to reduce violence in all communities.
- We will challenge violence in any situation in which we are working.

ACCOUNTABILITY

This means that we will be accountable for all aspects of our work.

- We will be open and transparent in our financial and other dealings with our stakeholders, and our annual report will detail all aspects of our work.
- We will monitor and evaluate our services.
- We will carry out all our duties as an employer in a way that supports and develops staff and volunteers.
- Our services and policies will be informed by input from our service users.

PLANNING CONTEXT

CRITICAL ASSUMPTIONS

- 1** Criminal justice matters will be devolved to a local Assembly. This will bring an increase in local interest in, and accountability of, criminal justice policy and practice.
- 2** The new Juvenile Justice Centre will be operational, and the new prison will be commissioned. Prisoner numbers will increase but there will be fewer separated prisoners.
- 3** Recommendations of the Sentencing Review Framework will be implemented, providing a wider range of court sentences. Sentencing will become increasingly complex. There will be an increase in diversionary and community based non-custodial approaches.
- 4** Support for children and families will increase – more funding for family work will become available and Northern Ireland will be seen as a model of excellence in this area. The prison service will make child centred visits available to more prisoners and their children.
- 5** Statutory agencies will show increasing interest in resettlement, rehabilitation, and reintegration issues.
- 6** With falling unemployment rates, employers and agencies working with the unemployed will take an increasing interest in ex-prisoners/ ex-offenders. Engaging employers will become less difficult.
- 7** The drive to reduce the costs of welfare benefit support will affect offenders disproportionately, given their high level of dependence on the system.

- 8** The Review of Public Administration will impact on NIACRO's work by changing the current shape of Community Safety Partnerships, health and education authorities, and other public authorities whose work affects ours.
- 9** We will build strategic alliances with the public, private and NGO sectors. The DSD led initiative Positive Steps will enable public funding to flow to direct service providers.
- 10** Funding from criminal justice agencies will continue, but European funding will change and decrease.
- 11** There will be a demand for services for high-risk offenders.
- 12** Volunteers will be readily available to the organisation and staff will commit to further upskilling.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE CONTEXT

NIACRO works in a particular criminal justice context. The following section gives a very brief overview of the scale and range of people who come into contact with the Criminal Justice System. Since the last corporate plan, there have been significant developments in the delivery of criminal justice in Northern Ireland. They include:

April 2003	Establishment of Youth Justice Agency.
June 2003	Updated implementation plan for the 2000 Criminal Justice Review.
June 2003	Appointment of the Justice Oversight Commissioner.
June 2004	Resettlement Strategy launched.
October 2004	Official start of Criminal Justice Inspectorate.
March/May 2005	Consultation on the review of the sentencing framework in Northern Ireland.
May 2005	Appointment of Prisoner Ombudsman.
June 2005	Publication of implementation plan for the Resettlement Strategy.
June 2005	New Public Prosecution Service came into operation.

NORTHERN IRELAND PRISON SERVICE

The Prison Service's 2004/2005 report notes that the average daily prison population was 1277, with a range of 1228 to 1352. The breakdown was:

	REMAND	SENTENCED TO IMMEDIATE CUSTODY	NON CRIMINAL	TOTAL
Men	432	804	11	1247
Women	14	15	1	30
Total	446	819	12	1277

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PROBATION BOARD FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

The Probation Board for Northern Ireland's supervision caseload at 31 March 2005 was 3,471, an increase of seven percent on the previous year, compared to an average of 3,250 quoted in our previous corporate plan. Of these, a significant proportion are Custody Probation Orders which are a positive new development for Northern Ireland.

YOUTH JUSTICE AGENCY

The Youth Justice Agency was established in April 2003, with a focus on preventing offending by children, and working with children who offend. In its 2004/2005 annual report, the Agency notes that there were 464 admissions to the Juvenile Justice Centre, with most young people staying less than one week. Five hundred and fourteen young people undertook a range of community services projects. In 2004, the Youth Conference Service accepted 431 referrals.

POLICE SERVICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND

The PSNI, in its 2004/2005 report, records the lowest level of overall reported crime for six years, and a 7.7% decrease from 2003/2004. A total of 118,124 offences were recorded compared to 139,786 for 2001/2002, which was the year quoted in our previous corporate plan and which was a particularly high figure.

