



2012-2022 ANNIVERSARY REPORT

Presented to the Irish Prison Service and Probation Service
in recognition of 10 years of IASIO operations

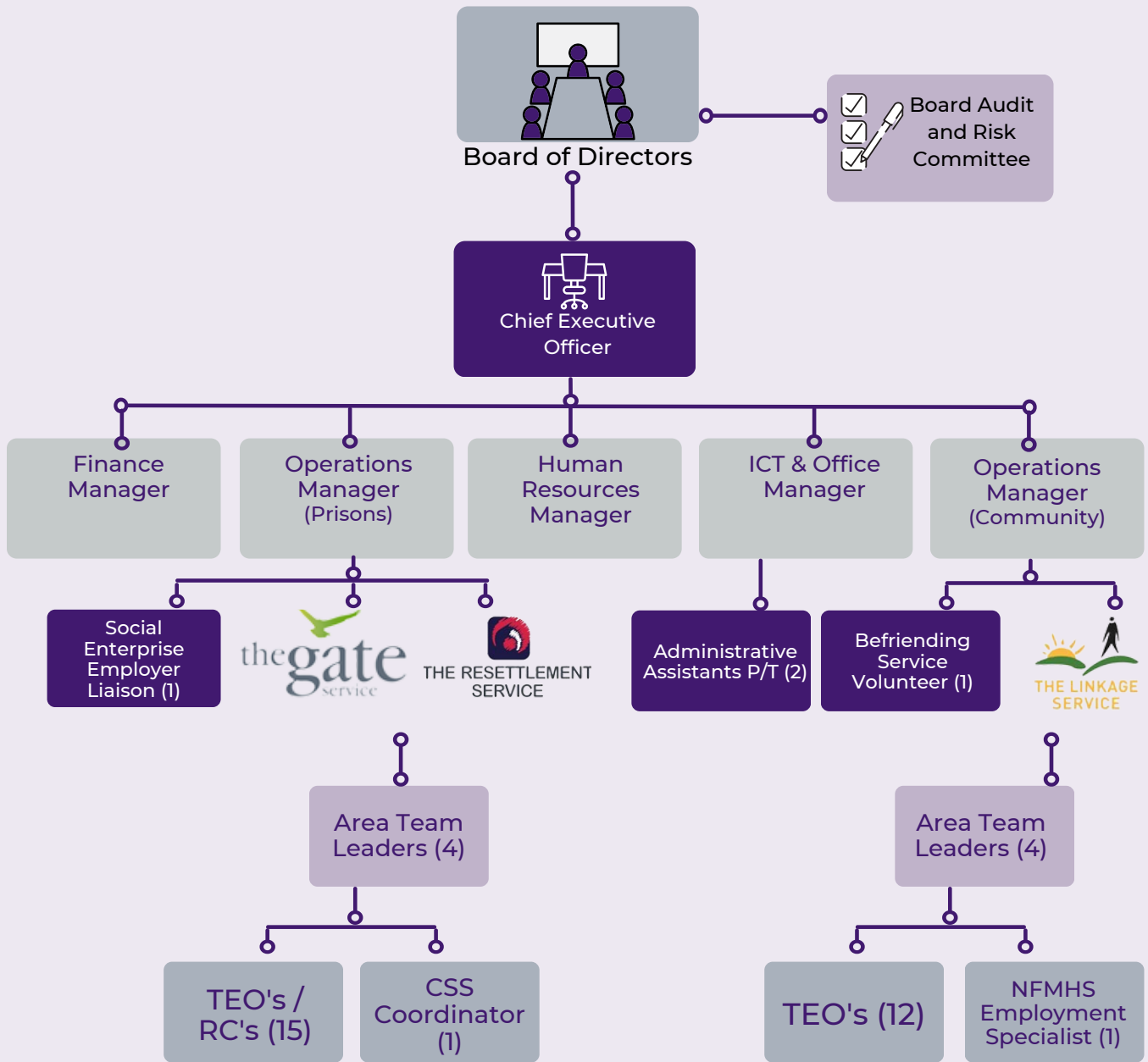




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MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE



Inaugural IASIO Board Meeting, 2012



IASIO Biennial Report Launch, 2015

FOREWORDS

Chairperson, Patricia Callan

It is my pleasure to present the 10-year anniversary report to the Minister for Justice, Helen McEntee, the Director of Care & Rehabilitation with the Irish Prison Service, Mr Fergal Black, and to the Director of Effective Practice with the Probation Service, Ms Una Doyle.

Looking back over the past 10 years and all of the developments over that time, it is impossible to pack everything into one report. However, this report provides highlights of the extensive achievements and the range of services developed across the country provided by IASIO's management team and frontline staff, since their operations began on the 2nd of April 2012. Their initiatives during that time, their commitment, and their efforts on behalf of the 37,600 clients referred to them during this period is worthy of acknowledgement. It is all the more noteworthy as they developed further initiatives to continue providing essential services during the Covid-19 pandemic. One of the most recent initiatives, The Compass Directory, which IASIO will be hosting, is also being launched by Minister McEntee.

