



# **NORTHERN IRELAND COURT BUSINESS**

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## **Direction governing the operation of “Problem Solving Justice” Pilot Courts**

- Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programme Pilot Court,  
Londonderry Magistrates’ Court; and**
- Substance Misuse Programme Pilot Court, Belfast  
Magistrates’ Court.**

Issued by the Lord Chief Justice’s Office on behalf of Presiding District Judge (Magistrates’ Courts) Bagnall and District Judge (Magistrates’ Courts) McElholm

## **Introduction**

1. The Department of Justice (DoJ) for Northern Ireland has made the decision to fund two problem solving justice courts on a pilot basis and have issued policy papers setting out their policy rationale for the establishment of these courts.
  
2. Annex 1 to this Practice Direction contains the DoJ policy paper in relation to the problem solving court in Londonderry Magistrates' Court, to pilot a new court supervised perpetrator programme in domestic violence cases.
  
3. Annex 2 to this Practice Direction contains the DoJ policy paper in relation to the problem solving court in Belfast Magistrates' Court, to pilot a new court supervised treatment programme in cases where substance misuse is a factor for the defendant.
  
4. The Judges who will be usually presiding over these problem solving pilot courts have developed and drafted this Practice Direction and it is issued under their name. There may be from time to time other Judges who preside over these courts, and these Judges will be made aware of this Practice Direction and the policy papers underpinning the creation of the problem solving pilot courts.

## **Commencement**

5. It is intended that Judge Bagnall, sitting in Belfast Magistrates' Court will start making referrals into the Substance Misuse Pilot Court on a date to be determined by the Judge in consultation with the Lord Chief Justice, and the supervision and treatment team on or after 22 March 2018, with the first problem solving court to be held on a date to be determined by Judge Bagnall during April 2018 – provided there are sufficient numbers of defendants. The pilot court will normally be held on Thursday afternoons, with the option of holding up to one court per week, depending on business volumes.
  
6. It is intended that Judge McElholm, sitting in Londonderry Magistrates' Court will start making referrals into the perpetrator programme for domestic violence cases on a date to be determined by the Judge in consultation with the Lord Chief Justice, and the supervision and treatment team on or after 22 March 2018, with the first problem solving court to be held on a date to be determined by Judge McElholm during April 2018 – provided there are sufficient numbers of defendants. The pilot court will normally be held on Tuesday afternoons, with the option of holding up to one court per fortnight, depending on business volumes.

## **Problem Solving Courts – Background**

7. The two problem solving justice pilot courts will be therapeutic courts which are aimed at supervising the treatment of defendants. The aims of the court are to break the cycle of offending.

8. In order to achieve those objectives, each problem solving court is supported by a specialist team made up of probation staff, addiction specialists (substance misuse court) and partner link workers (perpetrator court).

## **Agreement of Defendant to take part in the problem solving pilot court**

9. When a referral is made to a problem solving court, the Judge will ask the defendant if s/he agrees to participate in the regime, including attending all meetings and sessions of the programme, submitting for drug testing (in the substance misuse court), attending the court normally once per month and that they will be engaged in these court hearings in direct dialogue between the defendant and the judge at each hearing.

10. A defendant will be asked to give an agreement to the court that they:
- a. understand that this is a voluntary programme.
  - b. agree to attending all meetings, sessions, treatment programmes, appointments
  - c. submit to regular drugs tests (substance misuse court)
  - d. agree to the problem solving approach which will involve (at least) monthly reviews in court and a direct dialogue with the judge and a defendant.
  - e. agree to the judge and the specialist support treatment team holding regular pre-review meetings, in the absence of the defendant to discuss progress. The legal representative for the defendant may attend these pre-review meetings, however their attendance is not mandatory.

## **Pre-Review Meetings**

11. In addition to presiding over the review hearings in problem solving courts, the Judge (supported by a court clerk) will also meet with the representatives from the specialist supervision and treatment team at a private “pre-review” meeting to discuss details of treatment, engagements, test results, family circumstances, family or health issues affecting the defendant. Often these details are of a highly personal nature which it would not be appropriate to discuss in open court, but which are pertinent to the consideration of progress on the pilot court.

