



# 19 news

Winter 2007



## DEVOLUTION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Can we learn from the Scottish experience?

CEO Olwen Lyner, President Lord Hylton, Chair Richard Buchanan and Treasurer Patrick Farry at the AGM

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devolving criminal justice the impact on NI

our young people art, fire and magistrates

hate crime the muslim experience

prison population the latest figures

# DEVOLUTION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Earlier this year NIACRO talked to the Assembly political parties about the forthcoming devolution of criminal justice matters – we featured these discussions in NIACRO News 17. To increase our links with the parties, we’ve also attended party conferences in the last few months. Although the precise date for devolution has yet to be agreed, it’s an issue that obviously has major implications for NIACRO and the bodies with whom we work and/or who fund us.

To nail NIACRO’s colours to the mast straightaway, we believe that...

**THERE MUST BE WORK TO INCREASE PUBLIC CONFIDENCE;**

**REHABILITATION AND RESETTLEMENT MUST BE EMPHASISED AND RESOURCED**

**LOCAL COMMUNITIES MUST BE SUPPORTED TO MAKE AN EFFECTIVE CONTRIBUTION TO REDUCING CRIME IN THEIR AREAS**

**THE LIKELY EFFECT OF INCREASED LOCAL CONTROL MUST BE THOROUGHLY RESEARCHED IN ADVANCE AND PLANNED FOR.**

## THE SCOTTISH EXPERIENCE

We asked Dr Lesley McAra from the University of Edinburgh to speak at our AGM in November about the Scottish experience in devolving criminal justice there. Dr McAra is, among her other interests in young people and criminal justice, an academic advisor to the Scottish Government’s Crime and Justice Committee. (And that seems like a useful role to play. Does the Assembly formally invite local researchers and university staff to advise Ministers and members, on the basis of their research, data collection, shared discussion and reflection?)

Lesley described a “massive transformation in youth and adult criminal justice” and a “shift away from a predominantly welfare based system to one underpinned by a range of competing and somewhat contradictory rationales”.

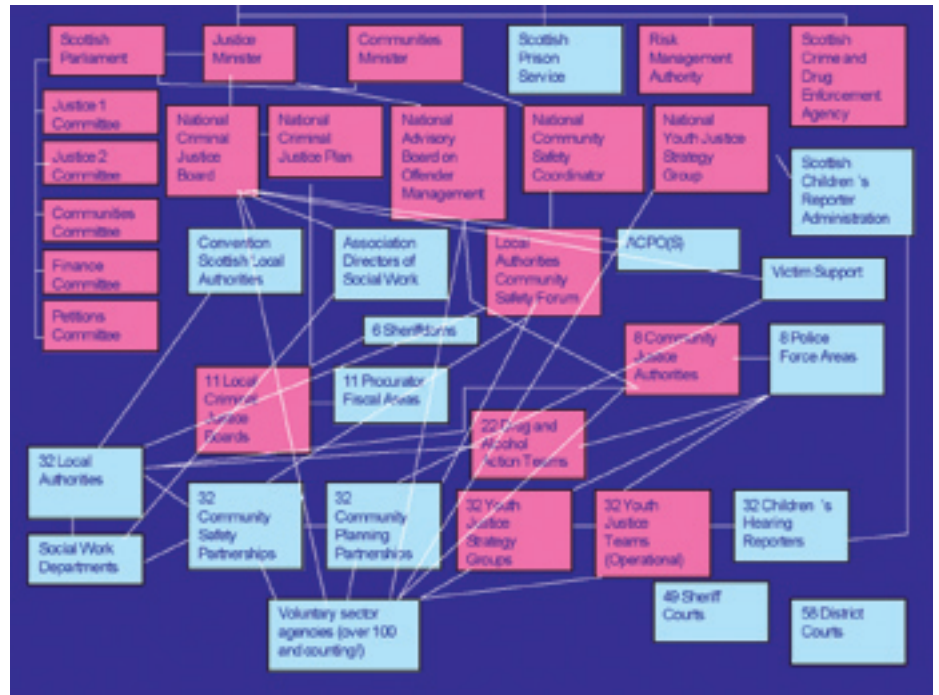
She characterised the pre-devolution system in Scotland as “penal-welfarism”. This focussed on helping people change their behaviour and reintegrating offenders back into the community, and was based on a broad political commitment to the advancement of social justice. However, she has observed a raft of new institutions

