

This article was first published by the [Probation Board for Northern Ireland \(PBNI\)](#).

Patrick Frew is one of three Community Service Supervisors based in PBNI's Ballymena Office covering the Coleraine, Ballymena, Antrim and Larne area. His role involves organising and supervising community service placements for people who have offended. Community Service Orders can range from 50 hours to 240 hours.

"It was hard to get placements during the Covid-19 pandemic. Initially Community Service was on hold however as part of the recovery plan we are now delivering community service again and being careful to socially distance.



"Part of my job is finding projects we can get involved in for long periods of time. Projects where we can work as a team, build each individual's confidence and help make a difference. Some of the people in the squad are new to community service, others I have seen a few times. In my opinion it's up to people like us to be accepting, hold people to account and through our actions show them the value of respect.

"Here in Cloughmills we have been working closely with Cloughmills Community Action Team (CCAT), helping local people with a small team of community service volunteers who have been active outdoors throughout the Pandemic. In the early stages of the COVID-19 crisis the community response was about making sure people had food and the squad assisted in delivering food parcels to vulnerable people. We worked with the Incredible Edible Project preparing and distributing Growing Packs for families and local people to promote healthy eating, the importance of positive mental health and well-being, during the lock-down. The Growing Packs contained compost and either wildflower seeds or mixed vegetable seeds for people to grow themselves at home. We also worked with the local pharmacy and a local restaurant to provide a delivery service for older members of the community and to those self-isolating. We have delivered hundreds of meals. This week we have been delivering live chickens for families to rear.

My priority now is ensuring all the squads are back to work in the community and able to continue to give back to people. In my experience community work happens when there is tragedy and communities start to pull together. I'm pleased that PBNI's community service has been part of this."

Patrick Frew is Chair of CCAT.