12. The pre-review meetings will be held in a courtroom, on the morning of the Review Hearings which will then be held in the same courtroom that afternoon. The start times for both the morning session and the afternoon session will be determined at a local level by the local judiciary presiding over the pilot courts.

13. The defendant does not attend these pre-review meetings, but they can only be held where the defendant has formally given his consent to their taking place in his absence. Legal representatives may attend these meetings to observe, however their attendance is not mandatory. Because the pre-review hearings are not a court sitting, the legal representative will only be permitted to observe the part a pre-review meeting which relates to their client, and will not be permitted to be observe any discussion relating to other defendants.

14. No court list will be published for the morning pre-review meetings as this is not a court hearing. The pre-review meetings will take place in a court-room, and it will be the responsibility of any legal representative who wishes to attend the pre-review meeting to make themselves known to the court security officer who will be outside the courtroom and let them know which case they are involved in and they will be invited into the meeting at the appropriate time to observe that part of the meeting.

15. The contents of the discussions at the pre-review meetings are confidential and should not be disclosed by anyone present to anyone who does not have the right to attend the pre-review meeting.

16. The main aim of the pre review meeting is for the Judge to be briefed about the defendant's treatment and general progress (or lack of it) during the month under review and to answer any questions which might arise from the written report which has been submitted to the court. It is also possible to provide details of the most up to date drugs tests results (for the substance misuse court) which might not have been available at the time of the report being compiled.

17. The Judge will not make any decisions about whether a defendant should be taken off the problem solving treatment programme at a pre-review meeting. The aim of the pre review meeting is about information sharing. A decision to take a defendant off a programme can only be done in the afternoon court hearing, when the case is formally dealt with and when the defendant and his/her solicitor and the PPS are present and have the right to make representations in open court.

18. The probation staff who attend the morning pre-review meeting will attend the afternoon court session and will be able to provide additional information to the judge as required.

19. If anyone other than those persons entitled to be present at the pre-review meeting wish to attend this meeting they must seek the direct and express permission from the Judge in advance of the meeting. The Judge will consider whether their request to attend can be facilitated – for example if there are new staff from PBNI or from Court Service who need to be trained in the problem solving courts process then requests such as this would not be problematic. However, these are private meetings and only those entitled to attend should be present.

### **Review Hearings**

20. One of the key features of a problem solving court is the system of regular court reviews. These give the Judge an opportunity to directly supervise the defendants' progress over the duration of the programme. The review hearings allow the Judge who placed the defendant on the programme to maintain a personal involvement with the case, and to continue to supervise the defendant at each subsequent review hearing, in open court.

21. Review hearings provide an opportunity to examine the results of drugs tests (in the substance misuse court), and to monitor levels of co-operation with treatment, issues of compliance and any difficulties or tensions that might affect progress on the programme.

22. When a referral is made to a problem solving court, the court order will specify the date of the first review hearing. Thereafter the date for each succeeding review hearing will be fixed at the review itself. The review should not normally be held longer than one month after the previous hearing, however there is a degree of flexibility for the Judge to have reviews more frequently if appropriate.

23. A defendant must attend the review hearing – unless his/her attendance is excused. A defendant who agrees to take part in the problem solving justice pilot court agrees to be legally represented, and therefore his/her solicitor must also attend the review hearing.

24. Despite the presence of lawyers at the hearings, the review hearings place an emphasis on direct dialogue between the judge and the defendant. The main reason for this is to encourage the defendant to accept personal responsibility for their actions and to build a relationship with the problem solving judge.

25. In order to encourage direct dialogue and to aid communication a defendant will not normally be expected to take their place in the dock during the review court. However, a judge may direct that a defendant be placed in the dock if s/he considers it necessary.

26. In other criminal courts, the judge will address most of their questions and remarks to the lawyer on record for the defendant. In the problem solving court however, questions about how the defendant is getting on in treatment, how his family and personal life are, will be put to the defendant directly. In this way, a form of relationship builds up between the judge and the defendant over the course of the treatment programme. This can have a significant effect on the power of the judge to motivate a person to comply with the programme.

27. There will be no change to the current practice of how cases are called in the Magistrates' Court – i.e. practitioners will be able to call cases at the review hearing in the normal way, and they will not have to follow the order in which the cases appear in the published list.