and procedures being set up, some dating from the mid-1990s but with the pace of change speeding up after devolution. These have on the whole been increasingly bureaucratic and punitive, and increasingly aligned with the criminal justice culture in England and Wales.

This appears to be paradoxical – why would Scottish justice become less distinctive after devolution, not more? In Lesley McAra’s view, this has two main causes. The first is “post-devolutionary cultural identity” – with less clear left-right polarisation, and the loss of the need to parade Scotland’s differences from the English systems. Another cause is the need for the new political institutions to build political capacity, with a certain weakness in Government resulting in a tendency to turn to crime control as a convenient way of whipping up public support and being seen as active and in control.

**MORAL PANIC**

The “moral panic” about perceived rising levels of crime is not unique to Scotland, but has there as elsewhere been fuelled by the Executive and the media. All available indicators suggest that crime rates among both young people and adults have generally levelled off or fallen in the last ten or more years. However, the Scottish Social Attitudes survey of 2005 showed that 69% of people believed that youth crime had increased over 10 years, and while a high proportion believed that there was a lot of anti-social behaviours of various sorts, only a very low proportion said they themselves had been affected by this behaviour.



Scottish Parliament, local authorities, criminal justice and other public bodies and their relationships. In danger of collapsing under the weight of its own complexity?

**LABYRINTHINE INFRASTRUCTURE**

NIACRO News is reproducing the slide on which Lesley McAra tried to sketch the criminal justice institutions in Scotland. She readily admitted that in the event it had proved impossible to get them all in, or to completely describe the linkages (overlaps?) among them.

Her explanation as to how this elaborate structure had grown up included the fact that “institutional construction has been undertaken on a piecemeal basis with new institutions being created in response to very specific policy problems”. This in spite of the existence of a National Criminal Justice Plan.

Lesley also gave examples of practitioners strongly challenging policies and structures, with mixed success; noting a “battle for the heart and soul of criminal justice policy” gradually emerging between key practitioners and Ministers.

**TARGETS**

The setting of targets and timetables is in principle a necessary framework for improving services. However, Lesley identified “unscientific targets” as a real danger; they can depend on uncertain and inaccurate data, and they are often over-optimistic (if not to say quite unrealistic).

**WHAT CAN BE LEARNT FROM SCOTLAND?**

Lesley McAra helpfully outlined the key lessons from the Scottish experience. Firstly, she suggested that the Scottish case highlights the risks of “governing through crime” – using crime control as a way of boosting political profile, with related short-termism and failure to base policy decisions on clear evidence.

She noted that politicians have used crime control as a means of enhancing popular/political support

in Scotland. This runs the risk of building a society in which social solidarity is based on excluding rather than including people, and increasing the fear and intolerance of, especially, young people.

There is a “need to build coherent and empowered policy networks” made up of actual practitioners and policy makers at all levels of governance. These networks should give practitioners and other experts a louder voice in policy development and greater control over the ways in which policy is implemented and evaluated.

Finally, Lesley stressed the need for “bolder vision among politicians”. This at a minimum would, in her view, recognise:

- That criminal justice institutions in themselves cannot make the wider public “feel” safer nor can they completely eradicate risk.
- That punitive measures and tough talk are generally the refuge of weak governments and evidence of political and moral failure.
- That the most effective way of reducing offending and promoting social inclusion is to place social justice at the heart of criminal justice.

NIACRO agrees wholeheartedly with these conclusions. They do demand “a bolder vision” and that’s what we will be looking for and hoping to encourage among the Assembly’s members as policing and justice matters come under their responsibility.

