



An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt  
agus Comhionannais  
Department of Justice  
and Equality



An tSeirbhís Phromhaidh  
The Probation Service



Seirbhís Phríosúin na hÉireann  
IRISH PRISON SERVICE

# Action Plan for the Joint Management of Offenders

## 2019-2021

### Enhancing Community Safety Through Collaborative Management of Priority Offenders



## Foreword and Introduction

This Action Plan for the Joint Management of Offenders (2019-2021) has been agreed between the Department of Justice and Equality (D/JE), the Probation Service (PS), the Irish Prison Service (IPS) and An Garda Síochána (AGS). It was developed by a High Level Group on Offender Management, chaired by the Department and comprising senior members of all four organisations. Wider stakeholder input was also received, including a well-attended consultation event in February 2019, which was facilitated by the Institute of Public Administration (IPA).

This Action Plan is intended as a concise and focused framework to develop further the productive partnership, which our organisations have built through the [Joint Strategy on the Management of Offenders \(2016-2018\)](#) and underlying initiatives, such as the Joint Agency Response to Crime (JARC) and the Sex Offender Risk Assessment and Management (SORAM) programmes. Such initiatives provide offenders with structured supports to help them move away from criminal behaviour, in line with the policy direction envisioned in the [Strategic Review of Penal Policy \(2014\)](#). The relevant agencies jointly monitor the individual offenders' progress and take swift action in the event of any further offending, breaches of conditions or other negative behaviour.

### Focus of the Action Plan

The aims of this Action Plan are set out in the title '*Enhancing community safety through collaborative management of priority offenders*'. For the purposes of this Plan, the term 'priority' relates primarily to convicted offenders who:

- Have caused serious harm to their victims and/or their communities;
- Have been assessed as having a continued high risk; and
- Can be most effectively managed through structured collaboration and joint action between the policing, probation and penal authorities.

Specifically, priority offenders encompassed within this Action Plan comprise sex offenders, perpetrators of domestic abuse and prolific offenders (including violent and other serious anti-social offenders) who are being managed under the various JARC programmes. The Action Plan contains a concise, targeted set of measures to enhance JARC and SORAM and to develop comparable multi-agency approaches to managing perpetrators of domestic abuse and sex offenders who are not subject to supervision orders. The Plan also commits to a multi-agency approach to engaging with offenders who are believed to be at risk of radicalisation and violent extremism.

### Victims of Crime

In addition to its core objectives of making communities safer and reducing victimisation (including repeat victimisation), this Action Plan also aims to enhance the supports to victims of crime – including by providing them with a greater opportunity for their voice to be heard through victim/offender mediation and other appropriate mechanisms, where possible. Using this approach, we aim to build further on the improved victim services that have been delivered in recent years under the EU Victims Directive and the Criminal Justice (Victims of Crime) Act 2017.

## Supporting Measures

The Action Plan's specific commitments regarding offenders and victims are supplemented by a range of more general supports and reforms including:

- The management of pre-sanction assessment reports;
- The management of warrants issued for non-compliance with supervision orders; and
- The envisaged establishment of a dedicated national unit or office to support joint offender management.

There is also a key commitment to the Criminal Justice Operational Hub, which will facilitate enhanced data-gathering, data exchange, research, analysis and evidence-informed policy-making. In the area of offender management, this will:

- Facilitate faster and more efficient exchange of information on offences and perpetrators;
- Allow more reliable and regular evaluations of offender management programmes; and
- Enable enhanced analysis of the nature of prolific offending – including a longitudinal analysis of offenders – to support the further development of policy and practice.

## **Wider Strategic and Collaborative Contexts**

This Action Plan is not intended to be exhaustive in nature or to supersede other inter-agency strategies, policies or protocols. On the contrary, it has been framed as a small but significant part of a much broader strategic and policy infrastructure. It complements separate but related initiatives between the Probation Service, the Irish Prison Service and partner agencies that concern other aspects of offender management, rehabilitation and reintegration. It is also intended to complement other high-level frameworks, such as the [Second National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence](#) (2016-2021) and the planned Youth Justice Strategy.

This Action Plan also forms part of a wider collaborative framework, within and beyond the criminal justice sector, which has been substantially strengthened in recent years and, which continues to evolve. At a sectoral level, the Action Plan is a key area of focus for the Criminal Justice Strategic Committee, which was established in 2015 to drive collaborative improvement across the system. Other core elements of the Criminal Justice Strategic Committee's work programme include the aforementioned Operational Hub. It is envisaged that the next phase of collaborative reform will be delivered via a multi-annual Criminal Justice Strategy, under which this Action Plan and many other joint initiatives will sit.

