



Seirbhís Phríosúin
na hÉireann
Irish Prison Service

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

Irish Prison Service
www.irishprisons.ie



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FOREWORD BY THE DIRECTOR GENERAL

To: Minister Jim O'Callaghan TD,



Caron McCaffrey | Director General

Dear Minister,

I am pleased to present the Irish Prison Service Annual Report for 2024, a year of strategic advancement and operational resilience in the face of increasing demand and evolving challenges.

The Irish Prison Service plays a vital role in ensuring safe and secure custody while enabling rehabilitation and reintegration, all within a dynamic criminal justice environment. In 2024, the Irish Prison Service experienced a 9.6% increase in committals, with 8,704 individuals entering custody, a 10.7% increase in the number of persons committed compared to the

previous year. This growing prisoner population, coupled with an 11.9% increase in the annual cost per prison space, required targeted interventions to strengthen capacity, maintain service delivery, and uphold our mission to rehabilitate prisoners for safer communities.

To accommodate these increasing demands, significant investments were made to the prison estate, including capital projects to improve security, expand capacity, and modernise facilities. The Irish Prison Service was allocated €502 million in gross funding, ensuring that key operational functions remained robust, while a €39.5 million capital budget was strategically utilised for facility upgrades, ICT improvements, and vehicle procurement.

In 2024, we successfully introduced 150 additional prison spaces, with over 90 additional set to be delivered in 2025. This expansion is equivalent to establishing a medium-sized prison over just two years, an achievement made possible by the dedication and hard work of our staff. Their efforts ensure that we continue to effectively manage the growing pressures of an expanding prison population while maintaining the highest standards across our prison estate.

Enhancing rehabilitation and prisoner support remained central to our mission. Education participation rates saw continued engagement, with an average of 58.5% of prisoners participating in educational programmes by year-end. Additionally, work training initiatives expanded, offering 1,486 placements across the prison estate, introducing new vocational training in manufacturing technology, vehicle recycling, and nearly zero-energy building retrofitting, critical skills to support employment post release and reduce recidivism.

Mental health and addiction support continued to evolve, responding to increased referrals for psychological services, with over 9,720



individual and group sessions conducted in prisons. A new National Clinical Lead for Mental Health and Addiction was appointed to oversee enhanced intervention strategies, including harm reduction efforts, overdose response measures, and expanded addiction counselling services.

The progress achieved in 2024 would not have been possible without the dedication and professionalism of our staff. With 3,740 full-time employees, including 271 new recruit prison officers and 52 clerical staff, the Irish Prison Service remains committed to fostering an engaged and well-supported workforce. The Employee Experience Framework was embedded further, ensuring training, leadership development, and staff well-being remain priorities. Healthy Ireland is working with the Irish Prison Service, driving initiatives that support the physical and mental well-being of both staff and those in custody. Through evidence-based strategies and cross-sector collaboration, it plays a vital role in fostering a healthier prison environment.

As pressures on the prison system continue to escalate, the impact of overcrowding has become increasingly evident. On 1st January 2024, there were 4,696 persons in custody, with 83 individuals sleeping on mattresses on the floor of another person's cell. By the end of 2024, the prison population had risen to 5,001 - a 6% increase, while the number of people sleeping on mattresses surged to 213, representing a staggering 156% increase.

The sharp rise in the prison population highlights the urgent need to respond to future demand with a comprehensive capital strategy must be supported by significant funding commitments. Without long-term investment, the ability to plan for sustainable prison infrastructure remains limited. The necessity for a forward-looking approach to accommodation, security, and rehabilitative services cannot be overstated.

As we move into 2025 and beyond, the Irish Prison Service will continue to enhance rehabilitative initiatives, strengthen governance, and leverage digital advancements, ensuring a criminal justice system that prioritises public safety, supports offender rehabilitation, and operates with accountability and efficiency.

I extend my gratitude to all staff and stakeholders; whose commitment ensures that we fulfil our mandate with integrity and professionalism. Together, we remain committed to delivering safer communities through excellence in a prison service built on respect for human dignity.