## NI ASSEMBLY INQUIRY INTO TRANSFER OF POLICING AND JUSTICE

The St Andrews Agreement placed on the Assembly the responsibility to report on progress towards the devolution of policing and justice matters to the Secretary of State by 27 March 2008. The Assembly and Executive Review Committee is a standing committee of the Assembly. At a post-AGM meeting NIACRO organised for local politicians to meet Dr McAra, we were briefed by the Clerk to the Committee, Stephen Graham, on the elements of its work most relevant to this subject.



The Committee is conducting an Inquiry into the transfer of policing and justice matters and has met two or three times a month since July. It has heard evidence from the Secretary of State, the NI Court Service, the Policing Board, the PPS, and from the Lord Chief Justice, whose evidence was widely covered in the media as he proposed a high level of independence for the judiciary.



Guest speaker  
Lesley McAra at the AGM

It also heard from the Alliance and Progressive Unionist parties, who are not represented on the Committee.

The Inquiry's main terms of reference are:

- To identify the policing and justice matters which are currently reserved.
- To consider which of these matters should be devolved and the extent to which they should be devolved.
- To identify what "ministerial model" should be brought in [eg one Minister? Two of equal authority? A minister and a junior minister?] and how they should be appointed or chosen.
- To identify what the Assembly should be doing to prepare for devolution.

The Committee has undertaken to report to the Assembly by 29 February 2008, and the Assembly is required to report to the Secretary of State by 28 March.

## THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE ORDER

An ad hoc Committee of the Assembly was set up at the end of November to consider the draft Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2007. It will hear evidence, receive written submissions, and report to the Assembly by 28 January 2008.

# WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE



# Art JJC

NIACRO's Independent Representation scheme within the Juvenile Justice Centre provides the young people with an independent voice. We also offer other services including mentoring and advocacy. Mentoring provides the young person with a volunteer to meet with them weekly, carry out a range of activities together, and work towards agreed goals.

Taking advantage of the facilities available in the new JJC, NIACRO decided to carry out a week-long art project with the young people, with the aims of helping the young people set and achieve goals, and promoting our mentoring scheme.

The programme was designed with the help of two placement students, one of whom, Emma Kennedy, facilitated the programme throughout the week. We encouraged the young people to think of themselves in a more positive way. We looked at past achievements, present achievements and future goals. We also looked at labelling - many young people find themselves labelled by their communities, schools etc. Some of the labels the young people identified being called included Joyride, Glue bag, Scum. We discussed how there is more to a person than the labels attributed to them and encouraged the young people to identify positive comments which had been made about them.



## POSITIVE LABELS

The final pieces incorporated the young person's name with positive words to describe each person using the letters of their name. The new words were added by individual young people, other young people in the group and staff members and included Likeable, Interesting and Generous.

One of the participants took the idea a step further and created a poster using the letters JJC NI "Juveniles aren't Just Criminals and Neither am I".

The finished art pieces, more than 30 of them, have gone up in the visitors' area, to brighten the space up and to show visitors what the young people have created. This is the beginning of making the visitors' area a more child friendly, family orientated space.

Five of the young people involved are now benefiting from the mentoring scheme. The benefits of working intensely with the young people and centre staff became clear, and we plan to develop more programmes in the future, with the help of the existing Independent Representation volunteers.

# NEWSLETTER

A new publication hit the streets in October – or hit the corridors of the JJC anyhow.

It's a newsletter for the young people and its name awaits the decision of the readership - ie, they have been asked to come up with its title. With jokes, poems, and some feedback about common queries put to the staff, it's lively and informative and NIACRO News wishes it well.