In celebrating the past 10 years I also wish to acknowledge the inaugural board of directors led by its Chairman, Patrick Lynch until their tenure ended in the period up to 2019. Those other members were Dr. Mary Rogan, former Supreme Court Judge Catherine McGuinness, John Trethowan, Tom Carey, Denis McHugh and Judge Garrett Sheehan. In saying farewell to those colleagues, I wish to acknowledge and thank the current and new members who joined us over the course of the last few years; Dr. Deirdre Healy, Bernie Gray, John Lumsden, Peter Byers, Moira Horgan, Tomás Sercovich, and those with observer status; Assistant Garda Commissioner Garda Paula Hilman and Manager of Pathways, Niall Walsh. I wish to thank them for their commitment to the work of the organisation and in particular for their time and expertise during the development of IASIO's 2021-2023 Strategic Plan, which was launched by the Minister for Justice on the 7th of April 2021. Each of those Board members bring unique experience and skills that will no doubt continue to support the mission and objectives of IASIO, and by extension, the Department of Justice and our funders, the Irish Prison Service and the Probation Service.

The real beneficiaries of the combined collaboration of the Board, the Management and staff of IASIO, the Prison Service and the Probation Service, has, and should always be, the thousands of clients referred to IASIO services each year.

I also wish to thank our funding agencies, the Irish Prison Service and the Probation Service for their continued financial support to ensure that the valuable service being provided for all our clients is supported, maintained and developed.

In conclusion, I want to commend our team for their continued efforts in maintaining a first-class service to clients. They have been capably led by our CEO, Mr. Paddy Richardson, who we extend our best wishes to as he leaves IASIO to pursue new opportunities. In doing so, we also extend a warm welcome to Sharan Kelly who will assume the role of CEO from July 1st. We look forward to all that the next ten years will hold for IASIO.

Patricia Callan
IASIO Chairperson

Chief Executive, Paddy Richardson

It is with a great sense of achievement and pride that we can look back on our first 10 years in IASIO. As the founder and CEO of IASIO, and as this is my last day and final report, I must acknowledge that I owe a great debt of gratitude to my management team and my client facing colleagues for using their commitment, their professionalism, and their initiative for thousands of their clients during this period. They have especially earned the admiration and respect of the Irish Prison Service and the Probation Service for their commitment as an essential service for continuing to work on the frontline of services during the worst pandemic of our lifetime - they are a credit to their profession. During this tough period all of my colleagues have collectively been responsible for providing guidance, placement, and support to each of the 37,600 people referred to them over the past 10 years.

Of those referred in the past 10 years to Linkage and Gate Services, our staff have placed 7,437 in training and education settings and an even more remarkable figure of 4,162 into employment. Additionally, of the 9,940 people referred to the Resettlement Service there were 7,464 successful completions. In the last five years, we took on additional responsibility and assisted referred prisoners by submitting 2,242 housing applications, 2,262 Social Welfare applications and 3,194 Medical Card applications to the relevant state services.

We continue to use our initiative of which there are some examples in the report, and another, the Compass Directory, is being launched today by Minister McEntee. It is very encouraging that most of those referred to us continue to make a successful transition from criminal behaviour to economic and social integration, which of course is a positive outcome for the person, their families, and importantly, for the safety of the wider community. Those outputs would not have been achievable without the input of the management and staff of the Probation and Prison Services who also deserve great credit for doing their utmost to create safe and integrated working environments for our staff in supporting their clients.

I wish to thank the Director General of the Irish Prison Service and the Director of the Probation Service for their continuous funding and for their staff who continue to make referrals to our services. I would like to thank Patrick Lynch, the first Chair of the Board of Directors and also, the first members of the Board for their wisdom and support during the initial years in particular. Finally, I wish to thank Patricia Callan, Chair of the Board of Directors, for her support and advice to me. It has been a pleasure to work with her and the Board of Directors. They are the people who freely give of their time and expertise which is deeply appreciated by all of us. Finally, IASIO has certainly not reached its full potential and I look forward therefore (from the sidelines) to watching its growth over the next 10 years.

Paddy Richardson
Chief Executive

OBJECTIVES

- 1** To provide a range of services to marginalised groups, making communities more socially inclusive
- 2** To establish the development of excellence in practice across the full range of our services
- 3** To assist those referred to us to become independent, socially integrated and personally productive through client-centred, rehabilitative, employment, educational and vocational interventions
- 4** To develop collaborative working relationships that foster a more inclusive Ireland, promote opportunity and a shared responsibility in reducing marginalisation
- 5** To ensure the efficient use of resources in the pursuit of stakeholder objectives
- 6** To operate with integrity, be accountable to, and generate trust in our relationships with all our stakeholders



VISION

IASIO will contribute to safer and more inclusive communities through excellence in supporting marginalised groups and respecting the worth of every referred individual.

