



A message from our Programme Director



Adele Brown,
Programme Director

It's great to be back! I'm delighted that we are able to return to bringing you news and information about the work being done under the Tackling Paramilitarism, Criminality and Organised Crime Programme in our relaunched newsletter.

It's important to acknowledge just how difficult a period it has

been for so many of our delivery partners across the Programme in both the statutory and community and voluntary sectors. What has been incredible is how, in spite of all these difficulties, our delivery partners have innovated and gone above and beyond to provide services and help support people who are vulnerable to paramilitarism, criminality and organised crime. We hope we can use this newsletter to share some of their success stories and the learning that comes with it.

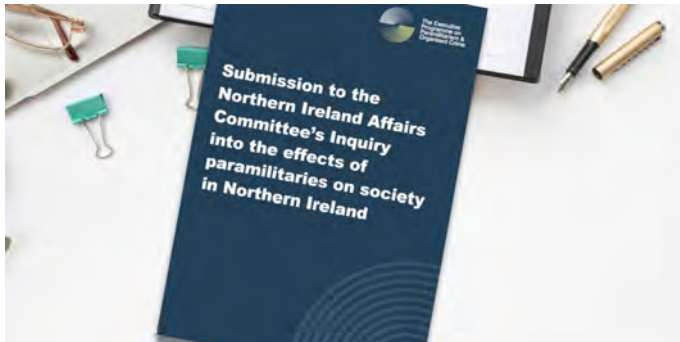
With close to 80 projects underway, we can only ever cover here a fraction of what goes on in the Programme. If you want more information or if you have ideas about what we should be focusing on, please do get in touch. In the meantime, thanks for taking the time to find out more. We truly value your support.

Adele



Science is brought to life for young people in East Belfast during the Wrap Programme STEM Summer School. Find out more inside!

Report submitted to Westminster inquiry



Our report gives an insight into the great work being done through our programme to address paramilitary harm

The Northern Ireland Affairs Committee has launched a new inquiry into the effect of paramili-

taries on society in Northern Ireland and we have submitted a report to the Committee in response to questions that it raised about paramilitary issues.

Adele Brown, Programme Director commented, "This report gives us the opportunity to give the NIAC inquiry an insight into the brilliant work being done by people and organisations in communities across Northern Ireland to address the harm caused by paramilitarism. It also contains an explanation of Phase 2 of the Programme and its public health approach to violence reduction and I would recommend it to anyone who would like an overview of the work delivered across our Programme."

[VIEW REPORT HERE](#)

Text Talk – Mark Dennison

In each Newsletter we have a quick-fire text conversation with someone who delivers a project through our Programme.



*Mark Dennison,
IFA Fresh Start Through
Sport Co-Ordinator*

In this edition, we speak to Mark Dennison from the Irish Football Association Foundation. Mark is the Co-Ordinator for the Fresh Start Through Sport programme.

How long have you been in your current role?
Four and a half years

Can you describe your job in one sentence?
Project Coordinator across Fresh Start Through Sport and the IFA Stay Onside programme, focusing on prevention, diversion and rehabilitation and working with young people and young adults at risk or in the criminal justice system, and those at risk of paramilitarism and Organised Crime

What is the most important skill you need in your work?

Being able to communicate with people at their level and understand the challenges they face. Ability to work in partnership with a range of organisations (sorry, that's two!).

What is the best part of your job?

Seeing the positive change sport can make in people's lives, both as a positive pathway and how it can really improve someone's mental and physical well-being. It's fantastic to see evidence of this and we have some real good news stories.

What's the most challenging aspect of your role?

The planning you have to put in place to run a successful programme, including working to project time lines and evaluations. This is very demanding but with planning comes success.

What do you like to do outside of work?

I like to travel and I enjoy football and sport. My role has provided opportunities to work with other associations and organisations. Football is a massive part of my life and with my daughter playing for St James Swifts now I am on the road around the country watching her games.

What is the biggest career lesson you have learnt so far?

Treat people with respect and value those who you work with. This is my second career and if you choose a career you love, you will never have to work a day in your life.

Dragon event Wraps up STEM summer school

The 'Wrap' programme is a wrap-around, flexible education service to children and young people facing significant challenges in four geographical areas. EastSide Learning deliver the programme in East Belfast.

Over the past couple of months, EastSide has been running a Summer Learning Programme that includes, community-based learning, family learning and a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) summer school where 30 children learnt about 'Sustainable Communities' in a fun interactive way.



The 'Science of Dragons' event



The STEM summer school helps bring science to life

Following the camp, everyone then got a chance to see their learning in real life during a trip to Queen's University where they found out more about mechanical and aeronautical engineering; raising career and educational aspirations.

Barbara Wallace, Programme Manager from Eastside Learning said: "We have delivered the Department of Education-led Wrap programme for a number of years and this is the fourth time we have delivered a STEM summer school through this programme.