## NORTHERN IRELAND FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE:

# LIFE programme

The Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service delivers a youth engagement initiative called LIFE (Learning in Fire Education) in association with local Community Safety Partnerships. Statutory and voluntary sector agencies across local districts in Northern Ireland make referrals to the project.



l to r, NIACRO's Denise Mac Dermott, Michael and mentor Patrick

“The aim of the scheme is to bring together young people and Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service in their local area to build mutual understanding and break down community barriers, be they real or perceived.” (NIFRS website)

Derry City Council Community Safety Partnership approached NIACRO’s mentoring project in the Western Board to offer us two places for young people for a recent LIFE programme. This was a welcome opportunity for two young people engaged with the project to access a very successful education and development programme.

The aim of LIFE is to provide real experiences with the NIFRS for young people aged 13-19 years. The programme provides one week’s work experience in a very challenging environment. It runs from 7.30am until 3.30pm Monday to Friday, and on the final day there is a graduation ceremony where the young people showcase their new skills in front of an audience of their parents, friends, referral agents, volunteer mentors and – on this occasion - the Mayor of Derry, Mr Drew Thompson.

James Moore and Michael Farrelly both successfully completed the LIFE programme, being assessed and evaluated by NIFRS officers over the course of the week. A portfolio was presented to James and Michael at the graduation ceremony at the Northland Road Fire Station in Derry/Londonderry on Friday 9 November 2007.



LIFE graduation, James is 2nd left in the back row and Michael 3rd from right in front

It was a very proud day for NIACRO to see two of its young clients develop and grow in confidence during a very challenging programme. James was so engaged that he has asked for a work experience placement through his school. This request is supported by staff at the NIFRS and NIACRO. James’ teacher also attended the graduation and remarked on the growth of his confidence and skills. Michael also worked extremely hard and showed great commitment during the LIFE programme. His mentor Patrick attended the ceremony and commented on Michael’s progress, “He’s done so well, I’m really proud of Michael, he pushed himself and has achieved great success. It’s great to see his efforts being recognised, with all his family here and the Mayor of Derry.”

We’d like to thank staff at NIFRS especially all those in Northland Road Fire Station, Derry City Council Community Safety Partnership, Michael and James and their families and the Mayor for their time and commitment.

### LAY MAGISTRATES TRAINING

One of the recommendations of the Criminal Justice Review of 2000 was to create a new judicial post of Lay Magistrate. The role came into being in 2005 with the goal of, to quote the news release issued at the time, forging “closer links between local people and the courts in their areas, and [enabling] greater civic involvement in the deliberations of the courts”. Two Lay Magistrates sit alongside a legally qualified Resident Magistrate in Youth Courts and Family Proceedings Courts as

**The aim of the scheme is to bring together young people and Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service in their local area to build mutual understanding and break down community barriers...**

well as carrying out some other duties (some of these duties were formerly the role of Justices of the Peace and Lay Panellists).

Last summer, the Judicial Studies Board of Northern Ireland asked NIACRO to facilitate a series of training sessions for Lay Magistrates across divisional areas. We chose Youth Employability and Mentoring to deliver the training and Senior Practitioners Billy Clarke and Denise Mac Dermott set about developing their training sessions.

The training took place in September 2007 to coincide with the Lay Magistrates Divisional Meetings. Sessions were held in Ballymena, Banbridge, Belfast, Magherafelt, Newtownards, Omagh and Portadown.

The training delivered was an overview of each of the projects, identifying how they benefit the young people who take part. It drew in some of the other projects NIACRO delivers and how these are connected to youth employability and mentoring. In devising the presentations we wanted to highlight the connections and in some cases the partnerships and collaborative working arrangements NIACRO has developed with other agencies like the Youth Justice Agency, to make the training relevant for the target audience.

This was the first time the Judicial Studies Board of Northern Ireland had organised such additional training for Lay Magistrates, and it was agreed to meet the JSB for feedback to NIACRO on the

training delivered. The evaluation was very positive - Lay Magistrates were interested in the service provision and its connections to other projects and agencies. They commented on the trainers' enthusiasm and drive for the work they delivered and overall felt the training was successful.

Denise and Billy would like to thank Maria Kane and her team at the Judicial Studies Board of Northern Ireland for organising the training schedule and making sure everything kept to time; and the tea and biscuits of course!