The largest single group of recorded offences was for criminal damage (31,432), with theft coming a close second at 31,097 (and having been the highest category in the previous year). Offences against the person came third with 29,339 recorded offences.

The overall clearance rate in 2004/2005 was 28.2%, compared with 20.1% in 2001/2002.

STRATEGIC AIMS

WORKING IN COMMUNITIES

WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO OFFEND

WORKING WITH OFFENDERS AND EX-PRISONERS

WORKING WITH PRISONERS, THEIR FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

INFLUENCING POLICY AND PRACTICE

APPLYING RESOURCES EFFECTIVELY

WORKING IN COMMUNITIES

1

RATIONALE

NIACRO supports communities in developing adequately resourced crime reduction strategies. These strategies will be based upon inclusion, tolerance and partnership.

STRATEGIC AIM

To work with communities to reduce offending and promote safety.

OBJECTIVES

Practice

To deliver a range of community safety programmes in an agreed number of locations throughout Northern Ireland and to promote good practice with all stakeholders.

Connections

To consolidate and develop relationships with existing and potential stakeholders in the voluntary, community, public and private sectors, to ensure the effective delivery of community safety programmes.

Influencing

To promote NIACRO's community safety services with Community Safety Partnerships, communities and other partners.

Outcomes

- To have implemented and evaluated models of good practice with key partner agencies.
- To have made an effective contribution to the development of community safety policy and practice.
- To have provided a specialist consultative service to relevant stakeholders.

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Young people in the community

WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO OFFEND

2

RATIONALE

NIACRO believes that child offending can be reduced by diverting children and young people to services which can help them to make positive changes in their lives.

STRATEGIC AIM

To promote and deliver services which divert children and young people from offending. We support the use of restorative approaches to addressing youth offending and the strictly regulated use of custody.

Young people enjoying the Reconnect project, funded under Peace II.



OBJECTIVES

Practice

To consolidate and develop evidence based and inter-agency services so that they meet the needs of children, young people and their families.

Influencing

To promote the particular needs of children and young people with relevant agencies both within and

outside the criminal justice system and to advocate on their behalf.

Connections

To work with existing and potential stakeholders to provide holistic services for children and young people and to consolidate and develop alliances with all relevant agencies to advocate for changes to the criminal justice system.

Outcomes

- To have made an effective contribution to the development of diversionary services for children and young people at risk of offending and to promote early interventions.
- To have secured contracts to deliver mentoring across Northern Ireland.
- To have taken all opportunities provided to represent the difficulties experienced by young people and to build appropriate alliances on their behalf both in the community and in custody.
- To have provided a continuum of services to young people who come into contact with us.
- To have established an advocacy service for young people in custody.

WORKING WITH OFFENDERS AND EX-PRISONERS

3

RATIONALE

Offenders and ex-prisoners experience multiple barriers to integration. To help stabilise lifestyles, a range of supportive elements is needed:

- increased employability;
- financial stability;
- supportive social networks;
- stable accommodation;
- appropriate health services.

STRATEGIC AIM

To deliver targeted interventions which support the successful integration of offenders and contribute to a reduction in offending.

OBJECTIVES

Practice

To provide integrated services that will address the needs of offenders and ex-prisoners through direct service provision and the brokering of services in the community.

Influencing

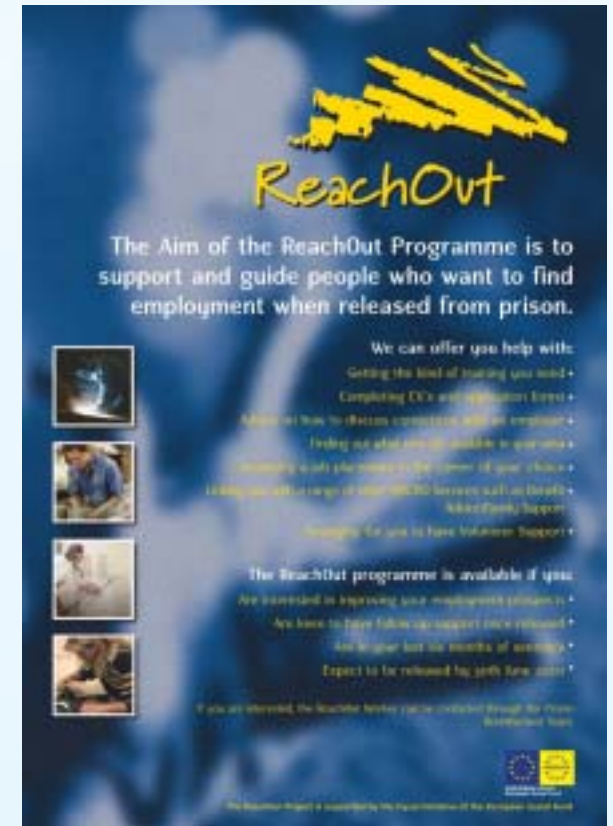
To raise awareness of, and seek to remove, the attitudinal, structural and legislative barriers to social inclusion set by individuals or organisations.