28. The lawyer can call the case and refer the judge to the case. In a normal Magistrates' Court, the lawyer would normally then provide the court with an update or make an application on behalf of his client and the PPS might then reply – however once the lawyer calls the case, and they have ensured their client is in the court, the Judge will then take over the dialogue directly with the defendant, and will only call on the practitioner if necessary.

29. On occasion, other cases which are not problem solving justice cases may be added into the court list for disposal. The Judge who is presiding over the court will determine when these cases should be dealt with – either before the problem solving court commences, or during the problem solving list, or at the conclusion of the problem solving business. This is a matter for the Judge to determine on a case by case basis.

### **Review Reports**

30. In advance of each review hearing, the Probation Officer who is working with each defendant in the pilot court will prepare a written review report for the problem solving court detailing the defendant's progress during the period under review. These reports are to be emailed to the court, the PPS and the solicitor on record for the defendant three working days in advance of the review hearing. The solicitor on record must sign up for a "CJSM" secure email facility. If there is no secure email address for the solicitor s/he will be provided with a hard copy of the report by PBNI at the afternoon review hearing in court.

### **Role of PPS**

31. A public prosecutor will attend each review hearing. There is no requirement for a public prosecutor to attend the pre review meeting.

32. A prosecutor will not normally be called upon to engage at the review hearings, as the dialogue will primarily be between the judge and the defendant. A prosecutor may be called upon at a review hearing if however there is an issue which the Judge may require assistance on – for example if a defendant is coming off a programme and the judge needs information in relation to sentencing; or if there is an issue regarding bail and the judge requires information regarding bail conditions or previous convictions.

### **Role of Press**

33. Problem Solving Justice pilot courts are normal adult magistrates' courts, and as such are open to the public and the press are entitled to attend and report as normal, subject to any reporting restrictions. Press will not be permitted to attend the pre review meetings.

### **Final Review**

34. At a final review hearing, a Judge may ask for a Pre Sentence Report, or they may ask the probation staff who have been working with the defendant as part of their treatment team what their recommendations are in terms of sentencing.

### **Removal from the Problem Solving Court Pilot**

35. Where a Judge makes a decision to remove a defendant from a problem solving pilot court list, they will normally remand (either in custody or on bail) a defendant to appear at a 'normal' adult magistrates' Court. A Judge may, at the time of making the decision to remove a defendant from a problem solving pilot court request a Pre Sentence Report so that this report will be available when the case next comes before the normal adult magistrates court.

**OFFICE OF THE LORD CHIEF JUSTICE**

**21 March 2018**

**Pilot Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programme**

**Introduction**

1. This paper sets out the policy context underpinning the commitment of the Department of Justice to introduce a Pilot Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programme (DVPP) at Londonderry/Derry Magistrates Court.
2. The DVPP pilot will commence operating at Londonderry/Derry Magistrates' Court in Spring 2018.

**Background**

3. In 2011, the Domestic Violence Listing Arrangement (DVLA) was introduced in Londonderry/Derry Magistrates' Court. This resulted in all domestic violence cases in the jurisdiction being clustered in specific court sittings, heard on specifically assigned days and by the same judge. Victim Support NI and Women's Aid are also available to provide moral and practical support. The overall objective is to make victims feel safe, secure and confident to attend court and give evidence.
4. The DVLA was subject to a case study review under the terms of reference of the OECD Public Governance Review of Northern Ireland. The report, published in 2016, commended the DVLA as an example of local justice innovation in action and confirmed it as a model compatible with the ambitions of domestic violence courts; a bottom up approach with a judge taking the initiative to improve court practices reflects the positive actions of judges in problem solving courts.
5. The report however also concluded that the DVLA is not a fully-fledged specialist domestic violence court due to the exclusive focus on the victim i.e. it does not include judicial supervision of offenders and there is no bespoke programme for perpetrators. It thereby recommended introducing judicial

supervision of a select number of perpetrators (e.g. 20 – 25) participating in an accredited programme over the period of roughly a year. Notably, the strength of the relationship between a judge and an offender has been identified as a key driver of better outcomes within the literature on problem-solving courts<sup>1</sup>. This recommendation was accepted by the then Justice Minister Clare Sugden in 2016.