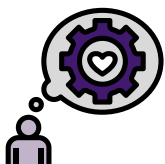


MISSION

In partnership with our funders, our mission is to provide a range of services to referred persons who have come into conflict with the law or are at risk of coming into conflict with the law, and others who in the opinion of the company, are socially excluded.

We aim to develop, facilitate, and assist any of the above persons towards appropriate employment, rehabilitation, housing, educational and training services to enable them to contribute to society in a positive manner.

VALUES



Justice

We believe in a fair and just society, where all people have an inalienable right to equal protection before the law

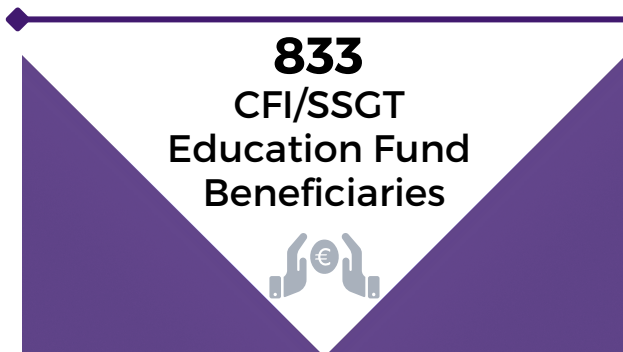
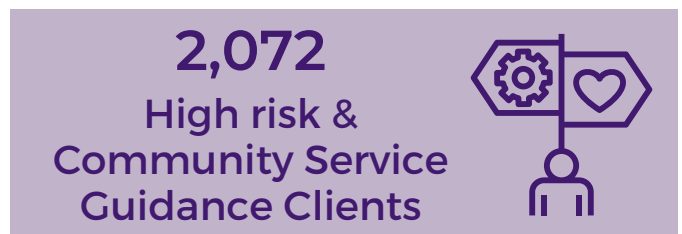
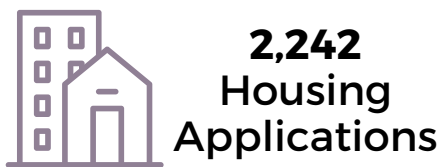
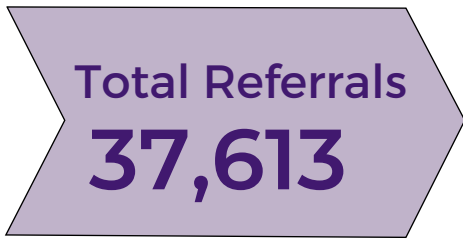
Equality

We believe that all members of society have a right to equal access to opportunities leading to a life of fulfilment

Dignity

We respect and value the worth of every individual

2012-2022 IN NUMBERS





10 YEARS OF PRACTICE

REFLECTIONS & PROJECTIONS



The Criminal Justice Sectoral Strategy (2022 – 2024) describes the Irish criminal justice sector as a complex network of independent yet interdependent organisations. While each organisation operates independently to fulfil its own function, collectively we are all responsible for the administration of criminal justice in Ireland. As a system, the various criminal justice organisations operate independently to prevent and reduce crime and harm, reduce re-offending and build safer communities. IASIO is proud to have played its part in assisting the sector to meet these objectives.

However, the Strategy recognises the need to develop a shared vision for a more joined-up criminal justice system, where criminal justice organisations think beyond organisational boundaries. This method of working has been evident right throughout IASIO's first 10 years in operation, as we have both spearheaded new, and collaborated with others on a large number of successful initiatives.

This section of the report will celebrate this success by **reflecting** on past work, and **projecting** future accomplishments arising from initiatives we are currently involved in.

REFLECTING ON... PAST INITIATIVES

Traveller Initiative—Midlands Prison



The Traveller Initiative was started by Aoife Buggie of the Gate Service in 2015, in collaboration with the Laois Travellers Action Group and fully supported by the Irish Prison Service. Due to the increasing number of Traveller men incarcerated in the Midlands Prison and their lack of involvement in other mainstream activities, it was decided to invite them to formulate a Traveller only group. It was envisaged that this group would create a safe space for the men to support each other throughout their sentences, build relationships and trust within the prison, and provide them with an opportunity to explore their culture and focus on supports pre and post release.

The group met fortnightly with the aim of recognising and celebrating Traveller culture and identity. In 2017, following the conferral of official recognition of Traveller Ethnicity by the State, a series of workshops to celebrate Traveller Ethnicity was developed, followed by an Irish Prison Service funded 15-week furniture restoration training course for members of the group which proved extremely successful.