Connections

To consolidate and develop strategic alliances with statutory and voluntary sector organisations, and with employers from all sectors, that increase opportunities for offenders and ex-prisoners.

Outcomes

- To have created links with employers throughout Northern Ireland.
- To have put in place arrangements that enable offenders to access mainstream services.
- To have increased opportunities for offenders to engage in active citizenship activities.
- To have secured ongoing funding for employability services for offenders.



WORKING WITH PRISONERS, THEIR FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

4

RATIONALE

Imprisonment can have a detrimental effect on families, and the children of prisoners are more likely themselves to be at risk of offending. Successful reintegration depends on strengthening and restoring positive relationships and having support to move from prison back into the community.

STRATEGIC AIM

To provide services which reduce the negative impact imprisonment has on prisoners, families and children and which support the resettlement of prisoners on release.

OBJECTIVES

Practice

To extend the range of services which support families, based on the new Family Links model, and test interventions for children of prisoners.

To develop opportunities for prisoners and their families to prepare for their release and reintegration.

Influencing

To promote awareness of the particular needs of the children and families of prisoners in appropriate fora.

To contribute to the effective implementation of the resettlement strategy.

Connections

To consolidate and develop alliances with relevant statutory and voluntary sector organisations which offer services addressing reintegration needs.

Outcomes

- To have contributed to the implementation of the resettlement strategy.
- To have shown an increase in the levels of employability and welfare benefit engagement pre and post release.
- To have extended services across Northern Ireland that recognise the specific needs of the families and children of prisoners.
- To have worked to ensure that visiting and child centred visiting are equitably available across the prison estate.
- To have established an advocacy service for prisoners.

INFLUENCING POLICY AND PRACTICE

5

RATIONALE

The experience and knowledge NIACRO gains from its work give it the right and the duty to try to influence those who make policy, those who deliver services, and the general public. All the preceding strategic aims contribute to this one, and it in turn informs the future development of our services.

STRATEGIC AIM

- 20 To promote our views and values with policy-makers, our other stakeholders and the wider public and to increase support for the Association and its work.

OBJECTIVES

Practice

To expand and streamline our internal and external communications.

Influencing

To use NIACRO's unique experience and skills to make a real impact on public policy-making and practice.

Connections

To co-ordinate, monitor and use to maximum effectiveness our relationships with existing and potential stakeholders.

Outcomes

- To have engaged a larger number and wider range of people in NIACRO's work.
- To have produced and implemented a communications strategy.
- To have promoted awareness and take-up of all our services.
- To have impacted on public policy and practice by responding effectively to relevant consultations and meeting regularly with key players in the criminal justice and other relevant fields.
- To have used research effectively to ensure our views are underpinned by firm evidence.
- To have extended the range and depth of our North/South, East/West and international links.

APPLYING RESOURCES EFFECTIVELY

6

RATIONALE

NIACRO believes that it must secure adequate resources, and use them efficiently and effectively, to bring maximum benefit to our service users and have a significant impact on crime reduction.

STRATEGIC AIM

To continuously develop staff and volunteers so that we can implement our objectives effectively.

To secure adequate resources for our work and manage them efficiently and effectively.

Volunteers and staff at the volunteering seminar in October 2005



OBJECTIVES

Practice

To ensure best practice in the deployment of all resources.