6. In 2015/16, the number of recorded offences with a domestic abuse motivation as a proportion of all crimes recorded was on average, 12.8% across Northern Ireland. Whilst this rate varied across the 18 Northern Ireland constituency areas (ranging from 6.4% in Belfast South to 16.3 % in East Antrim), in the East Londonderry and Foyle constituencies the rate was higher than the NI average at 13.5 and 13.6% respectively<sup>2</sup>.

### **Strategic and Policy Context**

7. The overriding policy objective of the pilot is to explore the effectiveness of strengthening the existing DVLA so that it is more akin to a specialist domestic violence court and compatible with the principles of problem solving justice. As well as providing an intervention to modify perpetrators' behaviours and reduce reoffending, it is also hoped that the availability of a programme may help reduce attrition rates in domestic violence cases, where victims are often prevailed upon to withdraw their evidence.
8. These objectives accord with Outcome 7, '*we have a safe community where we respect the law and each other*' of the Draft Programme for Government and the accompanying indicators:
  - Reduce Crime
  - Effectiveness of the justice system
  - Reduce reoffending
9. The 'Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse' Strategy was also published in March 2016 and is a jointly-led strategy between the Department

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<sup>1</sup> 'Problem Solving Courts: An evidence review', Centre for Justice Innovation, August 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Data derived from constituency profiles produced by the Research and Information Service (RaISe) of the Northern Ireland Assembly.

of Health and the Department of Justice. DOJ leads on the 'Protection and Justice' Strand within the Strategy and a key priority is to continue to develop and deliver interventions based on best practice, to effectively address harmful, violent and abusive behaviour.

### **Proposed Arrangements**

10. The pilot will enable the Judge of the DVLA to refer convicted offenders to complete a behavioural change programme<sup>3</sup> before passing sentence and to closely monitor and review their compliance with programme requirements. Through engagement with key stakeholders, the DoJ has developed a framework for the delivery of the Pilot as follows:

- a) A defendant must have pleaded guilty or been found guilty in court either on an overnight or 28 day charge.
- b) In advance of sentencing and where the Judge considers a defendant as a suitable participant for the programme, he will direct PBNI to assess and confirm the defendant's suitability for inclusion on a Programme.
- c) PBNI will deliver the programme.
- d) Partners/ex-Partners will be supported by a Women's Aid Partner Link Worker whilst the defendant is completing the programme.
- e) This arrangement does not constitute a formal deferral of sentence under Article 3 of the Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 1996. Rather, under Article 50 of the Magistrates' Courts (Northern Ireland) Order 1981, the court will adjourn the case<sup>4</sup> and remand the defendant as necessary for the duration of the programme.
- f) Remand conditions will require defendants to return to court for regular review hearings in open court with the judge<sup>5</sup>.
- g) If a defendant reoffends or breaches bail whilst on the programme, this will be brought to the attention of the Judge and considered on a case-by-case basis.

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<sup>3</sup> This will either be the Promoting Positive Relationships Programme (PPRP) or Respectful Relationships Intervention (RRI).

<sup>4</sup> Under Article 50, a single adjournment can be allowed for up to a maximum of 28 days.

<sup>5</sup> The frequency of review hearings may vary in any particular case at the discretion of the Judge.

- h) PBNI will provide written reports on the offender's progress to the Judge and legal representatives in advance of review hearings.
- i) Review hearings will consist of two sessions:
  - A morning Case Conference where PBNI will discuss the defendant's progress with the Judge; and
  - An afternoon Review Hearing in open court during which the Judge will address defendants directly on their progress on the programme.
- j) The defendant's solicitor and barrister (if Counsel has been certified in the case) are entitled to attend both the morning and afternoon sessions and may address the court, but the majority of interactions in the afternoon sessions will be between the Judge and the defendant.
- k) The Judge will not expect any more input from the legal representative(s) than, at most, a brief statement. The defendants and their legal representative(s) will leave the court after their case has been dealt with.
- l) There are a range of outcomes that may arise at the court review hearing:
  - Acceptable progress and the case is adjourned for up to a further 28 days.
  - Acceptable progress but Judge determines closer supervision is required and case is adjourned for a period less than 28 days.
  - The Judge deems the defendant no longer suitable to remain on the Programme and the defendant is sentenced.
- m) Upon successful completion of the Programme, the Judge will pass sentence, taking into account the offender's engagement with the Programme.