Caron McCaffrey | Director General



OVERVIEW OF THE IRISH PRISON SERVICE





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na hÉireann**
Irish Prison Service

THE ORGANISATION



THE ORGANISATION

Political responsibility for the prison system in Ireland is vested in the Minister for Justice. The Irish Prison Service operates as an Office of the Department of Justice and is headed by the Director General supported by five Directors.

The Irish Prison Service forms a key component of the criminal justice system. Its fundamental role is to help achieve a safer and fairer Ireland by:

- ▲ Providing safe and secure custody with dignity of care for people committed to prison.
- ▲ Reducing the risk of harm to the public and the likelihood of reoffending by providing rehabilitation for people in prison.
- ▲ Working with the Probation Service to create an integrated offender management programme.
- ▲ Assisting people in prison maintain family relations and contact with the wider community.

- ▲ Ensuring the health and safety of all those who live and work in our prisons through the implementation of effective infection control measures and supporting policies and procedures at local and national level.

The Irish Prison Service is responsible for the safe and secure custody of persons sentenced to prison, held on remand, or held on immigration matters. It is responsible for ensuring that convicted persons properly serve their sentence and for providing them with opportunities to engage in a meaningful way to reduce the likelihood of reoffending and assist their reintegration into law-abiding society.

The Irish Prison Service deals with male and female offenders who are 18 years of age or older.

The Irish Prison Service is administered centrally, with its headquarters located in Longford Town.