Influencing

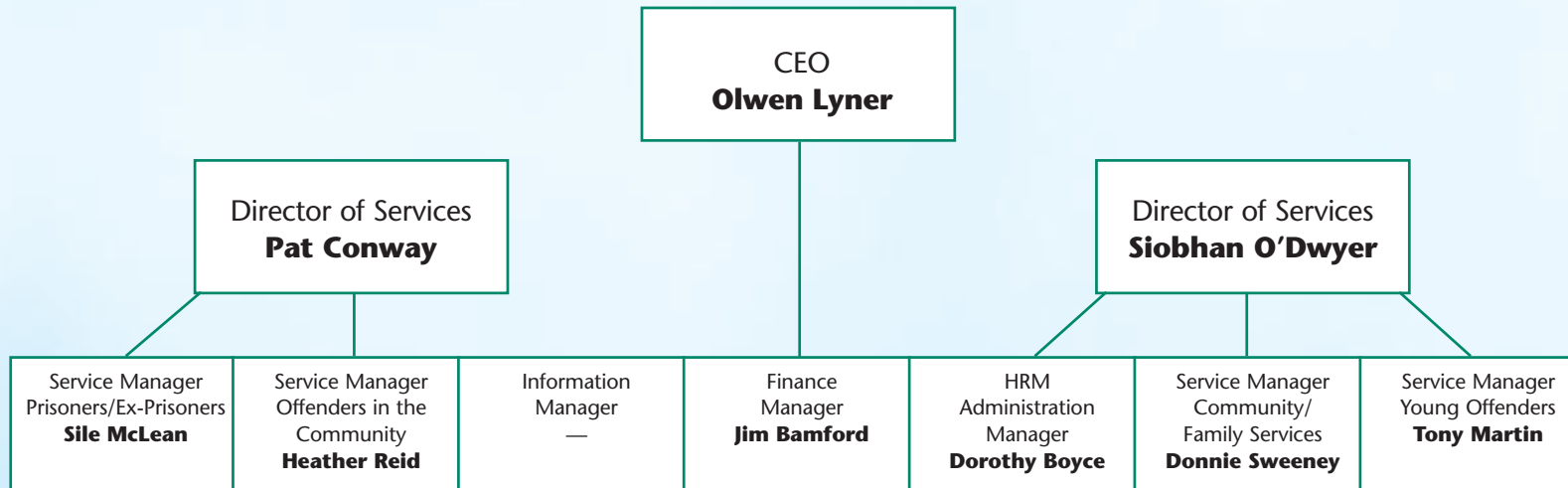
To engage in processes that seek to improve the skills and accountability of the organisation.

Connections

To work with other NGOs to support learning and development.

Outcomes

- To have delivered annual training plans in line with business planning requirements and to maintain the liP standard.
- To have maintained high levels of staff and volunteer retention.
- To have delivered services from appropriately located venues to ensure equitable access for users.
- To have been recognised as a key organisation in relation to the deployment of volunteers in the criminal justice system.
- To have undertaken financial planning and accounting that is timely, robust and transparent.



MANAGEMENT GROUP



Olwen Lyner



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Siobhan O'Dwyer



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Sile McLean



Donnie Sweeney



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Jim Bamford

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE Richard Buchanan (Chair)
Alan Caskey (Vice Chair)
Paddy Farry (Treasurer)
Dorothy Elliott
Alan Darnbrook
Peter Denley
Jill Quinn
Fergal Lynn
Tommy McLaughlin
Kieran McEvoy
Sam Pollock

REVIEW OF 2003-2006

This table of the outcomes of the previous corporate plan shows how we measured up to the goals we set ourselves then. The outcomes have been slightly abbreviated and in some cases merged to make the table easier to read.

PROMOTING SAFER COMMUNITIES

OUTCOMES	PROGRESS	COMPLETED	PARTLY COMPLETED	NOT COMPLETED
Positive evaluations of work	Positive external evaluation of Galliagh and Rural Community Network projects	✓		
Agreed & validated interventions to support Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs)	Work began on a good practice guide to evidence our experience of working with communities		✓	
Engagement with up to 50% of CSPs	Engagement with 13 CSPs, out of 26	✓		
Contribute to up to 30% of Community Safety operational groups	Work at operational level with four CSPs	✓		

WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO OFFEND

OUTCOMES	PROGRESS	COMPLETED	PARTLY COMPLETED	NOT COMPLETED
Relationships developed with Youth Justice Agency (YJA) and other agencies	YJA awarded NIACRO contracts for Independent Representation project at the Juvenile Justice Centre and mentoring within Youth Conferencing. Relationships developed with key agency staff and regular meetings at senior level	✓		
Positive evaluations of work contracted	Positive external evaluations of mentoring programme and Children and Parents Support	✓		
Recognition as a lead agency in mentoring	Mentoring project awarded Mentoring & Befriending Foundation Approved Provider Status	✓		
Representation on Children Services Planning Groups	Representative sitting on each of the four Health and Social Services Boards planning groups	✓		

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PROVIDING SERVICES TO FAMILIES & CHILDREN OF OFFENDERS

OUTCOMES	PROGRESS	COMPLETED	PARTLY COMPLETED	NOT COMPLETED
Partnership with the Probation Board for NI through Prison Link	Specialist services, advice, home support, transport & childcare delivered as agreed	✓		
Visiting services across NI with a focus on children	Visitors Centres at Magilligan and Hydebank Wood were contracted to NIACRO following a public tendering process and a programme of support for child centred visits was implemented	✓		
Delivery of services to children of prisoners linked to Children's Services Planning process	A pilot programme was established in the NHSSB area – Parents and Children's Service	✓		

SUPPORTING OFFENDERS & EX-PRISONERS IN THE COMMUNITY

OUTCOMES	PROGRESS	COMPLETED	PARTLY COMPLETED	NOT COMPLETED
Contribution to resettlement process	The Personal Progression System (PPS) and Reachout Programmes funded by EQUAL have made significant contributions throughout the period	✓		
Mainstreaming of employability provision engaging NIPS, PBNI, and DEL	PPS and Jobtrack have impacted on mainstream provision, including the development of new procedures and data capture. DEL have been engaged in the new Reachout arrangements ahead of mainstreaming discussions	✓		
Impact of NIACRO's input to consultations and external committees	Responded to over 100 consultations representing the needs of service users. All responses acknowledged as helpful	✓		
Increase in the number of work placements and of employers participating in training programmes	There has been an increase in number of employers trained but no significant increase in work placements. Recently a new partnership has been developed with Business in the Community		✓	

WORKING WITH PRISONERS

OUTCOMES	PROGRESS	COMPLETED	PARTLY COMPLETED	NOT COMPLETED
Validation and mainstreaming of PPS within prisons	The tools and processes of the PPS programme have become part of prison resettlement practice	✓		
Expansion of Welfare to Work type programmes to all prisons	Programmes in Magilligan & Hydebank Wood received positive evaluations, but lack of funding made the outcome unachievable			✓
Regular input to induction programmes	Input to all induction programmes in all establishments	✓		
Contribution to Prison Officer training	Training and advice on employability, fair recruitment, housing and interviewing delivered	✓		
Individual and group issues raised productively with NIPS	Issues raised through regular meetings at senior level with establishments and Headquarters - all key consultations responded to on time	✓		

INFLUENCING POLICY MAKERS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC

OUTCOMES	PROGRESS	COMPLETED	PARTLY COMPLETED	NOT COMPLETED
Acknowledged professional approach by key stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public endorsement from NIO Minister of State, David Hanson with respect to organisational activities • External validations including training and mentoring awards • 14 evaluations, all positive • Only NGO to be signatory to the Resettlement Strategy • Commissioned by CSU to carry out “Good Morning” research 	✓		
Acknowledged as having a regional, national & international focus	Active throughout NI and in all prison establishments. Transnational work through EQUAL and AGIS (European Networks); North/South links through the Educational Trust	✓		
Acknowledged as providing services which impact positively on offenders & families	Positive evaluations as referred to throughout. Many positive comments from service users and referral agents	✓		

APPLYING RESOURCES EFFECTIVELY

OUTCOMES	PROGRESS	COMPLETED	PARTLY COMPLETED	NOT COMPLETED
Achieve the renewal of liP status	Successfully achieved late 2003	✓		
One stop shop for services	Amelia House opened 21 June 2005	✓		
Annual financial plans in line with business planning	Robust and timely Plans produced	✓		
Provide services equitably throughout NI	A geographical audit of our services showed that services to individuals were being offered right across NI, and to local communities where resources were available	✓		
Acknowledged as a lead agency in using volunteers in the Criminal Justice System	Over 200 volunteers across NI working in the community and in prisons, contributing over 10,000 hours of work a year	✓		



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