## STAFF COMINGS AND GOINGS

We welcome to NIACRO:

### **Family Links**

– Stieneke Willis

### **Mentoring**

– Oonagh Quigg

### **Jobtrack**

– Ellie Campbell

Our two Australian colleagues, Kelly-Anne Stewart and Michelle Ring, working on APAC and Mentoring respectively, have returned to their native land. Our loss is Down Under's (re)gain. Good wishes also to Margaret McCloskey, formerly childcare Project Worker in the Western Board.

## THE FUTURE OF THE THIRD SECTOR

NIACRO's CEO, Olwen Lyner, is Chair of CO3, the organisation which brings together the chief officers of 175 voluntary and community bodies, employing around 20,000 people. At CO3's November conference in Newry, over 100 participants heard calls for the Assembly to recognise the important role NGOs play, both in delivering vital services and in helping shape effective public policy. The "third sector" - charities, social enterprises and other voluntary/community organisations - has an annual turnover of over £600 million.

New legislation governing charities is coming soon, and CO3 see this as the opportunity for a framework of law that will support the whole third sector. The organisation also stresses the importance of involving the sector closely in the planning and implementation of the Review of Public Administration with its major changes in how public services are delivered. Olwen has called for partnership and sustainability to be at the heart of implementation of the RPA so that the sector "will continue to be a modern and innovative sector that will impact on all our lives in Northern Ireland."

You can find out more about CO3 on their website, [www.co3.bz](http://www.co3.bz)



# Radicalisation and Criminalisation

NIACRO is part of a European-funded project called AGIS, working on race and faith based hate crimes. There is a description of the first phase of the project, which ran to 2006, in NIACRO News 14. Together with the same partners (London Probation, University of Bremen, International Initiatives for Co-operation from Bulgaria and Mid-Dham Ghad-Dawl, a prisoner resettlement NGO in Malta) we are now looking at the topic of

“criminalising radicalisation”. NIACRO hosted a seminar in Belfast in November which built on established relationships between a range of interested parties in Belfast, Bradford and London.

The aim was to look at any parallels and learning there might be between the Northern Ireland conflict and the effects on Muslim communities in Great Britain of the “war on terror”.

# There is a real opportunity to help perpetrators look more constructively at diversity in our society

## RESPONSES TO RADICALISATION

The 25 participants in this particular seminar came from NIACRO along with academics, ex-prisoner and community development NGOs, journalists and statutory agencies from both cities, and representatives of London Probation. They explored the proposition that Northern Ireland had become radicalised, with non-violent agitation developing into armed conflict, and how parties to the conflict had subsequently moved into the peace process. In that context, participants also examined the radicalisation that has occurred within Islam and why the use of violence is so frequently

discussed at present. They looked at governmental and political responses, the response from communities, and human rights and community relations issues.

There was a great breadth and depth of experience and intellectual power in the room, and the discussion reflected that. We'll be teasing out the lessons to be learned, and add them to two earlier publications – "An Overview of Hate Crime in Northern Ireland", produced for the project by NIACRO and the Institute for Conflict Research, and the report of a transnational seminar "Challenging the Perpetrators of Hate Crime" hosted by NIACRO in September 2006.

These publications could be used as the building blocks for developing a project working with people convicted of hate crimes. The broad social and political moves to create a more integrated and tolerant society are vital, but it's important also that attention is paid to those who for whatever reason have felt it appropriate to carry out this sort of offence. Given NIACRO's often-stated point of view that criminal justice should give greater emphasis to rehabilitation and resettlement, there is a real opportunity to come up with effective ways of helping perpetrators look more constructively at diversity in our society.

If you'd like to know more about the project, contact Pat Conway on 028 9032 0157 or [pat@niacro.co.uk](mailto:pat@niacro.co.uk)

The head of our Maltese partner, Mark Motebello, has drawn to our attention an international campaign calling on the United Nations to dedicate a day to prisoners around the world. The campaigners are suggesting that 11 February, the day in 1990 when Nelson Mandela was released from jail, should become World Prison Awareness Day.