IASIO's engagement with national and local Traveller Support Groups continues. The Travellers in Prison Initiative (TPI) has agreed conduct a review of IASIO services to Travellers to see what works and how we can potentially improve outcomes for our Traveller clients. Further, IASIO's 'Changing Course' groupwork programme is being tailored based on feedback received from Travellers. It is envisaged that a customised Changing Course programme will be developed and run in the near future, co-delivered by Travellers for Travellers.



Recovery College: Castlerea Prison

A Recovery College is a collaborative educational initiative promoting mental health recovery practice. It works towards building a greater quality of life for service users by committing to give equal attention to the personal or lived experience of people with mental health difficulties, their family members/friends, and professional expertise. Mayo Recovery College, the first of its kind in Ireland, uses a collaborative approach based on sound adult education principles as a key tool to influence and empower personal recovery. The courses, seminars and events are designed to put people back in control of their life, helping each person to identify goals and ambitions whilst giving the confidence, skills and support to access opportunities.

In the spring of 2014, the Chief Nursing Officer in Castlerea Prison asked Tim Rogers (Linkage TEO) to develop a link between Mayo Recovery College and Castlerea Prison. With the help of the Governor, the Chief Nursing Officer and the Education Unit, a pilot programme was introduced to several prisoners who were engaged with the medical staff around their mental health issues.

In autumn 2014, Tim co-produced and co-facilitated a two-part module on self-esteem with Donal Hoban (HSE/Recovery College project lead) which focused on the lived experience of the learners.

IASIO involvement in this initiative demonstrated a commitment to work with other agencies in developing multi-dimensional responses to client's needs. Studies have shown that failure to address the psychiatric needs of a certain segment of the prison population leads to higher rates of recidivism and avoidable stresses on the prison system.

IASIO knows the best interventions are supported by strong inter-agency cooperation. This initiative draws on the expertise of a number of bodies in recognition that many prisoners have multiple needs that must be addressed in a holistic manner. As such, IASIO is proud to have played a key role in this response. IASIO hopes that inter-agency cooperation such as this Recovery College Initiative can be widely reproduced across the Prison System.

'Jobs & Opportunities' Expo: Mountjoy Prison



In May 2017, the 'Jobs & Opportunities Expo' was organised by IASIO Gate and Resettlement Service staff. The main objective of the event was to provide prisoners from the Mountjoy Campus who have acquired skillsets, and are ready to take up employment, with the opportunity to meet employers who are willing to discuss employment opportunities with them.

The jobs exhibitors at this event were employers targeted by IASIO GATE and Resettlement Service staff. In addition, there were other services present to provide advice and support in the areas of training and education and others in the area of resettlement support. As is widely recognised, finding employment is one of the key factors in reducing the risk of re-offending.

However, support services such as housing, addiction and welfare needs are also a pre-requisite to successful employment placement. All clients who attended the Expo Day were prepared having participated in primary needs resettlement assessments, and CV and Interview workshops with IASIO staff. They then met with employers and underwent interview for available positions

All participants were surveyed post event and their feedback compiled into a report. 100% of the employers present rated the quality of their experience on the day as 'very positive'. 86% of employers also said they were either 'extremely likely' or 'very likely' to recommend attendance at a similar event to other employers. The feedback from IASIO clients was also extremely positive. 83% of candidates said they would 'definitely recommend' attendance at similar events to others, and 96% rated the quality of their experience on the day as either 'very good' or 'good.'

The event was a great success, but the most important measure of success was the offer of employment to four candidates on the day, and several follow-up enquiries about candidates arose in the following weeks. A number of candidates were offered Community Employment positions to support them in their efforts to upskill for employment.



Minister of State, David Stanton



Mountjoy Campus Governor, Brian Murphy; Minister of State, David Stanton and IASIO CEO, Paddy Richardson



IASIO Chairperson, Patricia Callan

The Community Coaching Programme: Cork Prison

The Community Coaching Programme was developed from a desire to offer prisoners an attractive sport-related programme at the newly built Cork Prison, while at the same time engaging in literacy or computer skills.



IASIO Resettlement Coordinator, Colm Carey; Roy Keane; IASIO CEO Paddy Richardson and Cork Prison Governor, Pat Dawson

The Programme was a collaborative effort between sports organisations such as the FAI, Cork GAA, Basketball Ireland and Munster Rugby, alongside the Irish Prison Service and Colm Carey of IASIO's Resettlement Service.

For the first time, external community-based sports organisations delivered accredited modules within the prison, giving participants an opportunity to gain sports related certification, educational certificates, sports coaching skills, tangible links to community-based organisations and develop a focus for further study or work. It also offered participants the opportunity to demonstrate their positive, changed behaviours and course achievements to friends and families who attended graduation ceremonies in the prison.