11. The pilot will provide for thirty participants to be referred and accepted onto the DVPP. Once this threshold has been reached, this will be clearly communicated to all stakeholders and no further referrals will be made.

## **Evaluation**

12. DoJ will evaluate the pilot and require the assistance of all stakeholders involved in the delivery of the Pilot in facilitating this process. The pilot will also form part of a wider evaluation of the five Problem Solving Justice Pilots<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> The other 4 pilot projects are: Substance Misuse Court, Family Drug and Alcohol Court, Enhanced Combination Order and Support Hubs.

**Substance Misuse Court Pilot Programme**

**Introduction**

1. This paper sets out the policy context behind the commitment of the Department of Justice (DoJ) to introduce a Substance Misuse Court (SMC) Pilot Programme at Belfast Magistrates' Court, sitting at Laganside Courts.
2. It is intended that the SMC pilot will commence operating in spring 2018.

**Strategic and Policy Context**

3. In 2014 the Executive asked the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) to assess ongoing reforms of the public administration programme in Northern Ireland. The assessment included collaborative initiatives such as the Domestic Violence Listing Arrangements that were operating in Londonderry Courthouse, with a view to the possible extension of problem-solving initiatives throughout Northern Ireland.
4. Recommendation 3 of the OECD's subsequent report<sup>7</sup> recommended that there should be a "*strong point of departure to expand problem-solving principles in the justice chain.*" Pointing towards strong evidence in support of drugs courts in other jurisdictions, the recommendation stated that "*Overall, strengthening problem-solving justice approaches in Northern Ireland can provide an important opportunity to contribute to the modernisation of the justice system and to resolve pressing social challenges.*"
5. A Northern Ireland Justice Committee report<sup>8</sup> published in March 2016 found that the underlying problems and root causes of offending behaviour related to drug and alcohol addiction "*must be tackled if reoffending rates are to be addressed.*" The report recommended that the next Programme for Government should contain a commitment for a pilot project of a problem-solving solution, taking account of particular challenges within the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland such as alcohol and drug addiction. The report detailed four key elements of the proposed pilot:-
  - Commitment from both justice and health sectors to the pilot project;

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<sup>7</sup> [OECD \(2016\), Northern Ireland \(United Kingdom\): Implementing Joined-up Governance for a Common Purpose.](#)

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/documents/justice-2011-2016/copy-of-the-justice-in-the-21st-century-report-with-appendices.pdf>

- A collaborative joined-up approach between justice and health in terms of working together and information sharing;
  - Flexibility and versatility within the model; and
  - Specific tailored orders/support packages for each individual being immediately available.
6. In 2016 the Northern Ireland Executive developed a draft Programme for Government (PfG) based on an Outcome Based Accountability approach. The PfG sets out 14 strategic outcomes and 42 indicators. The DOJ leads on Strategic Outcome 7: *“We have a safe community where we respect the law and each other”* with three agreed indicators:
- Prevalence rate (crime);
  - Effectiveness of the justice system; and
  - Reduce reoffending.
7. In response to the draft PfG and the reports from OECD and the Justice Committee, together with other publications such as Lord Justice Gillen’s *Review of Civil and Family Justice*, DoJ undertook to develop an initial programme of five problem-solving justice initiatives, namely:-
- A Substance Misuse Court;
  - A Family Drug & Alcohol Court;
  - A Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programme;
  - A Support Hub; and
  - An Enhanced Combination Order.
8. The Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS) was tasked with developing and implementing the pilot SMC to address Indicator 39 - Reduce Reoffending. In July 2016 the NICTS created cross-departmental multi-agency Steering & Working Groups. The Working Group focussed on developing policy and an operational template for the SMC pilot, while the Steering Group provided governance and a decision-making forum.

### **Proposed Arrangements**

9. The pilot will enable the Judge of the SMC to divert convicted offenders to complete a supervision and treatment programme before passing sentence and to closely monitor and review their compliance with programme requirements. Evidence from other jurisdictions notes that the strength of the relationship between the judge and the offender is a key driver of better

outcomes. To that end it is anticipated, as far as possible, that only one judge will supervise the SMC pilot.

