



Connecting People to Effect Positive Change

The Role of Guidance in Transitions from Criminal Justice Settings

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Background

- **Linkage Service was set up in 2000**
- **GATE Service followed in 2007**
- **Dedicated Service (IASIO) was set up in 2012 with 25 staff – now 48**
- **Resettlement Service**
- **CSS / NFMHU**
- **Number of people referred each year exceeds 4000**



Our 3 Main Services

Resettlement Service. Funded solely by the Irish Prison Service

The Resettlement Service is a primary needs resettlement service that aims to stabilise a referred prisoner's return to the community

GATE Service. Funded solely by the Irish Prison Service

The GATE Service is a unique prison based 'through-the-gate' guidance & employment service that provides individuals with opportunities for change on committal and fosters stable reintegration following release

Linkage Service. Funded solely by the Probation Service

The Linkage Service is a community based guidance & employment service similar to the GATE Service and funded by the Probation Service



Our 4 additional Services

Community Support Scheme (CSS): A support scheme for people serving sentences of less than 12 months that allows them to be supervised in the community as an alternative to imprisonment

Individual Placement & Support: An employment service for people in mental health recovery from the Forensic Central Mental Hospital

Befriender Programme: A befriending service for isolated prisoners pre and post release

Recruit & Retain: A recruitment and support service to Social Enterprises in receipt of KickStart Funding that assists them to recruit & retain people with criminal convictions



Frontline Staff Numbers

Resettlement Service

Currently IASIO have 11 Resettlement Coordinators, 1 of whom is part time

GATE Service

IASIO currently employ 8 Training & Employment Officers (TEOs) in the prisons, 4 of whom are part time, equalling 6 FTE posts

Linkage Service

Currently employ 17 TEOs, 3 of whom are part time, equalling 15.5 FTE posts

CSS, Recruit & Retain, Befriending and the IP&S each have one person assigned. IP&S is a part time post and Befriending is a volunteer post.



IASIO Credentials

- Our staff are qualified professionals in their relevant fields depending on the service to which they are assigned.
- For example TEOs are Criminal Justice Guidance Counsellors and Resettlement Coordinators (RCs) are qualified Information & Advocacy Specialists and currently undertaking the DCU programme in Homeless Prevention and Intervention.
- We have long- established relationships with the Irish Prison Service, Probation Service and the Forensic Mental Health Service (our funders) across all operational settings
- We help people on life-license – we prepare them for release and continue working with them following release



Inter-agency Activities

- Intreo and DSP National Protocol Agreement
- Welfare provision
- Local Authorities
- Housing First - Peter McVerry Trust
- Medical Card Unit
- SORAM (Sex Offender Risk Assessment & Management)
- Traveller in Prison Initiative
- Dept of Justice Working to Change Strategy



Bridging The Gap

IASIO sees its Services as bridging the gap between forensic / criminal justice settings and the community.

It helps people imagine an alternative life and supports them in practically achieving that life.

It instils hope

Each of our Services in some way fall into this broad description



Some IASIO Statistics

Approximately 4000 referrals are made to IASIO services each year

Numbers referred to Resettlement each year: approximately 1,400

Numbers referred to GATE each year: approximately 750

Numbers referred to Linkage each year: approximately 2000



What Makes IASIO Unique

National organisation providing a range of services

Desistance focused, person-centered approach

Data Capture and Reporting mechanisms

Unique case management model – in guidance terms – PRI – with standardised entries for PIMS (prison database)

Annual KPIs – outcome & target focused

Nationally networked

Sectoral support: Compass Directory



Working With The Person

IASIO Interventions



Typical IASIO Client

- Typically, IASIO clients range from age 16 upwards to late adulthood
- Approximately 10% are female

Majority are likely to have experienced:

- Unemployment
- Alcohol and/or drug abuse
- Personal trauma
- Mental health issues
- Poor physical health
- Homelessness
- Family breakdown
- They are also likely to have been early school leavers
- Have very low self-esteem
- Can lack motivation due to sense of hopelessness
- A developed mistrust of the criminal justice system



Impact Of Long Term Incarceration

In our experience, the impact of long term incarceration is manifested in many ways. The following is a snapshot of the consequences of long prison terms:

- Anxiety
- Fear of media
- Isolation due to breakdown in family relationships
- No knowledge of disclosure legislation
- Little or no digital literacy
- Long gaps in CV
- No work references
- Reputation
- Lack of knowledge of basic activities such as shopping, Luas etc
- Over-reliance on support services / institutionalisation



Typical IASIO Client cont'd

A Strengths based approach:

The previous list may be read as a series of deficits, and it is true that people present with those issues. However, there are also strengths.

We have found the people we work with to be capable of resilience, resourcefulness, responsibility and commitment, aspects of a person that need to be recognised if they are to be centrally involved in their release or integration once back in the community.

We look for the person's strengths as well as acknowledging their challenges.



Criminogenic Factors

Risk Factors 6 major factors associated with criminal conduct: 1) antisocial/pro-criminal attitudes values and beliefs 2) pro-criminal associates 3) temperament and personality factors 4) a history of anti social behaviour 5) family factors and 6) low levels of educational, vocational or financial achievement.
Some of these can be changed, others cannot

Static Prior record (early onset a good indicator of future offending behaviour), family criminality

Dynamic Peer groups, attitudes and values, problem solving skills, substance use, employment status...each of which have been correlated with recidivism.