The course was recognised in a ceremony within Cork Prison, where Roy Keane was the guest of honour.



Awardees pictured at the IITD National Training Awards Ceremony

In the months that followed, the course picked up the award for 'Best Not for Profit Partnership' at the Irish Institute of Training & Development's National Training Awards. The purpose of the IITD National Training Awards is to promote excellence, best practice and innovation in training, learning and development, and to highlight the importance of this area in today's climate. The award was given in recognition of the excellence and professionalism shown by the collaborative team which was led by IASIO's Colm Carey.

REFLECTIONS...

ON A CRISIS



IASIO's Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic

2020 was a year of enormous challenges, of which the criminal justice system was not exempt. The threats associated with the Coronavirus pandemic required immediate action across the system. Given the close confines of the prison environment and the fact that people in contact with the criminal justice system tend to be in poorer health than the general population, it was vital that swift action was taken.

In order to anticipate and mitigate any disruption to IASIO services, a COVID-19 Business Continuity Plan and COVID-19 Monitoring document were developed during the week of the 16th of March. These documents were monitored weekly at IASIO Management Team video conferencing meetings.

To ensure the ongoing safety and well-being of IASIO staff, communications were issued regularly by the IASIO HR Manager regarding any COVID-19 updates from the HSE, Government and/or Prison and Probation management. A Return to Work plan was also developed, which included the appointment and formal training of designated staff as COVID-19 Lead Workers whose role is to monitor and ensure offices and staff continue to be compliant with all COVID-19 safety regulations.

The Resettlement Service was quickly designated as one of four essential services by the Irish Prison Service as part of its response to the pandemic, and over the course of the crisis it played a significant role. The first task in response to the outbreak, as communicated to IASIO, was to reduce the prison population as safely and quickly as possible, which placed a significant demand on the Resettlement Service. Resettlement Coordinators maintained frontline contact with prisoners, adjusted referral procedures to capture the maximum number of releases, operated a phone system to support isolating and cocooning prisoners, captured and reported on daily 'No Fixed Abode' and weekly 'Planned NFA' returns, introduced a 'travel roster' to respond to spikes in demand, and extended its client group to include those on remand.

It was a whole Service response to the crises that IASIO is very proud of, one that saw every Resettlement Coordinator, with support from their Gate Service colleagues, play a part.

In March 2020, Gate Service Training and Employment Officers (TEOs) were redeployed to resettlement tasks and as such, the Gate Service shares in the successes of the Resettlement Service over the course of the pandemic. The Service has since returned to guidance and placement functions but has retained some limited support of the various initiatives introduced during 2020.

The Linkage Service also amended its approach to client work in response to the pandemic. Linkage TEO's began working remotely to reduce footfall in Probation offices around the country thereby prioritising the safety of IASIO and Probation staff and clients.

While working remotely, Linkage TEOs began conducting phone appointments with each active client, updating CVs and uploading them to job sites, assisting clients in setting up their Gov-ID, researching courses and job vacancies for individual clients, and contacting employers. Clients who had previously been placed returned to the TEO for assistance in making applications for the Pandemic Unemployment Payment, and a large number of new referrals were received from Probation Officers including Community Return referrals. In some cases, Probation Officers asked the TEO for assistance with specific clients who needed more frequent contact than normal (for supervision purposes) and to report back to the Probation Officer on the interaction and any progress made.

In addition, a working group of TEOs came together in response to an identified need to move the Changing Course Groupwork Programme online to facilitate continued delivery during the Pandemic. This initiative is outlined in further detail on page 18.

REFLECTIONS...

ON LEADERSHIP

June 30th 2022 will not only mark the date of this report launch, it will also mark the final day with IASIO of our founder and first CEO, Paddy Richardson, who is moving on to other exciting opportunities.

Below are some tributes to his leadership of IASIO in its first 10 years.

Patrick Lynch, IASIO Chairman 2012-2020

It is a great pleasure for me to make a small contribution to mark the occasion of Paddy's retirement. It has been an honour to have worked with Paddy for over twenty years since we started in BITC on the journey of helping people who had engaged with the Criminal Justice System and who wanted to make a fresh start in contributing to society.

In April 2012, IASIO was founded as a new independent organisation with Paddy as its first CEO and I had the honour of being its first Chairman. By that time, Paddy had built a strong team of 29 experienced and professional staff who engaged with IASIO clients and helped them to reorient their lives through being assisted in getting employment and in the detail of getting "set up" as a contributing member of society.

Paddy led this work and grew the team to what it is today—a large group of competent and caring professionals who 'make a difference' to society through the work they do. He managed the organisation with great sensitivity and consummate skill. He excelled in every aspect of good management practice and his style ensured that to the greatest extent possible, his always challenging performance targets were consistently delivered.

It was always a pleasure to attend and participate in board meetings where the focus was on the principles and policies relating to what we were or should be doing rather than a shallow recital of statistics.