Fig. 1: The Irish Criminal Justice System

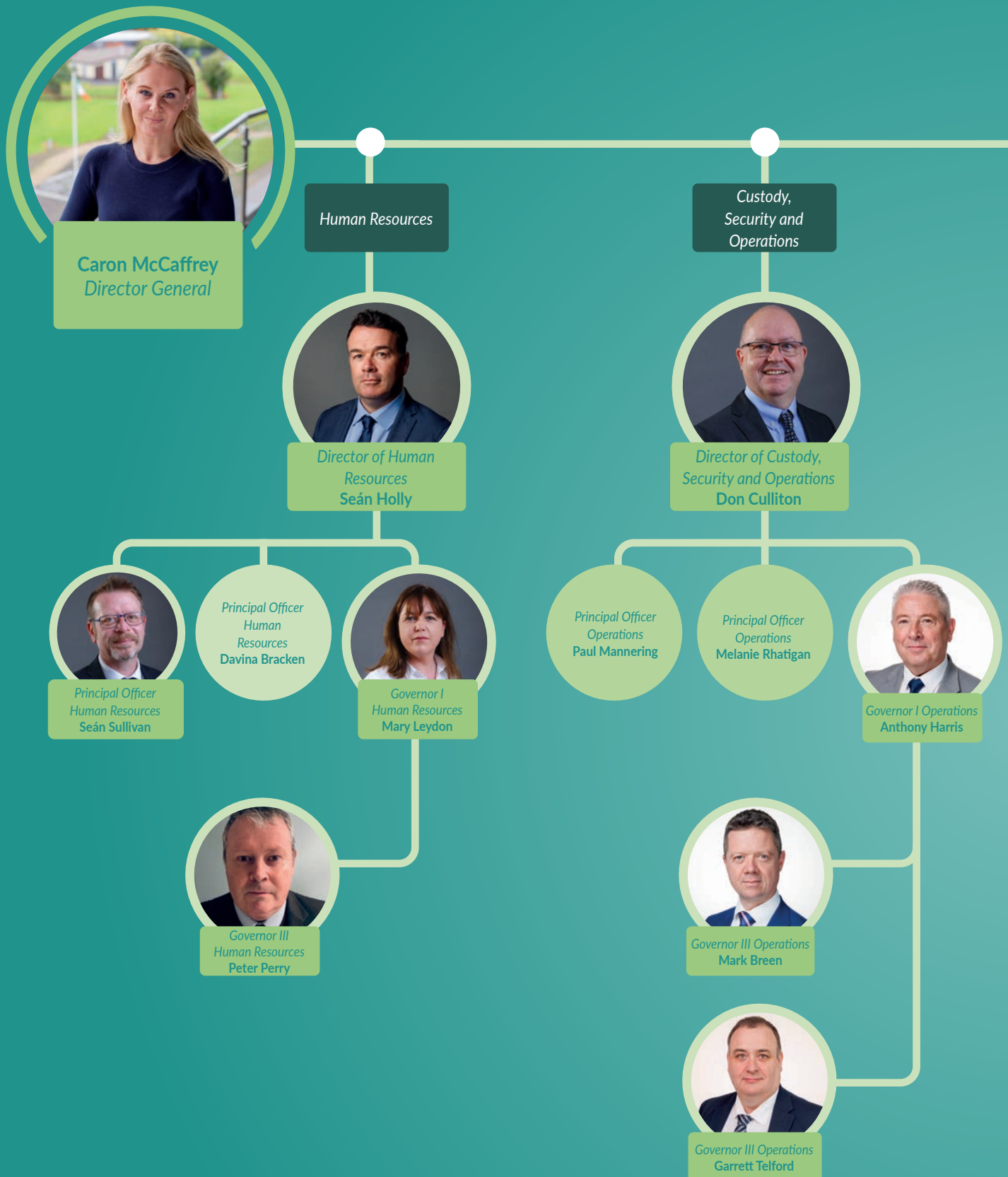


Fig 2.: Irish Prison Service Headquarters and Directorates



IRISH PRISON SERVICE HEADQUARTERS





Budget

The final gross budget for the Irish Prison Service for 2024 was €502 million, of which salaries, wages and allowances accounted for €338 million or 67% of the gross budget. There was a capital budget of €39.5 million and a budget for goods/services of €124.5 million. The capital budget was utilised to fund investment in a number of capital projects to increase prison capacity, improve the infrastructure and security of the estate, as well as for the provision of new ICT equipment and vehicle purchases.

The Irish Prison Service operates under Vote 21 of the voted funds of the Oireachtas and the Secretary General of the Department of Justice is the Accounting Officer. The Appropriation Account for Vote 21 is published on the Comptroller and Auditor General website at www.audit.gov.ie.

The average annual cost of an available, staffed prison space during the calendar year 2024 was €99,072, an 11.9% increase on the 2023 cost of €88,523. This includes net expenditure incurred within the year (such as salaries, utilities/maintenance, ICT, prison services, etc.) excluding capital expenditure on buildings, ICT and vehicle purchases. The main reasons for the increase over 2023 was due to increased variable costs due to increased prisoner numbers, increased capacity, inflation and increases in payroll costs.

Approximately 900 suppliers were paid during 2024, with many of these being in the small and medium enterprise sector.

Staff

At the end of 2024 there were 3,740.38 (full-time equivalent) staff in the Irish Prison Service.

This includes prison grades, prison civilian grades and headquarters staff.

271 Recruit Prison Officers and 52 Prison Clerical Officers joined the Irish Prison Service in 2024.

159 staff were promoted in 2024 of which 98 were male and 61 were female. This includes prison grades, prison civilian grades and headquarters staff.

There were a total of 122 retirements in 2024 broken down as follows:

- ▲ 88 normal retirements (includes HQ Civilian Staff)
- ▲ 20 compulsory retirements (aged 60) – up to 19th August 2024
- ▲ 14 ill health retirements

Sadly, 4 deaths in service across the Organisation were recorded in 2024.

The *Courts, Civil Law, Criminal Law and Superannuation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2024* came into law on 19th August 2024. This extended the Mandatory Retirement Age (MRA) from 60 to 62. The result of this change is that there will be no compulsory retirements on age grounds in 2025 and up to August 2026 at the earliest.

A number of staff, who ordinarily would have had to retire on reaching their 60th birthday are availing of the new extended MRA and their experience is of great assistance in supporting and mentoring new officers and in dealing with the challenge of staff retention across the system.

Overcrowding

The issue of overcrowding has presented significant challenges in the past, and experience has shown that it remains a substantial barrier to effective rehabilitation. At present, the prison system is operating above its designed capacity, and regrettably, some individuals in custody are accommodated on mattresses placed on the floor. The Irish Prison Service is mandated to accept all individuals committed by the Courts and, as such, does not have discretion over the number of people entering custody at any given time. The prison population is therefore subject to fluctuation.

