

Minister for Children and Youth Affairs Dr. Katherine Zappone and Minister of State at the Department of Justice and Equality David Stanton jointly publish Progress Report on the Youth Justice Action Plan 2014-2018

Minister for Children and Youth Affairs Dr. Katherine Zappone, T.D., and Minister of State at the Department of Justice and Equality David Stanton, T.D., today jointly published a progress report on 'Tackling Youth Crime' the Youth Justice Action Plan 2014-2018. The Report outlines the progress made in 2014 and 2015 in implementing the Action Plan.

The Action Plan, which was launched in April 2014, focuses on children and young people who require targeted, strategic attention because their behaviour has led to their involvement in the youth justice system. The Action Plan includes a number of specific goals and objectives targeted at delivering better outcomes for children who get into trouble with the law, and to reduce crime and make communities safer.

Implementation of the Action Plan is coordinated by a Cross-Agency Implementation Team led by the Irish Youth Justice Service. The Progress Report sets out an extensive list of developments over the period 2014/2015 under each of the five High Level Goals of the Action Plan. These include the development of a Bail Supervision Scheme for young offenders, the extension of the Garda Youth Diversion Project Network and the introduction of a risk/needs assessment tool for use in the projects, the completion of the re-development of the Children Detention Schools in Oberstown, the enactment of the Children (Amendment) Act 2015 which provides the legal framework to facilitate the amalgamation of the three schools into a single campus for young offenders, and the completion of a study which examined the influence of criminal networks on prolific youth offending.

Both the Department of Justice and Equality and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs together with the relevant agencies will continue to work closely together on implementing the remainder of the Youth Justice Action Plan.

In publishing the Report today the Minister Stanton said, "Significant progress was made by the various criminal justice agencies and Tusla in 2014 and 2015 in implementing actions set out in the Plan and further progress will be reported in the 2016 progress report."

Referring to the statistical youth crime data in the Report the Minister also said, "The falling numbers of young people being referred to the statutory Garda Diversion Programme in recent years points to the positive impacts of the Programme, supported by community based youth crime interventions, in addressing the bulk of youth offending behaviour."

Minister Zappone said that she particularly welcomes the establishment of a Bail Supervision Scheme and that her Department will continue to work to provide safe and secure accommodation for all young people and staff in the Oberstown Campus.

The Progress Report is available on the websites of the Irish Youth Justice Service, the Department of Justice and Equality and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.