"This programme has been a great success; the interactive elements of the summer school are a great way to increase the children's confidence, skills and aspirations. The whole Summer Learning Programme has provided local groups, children and families with opportunities to engage in hands on learning within the community setting; encouraging curiosity, addressing the summer learning slide and providing positive interactions around education. The Summer Learning Programme finished with a 'Science of Dragon's' family event using an entertaining, innovative approach to bring science to life."

[VIEW THE SUMMER SCHOOL VIDEO HERE](#)

Are you following us on Twitter?

Our Programme Twitter account, [@endingtheharm](#) is where we post regularly about various elements of our programme as well as highlighting relevant research and interesting insight.

[FOLLOW US HERE](#)

Investing in police community engagement

The Paramilitary Crime Task Force is often the most visible element of policing's contribution towards addressing paramilitary harm. However, in this financial year the Programme has also provided a £145,000 investment to policing for the delivery of Community Safety and Engagement projects.



PSNI Chief Inspector Joanne Gibson

Chief Inspector Joanne Gibson from the Strategic Partnerships and Prevention Branch explains more: "This investment allows us to support a range of projects in communities who have specific

challenges. These initiatives are tailored to meet the needs of different areas, allowing our local officers the opportunity to engage with people, build relationships and break down barriers in an informal setting.

"We also deliver projects that enhance problem-solving around issues impacting on the community and that promote engagement with, and visibility of, policing. This work complements the activities of the PCTF, as we know that in order to deliver safer communities a security and criminal justice approach alone will not suffice.

"This Programme newsletter contains information about our successful Ballybeen summer diversionary events, and future editions will feature other projects such as the 'Ramp Park' skate project in East Belfast, a Football Mentorship Academy and an Activity project in Colin Glen, to name a few."

Police project in Ballybeen helps to build lasting community relationships

In East Belfast, local officers have been working with youth workers and young people in Ballybeen estate to address a number of issues and help improve engagement.

Project coordinator, Sergeant Shelley Regan said: "This summer we held a number of video game sessions at a local Gaming Studio and organised a daytrip to the Siege Museum in Derry~Londonderry to allow for better engagement between younger and older members of the community.

The gaming sessions provided an alternative for young people to get involved in positive activities in evenings when anti-social behaviour is most prevalent. It also allowed officers an opportunity to engage with young people and build relationships in a relaxed setting."



Ballybeen residents enjoying their daytrip to Derry~Londonderry

"We have also been working with Ballybeen Educational and Cultural Heritage Hub (BEACHH) who provide a Youth Summer Scheme and a Senior Citizens' Club. Earlier this month the team organised the Siege Museum away day plus a tour of the City Walls. It was an interesting, educational trip for both groups, but more importantly it was also an opportunity to help build connections between the young and older generations and help reduce the fear of crime."



Young people enjoying the Gaming Studio event



Ending the Harm public awareness campaign update



Our hard-hitting Ending the Harm public awareness campaigns highlight how organised crime and paramilitary activity can have a devastating impact on victims, their families, local communities and wider society.

The current campaign focuses on how these gangs use illegal money lending to control and coerce vulnerable people. Damian Boylan, Programme Team Communications Manager, explains more:

“Our current campaign, which has been live since June 2021, is more important now than ever given the ongoing cost of living crisis. It will be particularly active from now until January next year and we will have a presence across TV, radio, billboards and online, highlighting the harms of this practice and signposting people to appropriate help.

“We have studied where the adverts have been most effective over the past year and have used that information to make changes to where we are spending our campaign budget going forward. For example, we’re now less active on Instagram and have used that money to advertise more on TikTok, where we have achieved good levels of engagement.

“We are also still testing and learning about new communications channels to help us get best value for money. For example, in the coming months you will see our adverts on ATM machines and at selected Asda supermarkets.

“Finally, we recently launched a printed information leaflet and poster and distributed them across Northern Ireland. I’d like to thank our colleagues in the One Team and others who have helped to ensure these materials have reached those who might need advice and guidance.”

Please get in touch if you would like copies of either the poster or leaflet. If you would like to support our campaign online, we will be tweeting regularly over the coming months on our programme Twitter account, [@endingtheharm](https://twitter.com/endingtheharm).

[VISIT THE CAMPAIGN SITE](https://www.endingtheharm.com)

Spotlight on.... Research and insight

We support projects across Northern Ireland that work directly with young people who have been harmed by paramilitary gangs or are at risk of becoming involved in paramilitary activity.

To help us develop these projects we work with local and international experts to create a solid foundation of data and evidence.



This report by Dr Colm Walsh from Queen's University, Belfast and Professor Ann-Marie Gray from Ulster University looks at how childhood adversity can impact on child and adolescent development. It explores the profound short- and longer-term effects violence has on young people in Northern Ireland.

[READ THE REPORT HERE](#)

LET'S STAY CONNECTED!

We hope you've enjoyed our first edition!

Please get in touch if you have any questions or if you have any stories to share in our next newsletter.



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