This success was achieved in sometimes very difficult times for the funding organisations, the Probation Service and the Irish Prison Service. They were challenged to provide adequate funding in very difficult times for the State but difficult as they were, Paddy was able to produce the required end results.

His mantra in these hard times was 'more with less' and in the most extreme times of financial pressure it changed to 'more with much less.' His management style and the clear management parameters that he operated by ensured success for IASIO in dealing with all the challenges that it met in those difficult times.

Paddy 'the man' is special. His work rate and output is formidable and the amount and range of work that he dealt with was immense. His style was to delegate fully and expect delivery from the team—which was always forthcoming.

I wish Paddy a long and happy retirement in this new phase of his life, and I have no doubt but that he will be as energetic as ever in whatever new activities he takes on.

It was an enormous pleasure and honor for me to have worked so long and successfully with him.

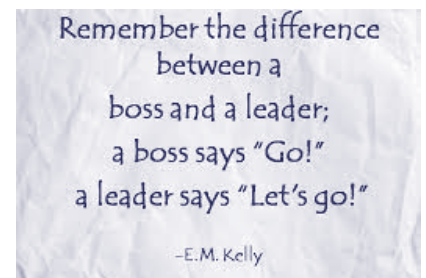
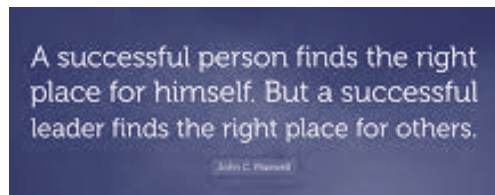


IASIO CEO, Paddy Richardson; Frances Fitzgerald TD and Patrick Lynch

Emma Byrne, IASIO ICT & Office Manager

It may be considered strange that a tribute to the outgoing CEO is being included in a formal report, but as this report is a celebration of achievements, outcomes and development in IASIO's lifetime to date, it would be remiss to exclude mention of the one at the heart of these successes over the last 10 years. He will say that success comes from having great people, which is true—great people have great impact—but without leadership, such good people may never become great in the first place.

The prevalence and popularity of leadership discourse can reduce it to little more than a concept. A google search on leadership will yield almost two million quotes on how to lead well:



Consuming such titbits at a surface level can lead to the belief that leadership is something that is 'done.' However, some of us in our working lives will experience leadership as more than just a concept- but rather, embodied in a person who exemplifies that leadership is something that is **become**. I have witnessed the qualities listed in each of the quotes above while working alongside Paddy over the last eight years.

Paddy & I initially met because he agreed to give up his time for a complete stranger and advise on how I might get work in the sector. As fate would have it, an opportunity arose, and I started work with IASIO in 2014. In the years since, I have been encouraged, pushed, supported both personally and professionally, challenged and changed by Paddy's leadership. My capacity and role expanded in line with his level of trust in my ability, and I say that not because there's anything special about me, but because I know from conversations I've had with colleagues that the same has been true for them. My experience in working with Paddy isn't a unique one—his leadership style flows from who he is as a person—so anyone who has worked alongside him in any capacity will share in it.



It has been a privilege for me to have worked so closely with Paddy for these last eight years. I know I speak for all staff in saying that we are losing a very special colleague, but we are looking forward to building on the solid foundation established by Paddy under the leadership of our new CEO—Sharan Kelly. On behalf of IASIO staff past & present I want to thank Paddy for his support, great leadership, guidance & goodness to us. We wish him all the very best with his future ventures post IASIO. Those he will help in the next stage of his life will be as fortunate as we have been to have known him.



PROJECTIONS

SERVICE EXPANSION

IASIO & the National Forensic Mental Health Service

2018 was the first year of IASIO's partnership with the Central Mental Hospital (CMH) in piloting a supported employment service for people with severe and enduring mental health difficulties. Funded through the CMH by the National Service Reform Fund, this employment service adopts the successful Individual Placement & Support (IPS) model which is an evidenced based approach to gaining and maintaining competitive employment for participants. The Employment Specialist delivering the service within IASIO is co-located with the CMH multidisciplinary team and works particularly closely with the Occupational Therapists and Community Nurses in the interests of each client referred.

The IPS model is a very well defined and specified intervention. The quality of IPS Services is measured using a 25-point Fidelity Scale and is widely in operation in the US, UK and Ireland. One of the main principles of the IPS model is inclusivity meaning that employment services are made available to all clients in mental health recovery who express an interest in employment.

It is currently being run on a part-time basis with the Employment Specialist, Colin Connolly, dedicating 2.5 days per week to meet with all people referred and to carry out the extensive networking with employers required to raise awareness of the service and to source employment placements for suitable clients. Due to the intensity of the guidance & placement process, caseloads are capped at 10 at any one time, with no more than 20 in one year for a part-time post.

