

NORTH/SOUTH COOPERATION ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE MATTERS: WORK PROGRAMME 2010-2011

Introduction

An Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) on Cooperation on Criminal Justice Matters provides the framework for North/South cooperation in this area. It provides for meetings between the Justice Ministers North and South, who receive reports from a Working Group made up of officials from both jurisdictions.

The Working Group is supported by a number of Project Advisory Groups which take forward work strands across a range of areas including youth justice, forensic science, public protection and support for victims. The Working Group is responsible for preparing an annual work programme which is presented to Ministers for their approval.

Work Programme

The work programme has been prepared under the terms of the IGA and has been approved by Ministers. It is not the intention, however, to capture the extensive day-to-day cooperation between criminal justice agencies on both sides of the border. This includes, for example, cooperation around the management of sex offenders as well as regular cooperation between the Police Service for Northern Ireland and An Garda Síochána in tackling cross-border crime. However, a number of priority areas have been agreed for action by summer 2011 as follows.

Area	Objective
Transfer of prisoners and probation supervision	To agree a shared approach to implementing two EU Framework Decisions on the transfer of prisoners and transfer of probation supervision
Risk assessment	To develop a joint proposal to research and evaluate the use of the sex offender risk management instrument (SA07)
Public protection	To organize a seminar to showcase progress to date in promoting and enhancing cooperation in public protection.
Returning sex offenders to home jurisdictions	To review processes for returning offenders in light of ongoing work in both jurisdictions.
Measuring performance	To agree the coverage of key statistical indicators to enable meaningful comparisons of criminal justice performance
Support for	To examine the responsiveness of the criminal justice

victims	system to victims on both sides of the border and report to the Ministerial meeting
Forensic science	To develop a Memorandum of Understanding between Forensic Science Northern Ireland and the Forensic Science Laboratory to provide for mutual support in the event of sudden loss or damage to facilities
Youth justice	To review approaches for dealing with priority offenders and report to the Ministerial meeting
Promoting social diversity	To scope actions in place to tackle hate crime and identify examples of best practice
Structures	To review the structure of Project Advisory Groups in light of current work priorities and agree revised terms of reference where appropriate

Reporting arrangements

Progress against the key priorities will be monitored by the Working Group who will report on progress to Ministers in November and April.

July 2010