Addressing overcrowding remains a key priority. In 2024, we continued to invest in the prison estate, delivering 126 additional prisoner spaces through the refurbishment and repurposing of existing infrastructure. A further 33 spaces were initiated during 2024, with completion expected in early 2025, bringing the total to 159 additional spaces. All of these new accommodations include in-cell sanitation facilities.

Governance and Statutory Framework

The overall governance and statutory control framework within the Irish Prison Service is guided by:



- ▲ the Prisons Acts, including the Prisons Act 2007, the Prisons Act 2015;
- ▲ relevant provisions in other statutes such as the Prisons (Visiting Committees) Act, 1925, the Criminal Justice Act, 1960, the Criminal Justice (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1997, the Criminal Justice Act, 2007, other criminal justice acts and the Transfer of Sentenced Persons Acts, 1995 and 1997;
- ▲ the Prison Rules, 2007, including the Prison Rules Amendment (2013) (2014) (2017) (2020); and
- ▲ the European Convention on Human Rights Act 2003.

For persons held on immigration related matters the main legislative provisions are the Immigration Acts 1999, 2003 and 2004 and their associated regulations, the Illegal Immigrants Trafficking Act 2000 and the International Protection Act 2015.

The Prison Service also takes due account of various international human rights treaties, declarations, standards and recommendations, including:

- ▲ the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- ▲ the European Convention on Human Rights;
- ▲ the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners;
- ▲ the European Prison Rules 2006;
- ▲ the United Nations Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;
- ▲ the United Nations Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; and
- ▲ the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

In 2024, the Irish Prison Service continued to be monitored by a range of oversight bodies which provide assurance in respect of compliance with statutory obligations.

The Irish Prison Service received and responded to reports from each of the twelve Prison Visiting Committees which were submitted on conclusion of their prison visits in 2023.

The Irish Prison Service engaged extensively with the Office of the Inspector of Prisons by contributing to the revised Framework for the Inspection of Prisons, responding to Inspection Reports in respect of twenty deaths in custody, and providing updates relating to all open recommendations.

In May 2024, the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) visited four prisons to monitor treatment of prisoners and recommend improvements. The CPT report was transmitted to the Department of Justice in December 2024 for review and response.

Governance Structure and Risk Management Strategy

Governance is a key pillar in the Strategic Plan 2023-2027 and the Irish Prison Service is continuing to progress a range of important objectives under this heading. Good governance is central to effectively discharging statutory and policy obligations by ensuring that a robust framework of structures, policies and processes are in place. It also allows for an objective assessment of management and corporate performance. The requirement to adhere to good governance applies to all staff throughout the organisation, as well as those employed in key leadership roles.

The Irish Prison Service's Governance Framework is kept under review and updated as necessary to ensure it meets the needs of our stakeholders.

It is designed to support existing external oversight mechanisms led by the Inspector of Prisons, the Prison Visiting Committees, the Comptroller and Auditor General, the Council of Europe Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhumane and Degrading Treatment.

The key relationship between the Department of Justice and the Irish Prison Service is governed by an Oversight Agreement. The Oversight Agreement sets out the broad governance and accountability framework within which the Irish Prison Service operates. It also defines key roles, responsibilities and commitments with a view to ensuring the development, delivery and effective administration of prison services which is an integral part of the criminal justice system. Compliance with the requirements of the Oversight Agreement is monitored through quarterly governance meetings between Senior Management of the Irish Prison Service and the Department of Justice.

Risks are identified and monitored at prison level by senior management. They are also captured and managed at corporate level by the Directors.



Protected Disclosures

Introduction

Under Section 22 of the Protected Disclosures Act 2014, each public body is required to publish an annual report setting out the number of protected disclosures received in the preceding year and the action taken (if any). This report must not result in persons making disclosures being identifiable.

The Irish Prison Service has provided the annual report to the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform.