While this Action Plan represents commitments agreed between the relevant criminal justice bodies, it is important to acknowledge the crucial assistance we receive from other State agencies and community-based organisations in supporting offenders with complex problems, such as drug or alcohol addiction, mental health, learning difficulties, and inadequate education or job skills. Timely and sustained access to such supports is crucial to reducing recidivism and is at the heart of the JARC and SORAM programmes. We are grateful to our colleagues in other agencies, and their parent Government Departments, for their committed and constructive support and participation in such initiatives.

As part of the implementation of the [Report of the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland](#), work has begun on developing a comprehensive Whole-of-Government approach to policing, community safety and harm prevention. Effective offender management will be an



important part of this wider framework, and in that context we look forward to forging even stronger partnerships with the relevant Departments and agencies in the coming years.

**Oversight and Evaluation**

This Action Plan is intended as a ‘living document’ which can be added to or otherwise modified over the lifetime of the Plan, as required. The High Level Group on Offender Management will monitor and evaluate its implementation, including through formal mid-term and final reviews, and will report regularly to the Criminal Justice Strategic Committee on progress and outcomes.

*Members of the High Level Group on Offender Management*



**Oonagh McPhillips**  
*Deputy Secretary General  
(Criminal Justice)  
Department of Justice and Equality*



**John Twomey**  
*Deputy Commissioner  
(Policing and Security)  
An Garda Síochána*



**Caron McCaffrey**  
*Director General  
Irish Prison Service*



**Vivian Geiran**  
*Director  
Probation Service*

## Summary of Commitments in this Action Plan

Further enhance and build on our management of prolific offenders under the Joint Agency Response to Crime (JARC) and Youth-JARC (Y-JARC) programmes.
Develop enhanced arrangements for assessment and management of perpetrators of domestic abuse.
Continued development of domestic abuse perpetrator programmes to address the behaviour of such offenders and better support their victims.
Develop and deliver a joint training programme for our frontline personnel in relation to domestic abuse.
Develop enhanced arrangements and structures for managing SORAM meetings.
Develop an electronic information-sharing platform for SORAM.
Conduct a formal evaluation of SORAM.
Develop a collaborative approach to managing assessed high-risk sex offenders who are not subject to post-release supervision orders.
Develop an information-sharing protocol regarding offenders believed to be at risk of radicalisation and violent extremism, and a joint training programme on engaging constructively with such offenders.
Develop joint arrangements – including in the area of victim/offender mediation – for providing victims of crime with opportunities for positive, restorative responses to the harm they have suffered.
Review arrangements for providing streamlined information and assistance to victims of crime.
Use the Criminal Justice Operational Hub for enhanced data-gathering, data exchange, research, analysis and evidenced-informed policy-making in the area of offender management.
Work with the Central Statistics Office to develop further insights into prolific offending by using social and demographic data.
Systematically review the structures, policies and processes that govern multi-agency offender management.
Use the findings of the systematic review to inform the establishment of a dedicated national unit or office to support joint offender management.
Implement the recommendations of the inter-agency review group on Pre-Sanction Assessment Reports.
Agree a joint approach for dealing with warrants issued for non-compliance with supervision orders.



## Part 1: Collaborative Management of Priority Offenders

Commitments	Timeframe	Responsibility <sup>1</sup>
<p><b>Prolific offenders:</b></p> <p>We will further enhance and build on our management of prolific offenders under the Joint Agency Response to Crime (JARC) and Youth-JARC programmes. In particular, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree a standardised evaluation framework for the adult JARC programme.</li> <li>• Conduct a first formal evaluation of the three adult JARC programmes located outside Dublin and a second round of formal evaluations of the Dublin-based adult JARC programmes.</li> <li>• Conduct a first formal evaluation of the two pilot Youth JARC programmes.</li> <li>• Use the results of the evaluations to refine the JARC/YJARC programmes as required and to make evidence-based decisions on their future expansion to other locations.</li> <li>• Extend the e-JARC data-sharing platform to all JARC/Youth JARC programmes.</li> </ul>	<p><i>By end 2019</i></p> <p><i>By mid 2021</i></p> <p><i>By end 2021</i></p> <p><i>By end 2021</i></p> <p><i>By mid 2020</i></p>	<p><b>D/</b>JE, AGS, PS, IPS</p> <p><b>D/</b>JE, AGS, PS, IPS</p> <p><b>D/</b>JE, AGS, PS, IPS</p> <p>AGS, PS, IPS</p> <p><b>D/</b>JE, AGS, PS, IPS</p>
<p><b>Perpetrators of domestic abuse:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will develop enhanced arrangements for the assessment and management of domestic abuse perpetrators.</li> <li>• We will continue, in line with commitments in the <i>Second National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence 2016-2021</i>, to develop domestic abuse perpetrator programmes to address the behaviour of such offenders and better support their victims.</li> </ul>	<p><i>By end 2020</i></p> <p><i>By end 2021</i></p>	<p>AGS, PS, IPS</p> <p><b>D/</b>JE, PS, IPS</p>

<sup>1</sup> Lead organisation highlighted in bold where applicable.