If you agree, go to [www.PetitionOnline.com](http://www.PetitionOnline.com) to support the campaign.



# JOBSEEKERS MEET EMPLOYERS

Eibhelin McCaffrey  
of Resource at the  
employer event

The recent NIACRO employer advice session gave jobseekers on our Jobtrack programme the opportunity to meet employers face to face and discuss job-seeking efforts. It was a chance for them to learn about the job market, the best vacancy sources, the best job application techniques, and how to impress at interview.



A good selection of employers from came along to the event, including Resource, Botanic Inns, Patton Group, Iceland & Belfast City Council. Each representative provided one-to-one support in a relaxed environment. Clients were able to gain information on a variety of employment sectors including retail, catering, construction, cleaning, security & local authority.

The employers found it to be a worthwhile experience. Shauna du Preez of the Patton Group saw it as “a great opportunity for individuals to ask questions and hopefully receive some useful advice in an open and friendly environment.” It also gave employers a chance to provide information on their organisations and the employment sectors they represent.

Our clients attending were also very positive. Their feedback on the event included:

*“It was really good to speak directly to employers rather than just looking at their websites”.*  
*“It will help me to make better use of my time when I’m looking for jobs”.*

Based on the success of this event, we plan to hold more in the future. If you would like to attend to seek advice or give advice, please contact Gareth Eannetta on 028 90320157 ext 219 or email [gareth@niacro.co.uk](mailto:gareth@niacro.co.uk).

## HOUSING ADVICE GETS IT RIGHT

The Housing Rights Service protects and promotes the rights of people with housing needs. Its Community Housing Advice Project (CHAP) recently carried out its third Case Review of the quality of housing advice delivered by NIACRO’s Advice Service.

Chap examined a sample of 13 cases, covering a range of homelessness issues as well as debt for both owner occupiers and social rented tenants. The outcome of the review is that NIACRO advisers achieved a 98% average and above rating overall in terms of their case management competence.

### THE REPORT STATES:

“In addition some very positive outcomes were secured for clients such as the award of FDA [Full Duty Applicant, meaning that NIHE has a duty to provide accommodation] status, additional Selection Scheme Points, suspension of

a lender’s possession action through the award of Income Support interest payments and another case securing temporary accommodation. The case reviewer also highlighted good communication processes within client casework and engagement with the client. Overall, this is viewed positively as a good reflection on the competency of the agency through engagement with the Project.”

You can contact NIACRO’s advice staff in Belfast (Barry McMullan on 028 9032 0157) or in L/derry (Claire McGonagle on 028 7126 4555).

# Reachout and Resettlement

NIACRO's Personal Progression System and ReachOut projects, funded by the European EQUAL programme, have made a real and measurable difference to their clients. Using the Causeway Criminal Record Viewer, the Probation Board tracked the post-release experience of 186 people who participated in the PPS project. Of these, 90 completed PPS and 96 did not. The general reconviction rate for ex-prisoners in Northern Ireland is 45%, but of the 90 who completed the programme, 15 were reconvicted following release, a reconviction rate of 17%. Of the 96 who did not complete the programme, 19 were reconvicted following release, a reconviction rate of 20%.

Everyone agrees that employment is a key element of resettlement, but also that employment programmes by themselves cannot lead to ex-prisoners and ex-offenders resettling successfully in their communities. They may also have problems with finance, housing, training, health, relationships and how to live in a community. These all come under various – probably all - Government departments and many of the related statutory agencies.

The ReachOut programme therefore, along with its transnational partners in the European EQUAL programme, took on the challenge of trying to design a matrix of support which would include all the relevant statutory services. Yes, that probably is another way of describing our old friend 'joined-up Government'. Not to mention the other old friend, mainstreaming. However, this process tries to chart, in a



very practical way, the direct and indirect, strategic and operational, contributions each Department makes – or could make – to resettlement.