Irish Prison Service Protected Disclosures Policy

The Irish Prison Service current Protected Disclosures Policy and supporting procedures issued on 1st January 2023.

The Policy is aimed at supporting the Irish Prison Service's values, ensuring employees can raise concerns about relevant wrongdoing which come to their attention in connection with their employment, without fear of penalisation and providing a transparent and confidential process for dealing with concerns.

Implementation of the Policy

To support the implementation of the policy the Irish Prison Service has committed to the *Integrity at Work Programme Membership* and the *Integrity at Work Pledge* with Transparency International Ireland ("TII"). Staff are made aware of the *Transparency International Ireland Speak Up Helpline 1800 844 866* for independent guidance on reporting a concern or making a protected disclosure.

A dedicated **Protected Disclosure Manager** for the Irish Prison Service is in place with a confidential email address speakup@irishprisons.ie and Post Box Number to enable staff to raise their concerns through multiple channels.

Training and Communications

The Irish Prison Service continue to work with TII as part of the Integrity At Work ("IAW") programme. Staff membership bodies and the Department of Justice have been informed about the Irish Prison Service participation in the IAW.

Communications

A bespoke Protected Disclosures Portal features on the staff intranet which provides access to the Policy and support information including a comprehensive Frequently Asked Questions document. The Speak Up Safely Guide is also

available for download on the staff intranet. Staff are made aware that free and confidential advice is available from TII's Speak Up helpline and the Speak Up Safely Video is displayed.

Information notices regarding the Protected Disclosures Policy are displayed on electronic noticeboards which are available in staff areas in prisons. Posters with information highlighting the confidential phone line have been circulated to all prisons for display in staff areas.

The Irish Prison Service also maintains a "Speak up and be Supported" spotlight on the staff intranet. This aims to signpost staff to the correct information and supports available should they wish to report a matter under the PD Policy, the Grievance Policy, the Dignity at Work policy or the Fraud Policy.

Training

Information about IAW is included as part of staff induction.

A detailed one-day training programme on Protected Disclosures was developed to roll out to all managers from Chief Officers and above. From January to June 2024, 124 managers were trained as part of this training programme, which was provided by an external legal firm.

On 8 October 2024, 17 senior managers participated in a training module titled 'Responding to Protected Disclosures' which was provided by TII.

Cooperation with the Department of Justice

The Irish Prison Service continues to work with the Department of Justice to ensure that the procedures for the submission, evaluation and investigation of protected disclosures is clear and communicated carefully to all employees of the Irish Prison Service.

Protected Disclosures at end December 2024

During 2024, seven allegations of wrongdoing were received for examination under the Irish Prison Service protected disclosures policy through internal channels.

The seven disclosures received in 2024 were dealt with as follows:

1	In assessment at 31/12/24
3	Sent for investigation
1	Referred to other procedures – HR
2	Not deemed a protected disclosure nor meriting further Investigation



The three matters sent for external investigation in 2024 remain open at 31st December 2024.

One matter relating to a potential breach of procurement law as set out in Directive 2019/1937 was reported in 2024 and remains in investigation.

One investigation which commenced in 2022 concluded in 2024.

Three investigations which commenced in 2023 concluded in 2024.

One external review of an investigation which had been completed in 2022, concluded in 2024 with no change in findings.

Two matters were received from the Office of the Protected Disclosures Commissioner (OPDC) and these were closed in 2024. One had already been reported simultaneously to the Irish Prison Service directly and is included in the seven cases above and was referred to another procedure, the second case was closed following the conclusion of a review.

Freedom of Information Requests 2024

The Irish Prison Service continues to meet its obligations in relation to responding to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests and Subject Access requests. FOI Decisions and Types of Request are outlined below:

FOI Decision	Year 2024
Granted	33
Part-Granted	112
Refused	63
Withdrawn	3
Under Consideration at Year-End	74
Total Received	285
Type of Requests:	Year 2024
Media	67
Business Interest Groups	0
Staff	30
Prisoner	152
Member of Public	36
Total	285

Data Subject Access Requests	Year 2024
Received	183
Completed	138
Under Consideration at Year-End	45

Climate Action, Energy Cost and Consumption

The Irish Prison Service has a growing Prison Estate with institutions located across the country. The Prison Estate consists of a range

of buildings dating from the 19th century, such as those located in Mountjoy, Limerick and Portlaoise, to more contemporary facilities built in the 21st century, including Cork Prison and our most modern facility opened in Limerick in 2023.