Our Employment Specialist (ES) is constantly making new connections with employers based on each client's chosen career option. The partnership was an exciting development for IASIO as it represented an extension of IASIO services to a new client group. In 2022, permanent funding for the IP&S Programme was approved by the HSE which is testament to the excellent work and outcomes attached to the partnership.

SERVICE EXPANSION

IASIO's Recruit & Retain Service: Supports for Social Enterprise

2020 saw the the launch of 'Working to Change,' the social enterprise and employment strategy for 2021 – 2023 by the Department of Justice. Working to Change aims to increase employment options for people with criminal convictions in three areas: 1) social enterprises, 2) general employment and 3) entrepreneurship.



It requires cross-departmental collaboration in order to achieve the 46 interconnected actions contained within it. In the two years since, IASIO has continued its membership of the project steering committee and we continue to assist suitable clients in accessing Social Enterprise opportunities.

In 2021, as a result of an identified need within Social Enterprises for assistance in recruiting people with criminal convictions, the Recruit and Retain Service was developed. The role is designed to solely support Social Enterprises in the hiring, training, and continuous employment of suitably qualified people who have criminal convictions and/or leaving prison.

IASIO's Social Enterprise Employer Liaison, Alice Walsh, provides a number of supports to Social Enterprises, including:

- Advice on how to recruit safely and fairly
- Assistance with queries and application for Kickstart Funding
- Matching the right person for the job by sourcing the best possible candidates;
- Assistance with developing policies, particularly around retaining and processing sensitive information, including a Data Protection Notice, Privacy Policy and Social Inclusion Policy
- Supports post recruitment to maximise retention rates



Alice Walsh, IASIO Social Enterprise Employer Liaison

Working to Change is an ambitious strategy that requires a great deal of organisational collaboration and as such, Alice works closely with the Social Enterprise Project Manager for the Criminal Justice sector, Siobhán Cafferty. IASIO's role in this partnership will increase access to and therefore maximise employment options for people with criminal convictions in Ireland.

PROJECTIONS



RECENT & UPCOMING DEVELOPMENTS

theCOMPASS.ie

IASIO has for many years, recognised the lack of a comprehensive listing of and details on criminal justice services, as well as significant variation in service provision across the criminal justice sector. This can lead to a lack of understanding of services among criminal justice clients, their families and service providers themselves. IASIO identified a solution to the issue, namely to map the range of services by geographic location, service type, capacity, access criteria, scope of operation and stage in the criminal justice process. The idea was shared with a number of stakeholders and ultimately developed into what is from now on to be known as The Compass.

The Compass is a directory of community support services for people and families affected by imprisonment or convictions. It offers contact information on different community support services in Ireland such as community, voluntary and charitable organisations working with prisoners, individuals engaged with Probation services, and/or people with criminal convictions or their families.

It was developed by IASIO, in partnership with SSGT, the Irish Prison Service, the Probation Service, Pathways Centre, Care After Prison, Prisoner Support Network, Irish Penal Reform Trust with support from Quality Matters and Enclude. The directory was funded by SSGT, the Irish Prison Service and the Probation Service. People with direct experience of the criminal justice sector and staff working in community support services also assisted with its development.

The Compass will be launched alongside this Report by the Minister for Justice, Helen McEntee. Once live, IASIO will assume responsibility for the hosting and maintenance of the site in partnership with Enclude. We are proud to support an initiative that will be of great benefit to the sector.



The Open Door: Pop-up Restaurant in Cork Prison

In May 2022, IASIO collaborated with the Irish Prison Service, Munster Technological University (MTU) and Cork Education and Training Board (ETB) in facilitating a pop-up restaurant event, The Open Door. IASIO's Colm Carey coordinated the event in conjunction with management in Cork Prison.

In advance of the event, six prisoners took part in a Practical Culinary Skills programme that allowed for the assessment of learning outcomes but also provided prisoners with the relevant experience of a fully operational restaurant space.

52 seated guests were in attendance at the event, including representatives from IPS, MTU, Cork ETB, IASIO and employers from various hotels and restaurants around the Munster area.

Speaking about the event, IASIO CEO Paddy Richardson stated "We fully support this collaborative programme that prepares participants to progress towards further employment, training and education opportunities." We are hopeful that such events will be replicated elsewhere in future and link more clients to employers with real, sustainable jobs in the community.



Director of Care & Rehabilitation, Fergal Black; Governor of Cork Prison, Peter O'Brien; IPS Director General, Caron McCaffrey and Colm Carey, IASIO

Job Search Workshop Initiative

In partnership with IASIO and the ETBI, Castlerea Prison proposes to establish a Job Search Workshop that will empower people in two broad ways: 1) by enhancing their digital literacy and 2) by allowing them to be central in their own applications for employment and education/training in the community.