## HILLSBOROUGH SEMINAR

As part of this process, we held a seminar in October with support from the NIO. We wanted to identify and promote the contribution of Government departments and agencies to the resettlement process. Three departments, DEL, DfP and DOE, came along to Hillsborough Castle to meet with ReachOut partners from the Prison Service and the Probation Board, and colleagues from the NIO. A relatively small response but this was a first-off and we know that there is genuine interest in other departments as well.

We'd asked departments to think in advance of where their work might interface directly or indirectly with resettlement issues - we offered prompts like: diversion; reintegration of offenders into the community; custodial sentences; community sentences; prevention of re-offending; supporting communities to deal with offending behaviour. This threw up examples like the licensing of taxi drivers, early entry into New Deal and departments' own recruitment policies.

It was noticeable that at the start of the session the participants were quite unsure about how resettlement fitted into their work, but as it went on they realised that they actually had much to contribute.

## CHALLENGES

Participants also put together a list of key challenges to achieving this cross-departmental approach. They were:

- Getting all departments involved – a cross-departmental forum was suggested, and work to help departments see the relevance of this subject to social issues like mental health, community safety etc.
- Identifying what resources are needed to make the process effective. The group also recognised that Government is “awash with strategies” all competing for attention and resources, and there will have to be a determined and persistent effort to keep this on the agenda.
- Changing the mindset of some ministers, especially encouraging them to think beyond the paramilitary groups to those defined as “ordinary” offenders.
- Greater recognition from the public sector generally of this politically and socially excluded group.

- Recognition that the criminal justice sector alone cannot reduce crime.

Feedback from the participants highlighted the “positive mood” during the day; direct and open conversation and useful flow of information; learning from one another; the value of “converting paper interaction to personal”; and indeed the psychological boost of meeting in such a prestigious venue.

The information NIACRO gained has been very useful, and we know that we will find the same outcome when we meet with other departments, as we have every intention of doing. This is a really exciting and positive development for us and for our ex-prisoner and offender clients.

Pat Conway presented the conclusions of the seminar at the concluding conference of the EQUAL programme of which ReachOut was a partner, in Latvia on 3 December. If you'd like to know more about the initiative, contact Pat on 028 9032 0157 or [pat@niacro.co.uk](mailto:pat@niacro.co.uk)

## INTERAGENCY PROTOCOL ON SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Meanwhile, NIACRO is leading a group working with the DHSSPS on an inter-departmental and inter-agency memorandum of understanding for the provision of services to children and families of those in custody. This looks at the relevant policies in health,

education and social services and spells out how they may impact on people in this situation – how teachers can best respond to changes in a pupil's behaviour, for example, or how the health sector can recognise and respond to the impact on a child's emotional and

physical well-being. It also lists some of the services available to children and their families, like NIACRO's own Family Links and visitors' centres, the Prison Service's Family Officers and Barnardo's Parenting Matters project.

This, still a work in progress, is potentially a good example of one way in which co-operation can add value to the work of individual departments and agencies.

## CAAB CONFERENCE

The Children Acts Advisory Board gives advice to the Ministers for Children in the Republic of Ireland on interagency working to co-ordinate the delivery of services to children and young people at risk. NIACRO's Siobhan O'Dwyer spoke at the Board's annual conference in Kilkenny about our work in this area, including experience from Family Links, child-centred visits and the work described above. She stressed the need for support at the highest level of the agencies involved, a shared vision, and a willingness to break out of "institutional bubbles".

## STAFF GET TOGETHER ON ADVOCACY

More than 60 NIACRO colleagues came together in September to exchange ideas and experiences, focussing especially on NIACRO's role as an advocate for our client group. Guest speaker Clive Martin is Director of Clinks, a York-based organisation working with organisations which, like NIACRO, support offenders and their families. He vigorously promoted the role of voluntary organisations in our field, both as campaigners and service providers.

From the feedback, it's clear that people valued the opportunity to hear in detail what other departments are doing, and also to be able to take time out for a broader, deeper consideration of a particular area of our work.