Due to the nature of our business, with prisons operating on a 24/7 basis, we are a major user of energy and had an annual energy spend of €11.1M in 2024. The Service consumes almost 80 million kWh of energy on an annual basis. As a responsible public sector organisation the Irish Prison Service has engaged with the **Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland's (SEAI) Public Sector Energy Programme** and is working with colleagues to meet the targets set out by Government in the **Public Sector Climate Action Mandate**.

Climate Action Plan and Roadmap

In accordance with the requirements of the Public Sector Climate Action Mandate the Service has appointed a Climate Action Champion and an Energy Performance Officer who have responsibility for the development and implementation of the Service's Climate Action Roadmap. The Roadmap for 2024 was completed in September 2023 and consists of 5 Action Areas including:



Progress towards 2030

The Organisation completed our energy data reporting obligations via the SEAI Monitoring

and Reporting System (M&R). Provisional data from the SEAI M&R systems reports that energy efficiency in 2024 has improved by 31.5% since the baseline year. To achieve our 2030 energy efficiency target, energy efficiency must improve by another 18.5 percentage points within 6 years.

In 2024, total CO2 was 25.3% below the baseline year however, to achieve our 2030 target our carbon emissions must reduce by another 53.7% from our current level within 6 years. The Service has identified a number of key projects included in our 2025/2026 Climate Action Roadmap including additional renewable energy, LED lighting and Building Energy Management System upgrades which if delivered will continue to improve our energy efficiency and reduce our carbon emissions.

2024 Climate Action Roadmap Implementation Update



A new energy data monitoring system was procured in 2023 and rolled out in 2024. This has allowed the Service to monitor our energy consumption on a monthly basis and target specific areas for action.

Construction on the first prison based solar farm located at Shelton Abbey was advanced in 2024 and the new system will become operation in 2025. This will provide over 400,000 kWh of renewable electricity at Shelton Abbey. It is intended to deliver other Solar PV projects in all suitable locations going forward increasing our use of renewable energy.

The roll out of the LED lighting programme and window replacement programme also continued throughout 2024 enhancing our energy efficiency.

In 2024, the organisation continued its efforts to reduce waste going to landfill through the



roll out of bio-digesters to all locations. This has ensured that all organic waste is redirected away from landfill and is now being used as an organic fertilizer. The roll out of biodigesters to all locations in 2024 has removed up to 700 tonnes of organic waste from our general waste.

In 2024, we introduced the Deposit Return Scheme on a pilot basis in Castlereagh, Cloverhill and Mountjoy Prisons. This has resulted in over 50,000 plastic bottles recycled at these locations. The DRS will be rolled out to all locations in 2025.

We continued our efforts to enhance climate literacy within our organisation. Climate action training was provided to our Green Team leaders in 2024 and we provided Climate Action Leadership Training to all our senior managers in accordance with the requirements set out in the Public Sector Climate Action Mandate.

In addition, energy awareness sessions were made available in all locations in 2024 to raise staff awareness on what they could do to help reduce the unnecessary waste of energy at work and at home.

We have continued to invest in the greening of our fleet with 29 Battery Operated Vehicles (BEVs) now operational across the Estate. We have rolled out our Electrical Vehicle charging points to support the electrification of the fleet where possible. Prison Service vehicles travelled



over 3.65m kilometres in 2024 and this figure continues to rise with the continued increase in prisoner numbers and the requirements for inter prison transfer, court and hospital visits.

Energy Cost and Consumption

Data on the cost and consumption of utilities such as electricity, gas and transportation fuel is not available at the time of publishing this Report and will be published by the Irish Prison Service in our Annual Energy Report later in 2025. Initial preliminary data shows that both cost and consumption remain relatively static in 2024 compared to 2023. The continued growth of the prison estate to accommodate the number of people being committed to prison continues to increase demand for energy. The increasing prisoner population increases our energy draw with pressure on kitchens, laundries and other services.