## Part 2: Supporting measures

Commitments	Timeframe	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Through optimal use of the Criminal Justice Operational Hub (CJOH), we will develop a strong basis for enhanced data-gathering, data exchange, research, analysis and evidenced-informed policy-making in the area of offender management.</li> <li>We will also work with the Central Statistics Office, in particular via the National Data Infrastructure project, to develop further insights into prolific offending using social and demographic data. In order to ensure the confidentiality of the data, this work will be undertaken by the CSO.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Ongoing</i></p> <p><i>By Q3 2020</i></p>	<p>PS, IPS,AGS,D/JE</p> <p><b>D/JE,PS,IPS,AGS</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will systematically <b>review the current structures, policies and processes</b> (e.g. co-ordination, monitoring/oversight, information-sharing arrangements, training) that govern multi-agency offender management.</li> <li>We will use the findings of this review to inform the establishment of a dedicated <b>national unit or office</b> with a remit including: further development and refinement of joint policies and procedures; governance and practical support of joint programmes and initiatives; and managing wider stakeholder communications and engagement.</li> </ul>	<p><i>By end 2020</i></p> <p><i>By end 2021</i></p>	<p>IPS, PS, AGS, D/JE</p> <p><b>D/JE, PS,IPS,AGS</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will enhance inter-agency management and information-sharing by implementing the recommendations of the multi-agency review group on Pre-Sanction Assessment Reports (PSARs).</li> <li>We will review the implementation of our changes to the management of PSARs within 12 months to ensure they are having the desired impact.</li> </ul>	<p><i>By mid 2020</i></p> <p><i>By mid 2021</i></p>	<p><b>PS,AGS,IPS</b></p> <p><b>PS,AGS,IPS</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will agree a <b>joint approach for dealing with warrants</b> issued by the Courts for non-compliance with supervision orders.</li> </ul>	<p><i>By mid 2020</i></p>	<p>PS,AGS, IPS</p>



## **Glossary**

***Criminal Justice Operational Hub:*** Is a centralised electronic hosting platform which allows for operational data to be (i) exchanged between the existing ICT systems in the various criminal justice agencies and (ii) accessed in an anonymised format for the purposes of analysis and developing evidence-based policy. It is being developed as a partnership between the Department of Justice and Equality (D/JE) and An Garda Síochána (AGS), the Courts Service, the Irish Prisons Service (IPS), the Probation Service (PS), the Legal Aid Board, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecution, Forensic Science Ireland, the Policing Authority and the Irish Youth Justice Service.

***Criminal Justice Strategic Committee:*** This Committee is chaired by the Deputy Secretary General (Criminal Justice) of the Department of Justice and Equality and comprises the Heads of all relevant agencies and senior Department management. It holds four plenary meetings per year, at which members exchange information and views on key issues and developments of mutual interest. The Committee also oversees a rolling work programme of initiatives to improve the exchange of knowledge, expertise and ideas across the sector and to accelerate reforms that require structured collaboration.

***Joint Agency Response to Crime (JARC):*** This is a multi-agency initiative which aims to reduce victimisation and make communities safer through the structured multi-agency management of prolific offenders in various areas of Dublin and beyond. JARC is jointly led by An Garda Síochána, the Probation Service and the Irish Prison Service, with assistance from other relevant State agencies and community-based organisations, as well as active support from the Department of Justice and Equality.

***Pre-Sanction Assessment Reports:*** These are completed, at the Court's request, in relation to offenders who have pleaded or been found guilty. The assessments are undertaken to assist sentencing decisions – particularly where the Court wishes to consider rehabilitative possibilities, including non-custodial sanctions such as probation supervision or community service. While PSARs are completed by the Probation Service, the overall process requires the input and co-operation of other criminal justice agencies including An Garda Síochána and the Irish Prison Service.

***Sex Offender Risk Assessment and Management (SORAM):*** This programme provides for structured co-operation and co-ordination between the statutory organisations involved in managing convicted sex offenders and the risks they pose to the community. SORAM applies to offenders who are subject to Part 2 of the Sex Offenders Act, 2001 and under the supervision of the Probation Service.