At another stage in the proceedings, a most impressive array of awards and certificates were presented. They ranged across welfare rights, ECDL and other IT programmes, advocacy, management, and NVQ. Particular congratulations to Billy Clarke and Denise Mac Dermott, who recently gained NVQ level 4 in Youth Justice – the first two people in Northern Ireland to achieve this.



# NI PRISON POPULATION 2006

The Northern Ireland Office has published its latest statistical bulletin on the prison population. “The Northern Ireland Prison Population in 2006’ provides statistics on the size and composition of the prison population in Northern Ireland between 1997 and 2006. The prison population consists mainly of offenders sentenced by the courts to immediate custody for criminal offences. It also includes fine defaulters, remand prisoners and a small number of non-criminal prisoners

The key findings were:

- The overall annual average prison population in Northern Ireland increased by 10% from an average of 1,301 in 2005 to an average of 1,433 in 2006. This represents a steady year-on-year rise since the low of 910 in 2001, though still well short of the peak of nearly 3000 in 1978.
- \* The 2006 average remand population of 529 was an increase of 19% on the 2005 level (444), whilst the average “immediate custody population” (see above) in 2006 was 873, 6% higher than in 2005 (826).
- The total number of receptions into prison increased by 9% from 5,912 in 2005 to 6,472 in 2006.
- The overall prison population was predominantly male (97% in 2006). Men also made up 93% of all receptions into prison during 2006.
- In 2006, 48% of the average immediate custody prison population were between the ages of 17 and 29, as were 55% of all immediate custody prison receptions (though only 18% of the overall population fall into this age group).
- In 2006, 66% of the immediate custody prisoner population were serving sentences for violent offences (violence against the person, sexual offences or robbery). Six percent were serving sentences for drug offences, motoring offences and ‘other offences’.
- Prisoners with sentences of between one and five years formed 38% of the immediate custody population in 2006; those sentenced to more than five years but less than life made up 28%; those with sentences of one year and under formed 18%. Life sentence prisoners made up 16% of the average immediate custody population in 2006.
- Northern Ireland had a rate of 84 prisoners per 100,000 population in 2006 compared to 148 in England & Wales and 139 in Scotland. The Republic of Ireland had a rate of 72 prisoners per 100,000 population. The USA had the highest rate of imprisonment in the world, 738 prisoners per 100,000 population, followed by the Russian Federation on 611.

You can download the bulletin from the NIO website ([www.nio.gov.uk](http://www.nio.gov.uk)).



niacro

## Membership

***Do you, or does your organisation, have an interest in  
Criminal Justice/Youth Justice/Community Safety etc?***

### ***WHY NOT JOIN NIACRO?***

#### **As a member you will:**

- Contribute to the creation of a safer society.
- Receive our regular newsletter, NIACRO News, with information on criminal justice issues and the work of NIACRO and other agencies.
- Receive all our publications free of charge.
- Have priority booking for NIACRO events.
- Have the right to influence NIACRO's policies and work by nominating members of the Executive Committee, voting for your choice on the Executive, and taking part in working parties and consultations.

#### **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**

Working to reduce crime and its impact on people and communities.

#### **Our Structure**

NIACRO is a voluntary organisation governed by an Executive Committee which set policy and employs staff. It is independent and non-profit-making.

#### **Membership of NIACRO costs:**

**£10 Individual Annual Membership**

**£30 Individual Life Membership**

**£25 Corporate Annual Membership**

**£50 Corporate Life Membership**

If you'd like further information or to register as a member, please complete this membership form and return to: **Jackie Junk, NIACRO,**

**Amelia House, 4 Amelia Street  
BELFAST, BT2 7GS**

**Tel: 028 9032 0157**

**Email: [jackie@niacro.co.uk](mailto:jackie@niacro.co.uk)**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Organisation:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Tel:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Type of Membership:**

**Individual Annual**  **Life**

**Corporate Annual**  **Life**

**Cheque Enclosed**

**Invoice Me**