



PACE, IASIO and Le Chéile Mentoring are leading organisations with over 100 years' experience between us working with people who come in contact with the criminal justice system – from youth at risk of offending to those leaving prison after serving life sentences.

Our work aims to reduce offending, and re-offending. We help people at risk of offending, and those with criminal convictions, to build sustainable futures and contribute to safer communities.

URGENT NEED FOR ACTION ON FUNDING OUR SECTOR

Providing quality services on our current budgets is becoming unfeasible, due to underfunding of our sector and the rising number of people in prison.

Our work is evidence-based and well proven and yet, since 2008, we have been struggling with extreme underfunding. Our models of delivery have been endorsed as providing excellent value for money.

We are calling on the next government to significantly increase funding for community organisations in the criminal justice sector which are funded by the Department of Justice, so that we can provide effective quality services.

TIME FOR GREATER COMMITMENT TO REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION

Rehabilitation has been named as a priority across the strategies of the Irish Prison Service and the Probation Service. We are calling for greater action in practice to provide timely access for our clients to rehabilitation, resettlement and reintegration services while also addressing severe gaps in areas such as mental health, housing and addiction. All of these services are critical to help direct people away from offending behaviour.

THEMATIC AREAS REQUIRING URGENT ATTENTION:

HOUSING: Ireland signed up to the Lisbon Declaration in June 2021 which committed to an offer of appropriate housing to anyone discharged from prison by 2030. We must make this commitment a reality in the lifetime of the next government, along with Criminal Justice Housing First.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES: it is estimated that 27% of men serving sentences and 60% of women serving sentences have a mental illness. Mental health needs are amongst the increasingly complex needs presented by our clients and waiting lists in prison far outnumber places in treatment.

As of September 2024, there were 888 people were on the waiting list for addiction services in prison. Progress has been made on reducing waiting times but the increasing prison numbers is putting extra pressure on these services.

EARLY INTERVENTION: The expansion of mentoring services for young people to a nationwide network which supports them to divert from crime.

ESSENTIAL NEEDS education, preparing people for employment, support to set up businesses, employment opportunities and training.

Background to our organisations

Le Cheile Mentoring

Our vision is that every child and young person that Le Chéile Mentoring works with, will be supported and empowered to realise their hopes and dreams. Le Chéile Mentoring is a national, volunteer mentoring, restorative justice and family support service, which supports children, young people and their families, where the child or young person is involved in or at risk of offending.

PACE

PACE supports people who have criminal convictions for a wide range of criminal offences by providing accommodation, training, employment and prevention services (for people convicted of sexual offences).

IASIO: since our foundation, we have supported almost 25,000 people to find places in training and education as well as employment. IASIO has also supported almost 11,000 people access housing, medical support, and social welfare.