The pilot project will primarily target people in the last 12 months of their sentence, with special consideration given to the needs of Travellers and life sentence prisoners. The pilot will reach out to these groups and capture the learning of that engagement.

The process starts with guidance, either delivered through the Gate Service Training and Employment Officer or the School's Guidance Counsellor. Once the person has identified a realistic pathway and the necessary digital skills have been developed, the person can begin the job or course search and application process. They will then reattend weekly to check on applications and make new applications as required.

While the initiative is still in a planning and development phase, we are hugely excited about its potential to change the way people in prison can prepare for employment opportunities post-release.



IASIO Groupwork in an online world

The Changing Course groupwork programme was established in 2012 in response to the identified negative thinking pattern toward change among a significant number of IASIO clients. As this thought pattern was undoubtedly hampering client desistance efforts, IASIO began to develop a client programme that would address the issue of change thereby minimising, as much as possible, any fears associated with change. The overall aim of the Programme is to promote desistance from crime by encouraging clients toward positive intentional change which complements their resettlement and social integration efforts.

Since IASIO was set up in 2012, courses have been running on a continuous intake basis in prisons, Probation Service offices, Probation Projects and many other community settings. It is suitable for Community Service clients, Community Return clients, those on Probation Bonds, Young Person's Probation (YPP) groups, women's groups and men's groups.

However, all face-to-face groupwork programmes were suspended in 2020 due to the Covid Pandemic and public health concerns. In response to the need for the course to continue, a number of IASIO Training and Employment Officers came together to look at moving Changing Course online with a view to delivering it at local as well as at national level. Despite the obvious benefit of online delivery not posing any risk to public health, it also meant that the programme could be delivered to groups of participants regardless of their geographic location.

Once the course was adapted for online delivery, it was piloted with a group of clients and all learnings were incorporated. Each of the initial participants had multiple phone conversations with their TEO in relation to the course prior to the pilot. This was followed by trial Zoom sessions to ensure they were comfortable using Zoom either on their smartphones or laptops.

An online client feedback form was also developed, to enable clients to submit their evaluation of the course, with a view to continuous improvement.

Having now been run online on an almost continuous basis for over two years, the added value to existing services is extremely evident. Benefits include:

- Client can be referred from anywhere in the country without concern around the cost of travel or the availability of transport.
- Clients value being able to access the course from their residences and from prisons.
- No requirement for TEO to have sufficient numbers in their area as groups can be formed with clients from multiple locations.
- The Integrated Community Service option can be accessed by suitable clients using this programme.

A panel of IASIO facilitators has been developed and will continue to run the course in line with the need to react in innovative ways to the needs of our clients and add value to funders' objectives.



Client Voice: Changing Course Feedback

"The course has helped me going forward- how to deal with certain situations, understanding things better, It answered questions to things I didn't know."



"It showed me that I should appreciate what I have because I have come a long way to what I was in the past. Change has to come from yourself, if you find the right resources it will help you in the long run."



"It covered a lot of issues and tools you need in every day life. I'm more confident in applying for work even though I have a criminal record."

"I would just like to say a special thank you to Maria and Ellen for being excellent hosts. I know things must not be ideal during these Covid times but given the tools they were given they did a magnificent job and should be very proud."



"Siobhan and Maria are very easy to talk to and can draw conversation very well from people to encourage involvement. Very easygoing atmosphere even though the topics are sometimes intense."

"The course reminds you to stay positive and focus on the parts of your life that you can change rather than the parts you can't."



"It helped me open up to doing courses and stuff online. I didn't think I would be able to."

"The team were great and could get their points across well. They made the environment comfortable and any questions we had if we didn't understand a part of the programme were answered without feeling like I was holding the group back."

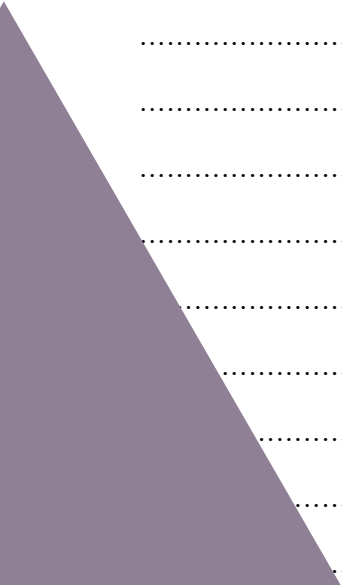


"I found the training extremely useful. This is because I have very little experience when it comes to goal setting and planning for work or training opportunities. Especially around the aspects involving sitting interviews. The course has lessened my anxieties as it helped me really get ready for looking for work."



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IASIO is compliant with FRS102, the Charities SORP FRS102 and the Charity Regulator's Governance Code

Further information for clients, services, employers, members of the Oireachtas, and Irish Prison Service and Probation Service staff is available from our website:

www.iasio.ie

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