10. Following engagement with key stakeholders, NICTS developed an operational framework for the pilot in accordance with the following key principles:-

*In advance of sentencing, the Judge will consider if a defendant meets the target defendant group (TDG) criteria and if so will direct the Probation Board (PBNI) to complete a risk assessment and report on the defendant's suitability for inclusion in the pilot. The TDG criteria refer to defendants who:-*

*Have committed a crime relating to substance misuse, such as minor theft offences like shoplifting, possession of small amounts of drugs, possession of paraphernalia, intoxication with substances or sale of small amounts of drugs to support their personal drug use, and who:*

- i. Have no history of violent crimes such as serious assault, spousal abuse, or child abuse;*
- ii. Have no history of sex offences;*
- iii. Were not in possession of an offensive weapon;*
- iv. Are not a large-scale drug dealer;*
- v. Must have pleaded guilty or been found guilty in court;*
- vi. Must be willing to co-operate with supervision, stop offending, avail of appropriate substance misuse treatment, and participate generally in the programme;*
- vii. Consent to the sharing of personal information between participating agencies/bodies; and*
- viii. Do not have a co-existing serious mental illness.*

*PBNI will undertake a detailed assessment and if the defendant is deemed suitable and the Judge agrees, the defendant will be admitted to the pilot programme. A comprehensive and tailored Supervision and Treatment Programme will be developed by Probation Officers who will deliver the plan, with clinical and therapeutic elements being provided by recognised experts from Addiction NI under a contract secured and managed by PBNI.*

11. The proposed arrangements do not constitute a formal deferral of sentence under Article 3 of the Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 1996. Rather,

under Article 50 of the Magistrates' Courts (Northern Ireland) Order 1981, the Judge will adjourn the case and remand the defendant as necessary for the duration of the programme.

12. While completing the programme, the defendant will be subject to court bail conditions. The Judge will conduct monthly review hearings, although the timing of hearings may vary in individual cases at the discretion of the Judge.

13. If a defendant reoffends or breaches bail in any other way, including non-engagement with the requirements of the programme, the Judge will deal with the matter based on the individual circumstances of each case.

14. It is anticipated that the review hearings will consist of:-

- I. A morning Case Conference during which PBNI and Addiction NI will discuss a defendant's progress with the Judge;
- II. An afternoon Review Hearing in open court during which the Judge will address the defendant directly on their progress through the programme and discuss matters pertinent to their treatment; it is expected that each defendant and their legal representative will leave the court after their case has been dealt with.
- III. Defendants and their legal representative may attend both the morning and afternoon sessions but it is considered to be very unlikely that defendants will attend morning sessions. The majority of the interactions in the afternoon sessions are expected to be directly between the Judge and the defendant. The Judge will not ordinarily expect any input from the solicitor other than a brief statement.
- IV. It is not anticipated that counsel will appear, as the nature of the cases involved does not meet the criteria to be certified for counsel.
- V. PBNI will provide written reports on progress to the Judge (and any other designated parties) in advance of review hearings. The maximum length of the programme for each defendant is expected to be approximately 32 weeks.
- VI. The Judge may terminate a defendant's participation at any stage of programme delivery in the light of the evidence before the court.
- VII. At final review when the defendant has completed the programme the Judge will pass sentence, taking into account the defendant's engagement with the programme and any other evidence before the court. A Discharge Summary will address the provision of social supports which will be made available to assist relapse prevention.

15. The pilot scheme will accept fifty participants. When fifty candidates have been assessed as suitable for the pilot this will be clearly communicated to all stakeholders and no further referrals to the programme will be made.
16. The pilot SMC will be based in Laganside Courts. The decision to base the pilot in Belfast was taken by the Steering Group following a review of a report which had been prepared to assess the impact of substance misuse and related offending across Northern Ireland. The report concluded that, having taken the higher population into account, Belfast was the region which suffered the greatest impact and was therefore designated as the preferred site for the pilot programme.

### **Evaluation**

17. NICTS will evaluate the pilot, with assistance from in-house statisticians from Analytical Services Group (ASG). The pilot SMC will also form part of a wider evaluation of the five DoJ problem-solving initiatives to be performed by ASG. The all-encompassing nature of the evaluation process is intended to ensure that cross-cutting issues are identified and evaluated and that there is a commonality of language and objectives across all of the projects.