Dynamic factors are also called criminogenic needs



Offender desistance

- Description:** The process by which an offender comes to stop committing crime
- Stages:** Primary and Secondary Desistance
- Maintenance:** Maturational reform and self control, social bonds & ‘knifing off’, ‘Re-biographing’ an identity...but also energy, hope, agency
- Influence:** In conjunction with the person’s stability - Recognising the non-offender (real and/or replacement selves), recognising generativity impulses and redemption opportunities, believing in the person
- Our approach:** Embody hope, most offenders change



Barriers to Progression

- Dire personal circumstances
- Criminal label
- Low self worth / self confidence
- Hopelessness
- Cognitive capacity
- Poor educational attainment – reading/writing/numeracy skills
- Little or no work history or experience
- No bank account or perhaps id
- Personal circumstances – transport, childcare etc
- Health & well-being
- Addiction/s
- Pending court cases
- Compulsory appointments e.g. Probation or Treatment Programme
- Family support network / family name
- Culture of unemployment / social capital / social/soft skills
- Home address

Criminal Justice Guidance?

- Skilled helper/process framework (non-linear)
- Note the presenting issue or issues
- Create the space to imagine alternatives
- Simple first questions – why you are here, what do you want, what stands in your way?
- The problem saturated description
- Ascertain current personal and social circumstances – what stands in their way (the deficits)
- Identify and recognise strengths – what they may draw on to overcome obstacles (personal strengths and social supports)
- Two twin tasks:
 - Instrumental guidance – match person to opportunities
 - Life guidance - explore past & future selves
- Useful approaches to client work:
 - Life-course Criminology & Desistance Studies
 - Transaction Analysis
 - Narrative Guidance
 - Strengths based approaches



Distance from the labour market

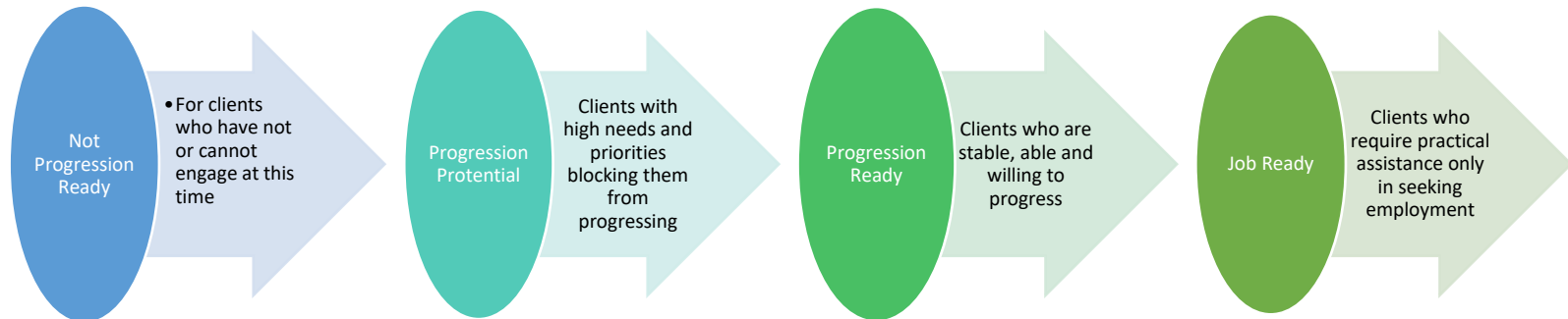
The Progression Ready Indicator

The PRI is a Client Self-Assessment Checklist developed by IASIO and is completed by or with the client

Purpose of the Progression Ready Indicator (PRI):

- To determine proximity to labour market for all GATE and Linkage clients at point of referral
- To measure distance travelled toward end of engagement with IASIO
- To develop client's insight and knowledge of strengths and issues that impact on progression efforts
- And to tailor the TEO intervention for each client based on his or her PRI responses thereby ensuring the most effective service provision to each person referred

The 4 PRI Categories





Personal Progression Plans

An action of the Joint Strategic Plan between the IPS and Probation Service is to ensure a multi-agency approach to rehabilitation from pre to post imprisonment in order to enhance positive prisoner outcomes

IASIO is central to this action through the development of a national Protocol Agreement with Intreo

This Protocol Agreement allows IASIO TEOs and Intreo Case Officers to collaborate on behalf of shared clients

The mechanism for doing this is a shared document called the PPP (Personal Progression Plan)

The PPP not only ensures the best possible intervention and outcome for each shared client but also eliminates any duplication of services

Improving employment outcomes for people with convictions

- Majority of people in criminal justice settings are either progression potential or progression ready by IASIO's PRI classification
- Need for transitional/supportive placements
- Need to address barriers to progression
- Need for leadership outside of criminal justice sector
- Need to challenge our own thinking on how we prepare people for employment
- Need to modernise – digital literacy skills
- Need to give greater ownership of the job search process to the people with convictions
- Need to fulfil the objectives of the Department of Justice's Working to Change Strategy
 - See <https://www.workingtochange.ie/>



The End

Thank You For This Opportunity

If in the future you have any queries, please don't hesitate to contact either

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