



Health and criminal justice: responding to learning disability, addressing addiction and improving mental health among offenders

Wednesday 24 September 2008 • Glenavon House Hotel, Cookstown



NORTHERN IRELAND PRISON SERVICE



Health and criminal justice: responding to learning disability, addressing addiction and improving mental health among offenders

Background

The health of offenders is affected by varied and complex factors, and therefore requires a coordinated response from both prison and community resources. Offenders are more likely to come from lower socioeconomic groups and have poor levels of education, factors which are inextricably linked with ill health. Offenders spend more time in the community than in prison, yet many offenders do not have a GP.

Offenders are significantly more likely than those in the general population to have mental health disorders. There are clear links between poor mental health and re-offending and mental health problems can increase the difficulties many offenders find in coping with demands that leaving prison places on them. These problems are exacerbated where drug use and mental health problems coexist. Alcohol and drug misuse tends to be common among offenders, and according to the Northern Ireland Drug Misuse Database, between April 2006 and March 2007, one in eight of those presenting for treatment for problem drug misuse were referred by probation services or prison.

Recent research has also focused attention on the issue of prisoners with a learning disability or learning difficulty. People with learning difficulties are more likely to be excluded from activities and opportunities than other prisoners; they are more likely to be victimised than other prisoners and they are likely to need more support and assistance than other prisoners. So it is important to make sure that we can identify and meet their needs.

The Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Prison Service and the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust are hosting a one day conference to bring together the organisations who contribute to offender health and wellbeing, to raise awareness of offender health issues, and identify how to improve outcomes in relation to offender health.

This event also provides an opportunity for the Prison Reform Trust to launch its report on views of Northern Ireland prison staff on how prisoners with learning difficulties and learning disabilities are identified and supported. This report is part of a UK wide programme 'No one knows' which aims to effect change by exploring and publicising the experiences of people with learning difficulties and learning disabilities who come into contact with the criminal justice system.

Objectives

- Raise awareness of the mental health, learning disability and addictions issues of offenders in Northern Ireland and examine the wide range of factors which impact on these
- Consider how current and developing services can be aligned to tackle the issues more holistically
- Consider how the criminal justice system can meet the needs of those with mental illness and personality disorder
- Identify how mental health can be promoted among offenders
- Consider what improvements can be made for those with learning difficulty and disability
- Provide an update on the developments in addiction services, current and planned, and consider how they can be further developed on a joined-up basis

Additional partners

This event has been developed in conjunction with the DHSSPS, Probation Board for Northern Ireland, NIACRO and the Youth Justice Agency.

Date and time

Wednesday 24 September 2008, 9.30am – 4.00pm, including lunch.

Venue

Glenavon House Hotel, Cookstown

Cost

There is no cost to participants for this seminar.

Closing date for applications

Friday 5 September 2008

Potential participants

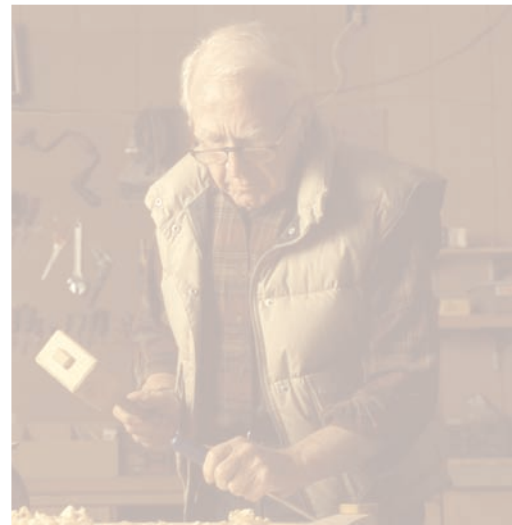
This event is aimed at all statutory, voluntary and community organisations whose work impacts on the health of offenders. It will also be of interest to those working to tackle inequalities in health at policy and operational level.

Booking

You can book a place at the conference by post or online. For further information on the parallel sessions, a PDF of the flyer, or to submit an online booking form, visit the events/training section at www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk

Programme

- 9.30am Registration for parallel sessions
Tea, coffee and scones
- 10.00am Welcome
Dr Brian Gaffney, Chief Executive, Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland
- 10.05am Guest speaker
- 10.20 am No one knows. Learning disability in offenders: assessment and intervention
Juliet Lyon, Director, Prison Reform Trust
- 10.45am Mental wellbeing and health problems among offenders
Dr Andrew Fraser, Scottish Prison Service
- 11.10am Tea and coffee
- 11.40am The challenges of working with offenders with addictions
Denis Bradley, Consultant, Northlands
- 12.10pm The transfer of lead responsibility for healthcare: implications for offender health
John Compton, Chief Executive, South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust
- 12.30pm Questions and discussion
- 1.00pm Lunch
- 2.00pm Parallel sessions
- Learning disability: assessment and intervention
 - Managing mental illness
 - Promoting mental health
 - Addictions: Treatment and brief interventions
 - Learning disability, mental health and addictions: making the links
- For more information on parallel sessions, go to the events/ training section at www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk
- 3.30pm Feedback
- 4.00pm Close
Robin Masefield, Director General, Northern Ireland Prison Service





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