Irish Prison Service Stakeholder Service Charter

The Irish Prison Service interacts with a broad range of internal and external stakeholders including the Department of Justice, other statutory and non-statutory agencies, families of people in our custody, victims of crime, and many advocacy groups and regulatory bodies.

The delivery of effective and quality service is a priority for the Irish Prison Service and forms an integral part of our overall Strategic Plan 2023-2027.

Under Strategic Pillar 3, New Business Processes we aim to **implement a stakeholder collaboration process with the following deliverables:**

- ▲ Create a map of key stakeholders for Directorates and Prisons. Clarify points of contact, stakeholder expectations, challenges and preferred method of communication.
- ▲ Assign clear accountability for managing stakeholders' requirements.
- ▲ Maximise criminal justice and interagency collaborations to deliver on shared goals.
- ▲ Educate stakeholders on opportunities and challenges and work on collaborative solutions.
- ▲ Perform and communicate an impact assessment for all requested stakeholder initiatives.

In addition, we aim to embed a process and a culture of innovation that is integrated into day to

day operations and results in innovative outputs that support the delivery of the strategy, the staff experience and improved services and outcomes for prisoners and families. All key stakeholders will be invited to engage in this process.

The Irish Prison Service Stakeholder Service Charter and accompanying Action Plan, published in 2021, sets out how we aim to provide the highest level of service to our stakeholders. The Charter sets out the standard of service and behaviour, which should underpin our interactions with all stakeholders.

Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights & Equality Act 2014

Since 2014, the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty has been an integral part of the legislative framework governing human rights and equality in Ireland. Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 places a statutory obligation on public bodies to ensure that, in performing their functions, they:

- ▲ Eliminate discrimination,
- ▲ Promote equality of opportunity and treatment for staff and service users, and
- ▲ Protect the human rights of both staff and service users.

This Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty ensures that equality and human rights are embedded in how a public body, like the Irish Prison Service, fulfils its purpose and delivers on its strategic goals. In alignment with the "assess, address, report" principles of the Duty, an assessment was conducted across the various functional areas of the organisation, leading to the development of a focused action plan.

The Irish Prison Service is committed to the safe, secure custody of individuals committed to it by the courts. However, our role extends beyond just ensuring public safety by holding individuals securely; it is also about treating those deprived of their liberty with dignity and humanity. Prisoner care and rehabilitation are central to the work we do, and we strive for a balanced approach in the effective performance of these dual responsibilities of care and custody.

Operating within the parameters of Irish, European, and international human rights law, the Irish Prison Service is committed to promoting equality and human rights through



our policies and practices. Our Strategic Plan 2023-2027 aligns with the Department of Justice Criminal Justice Sectoral Strategy 2022-2024, reflecting our shared priorities for research, data management, and evidence-based decision-making. This cohesive approach supports the development of policies, identification of emerging issues, and ensures the creation of a criminal justice system that upholds human rights, fosters public trust, and contributes to a safer Ireland.

At the core of our approach is the determination to deliver the best possible outcomes for those in our custody and to demonstrate how our values-led professional practice can transform lives. In our relations with staff, we maintain a culture of respect and trust, and we expect staff to behave in the same manner toward everyone—whether they work, reside, or visit our institutions. The Irish Prison Service is steadfast in its commitment to staff diversity and responds appropriately to allegations of discrimination, bullying, and harassment.

In 2024, staff from Corporate Services and Human Resources Directorates continued to deliver presentations across the Estate, raising awareness of the 2021 Code of Ethics and addressing key issues such as sexual harassment, sexual assault, bullying, and dignity at work. These sessions underscored the organisation's commitment to supporting staff and prisoners who may experience such misconduct.

Training for recruit prison officers and the continuous professional development of established staff include elements that foster a deep understanding of international human rights instruments and the ethical context within which prisons must operate. We have partnered with the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission to offer bespoke human rights training, ensuring that the dignity and humanity of everyone in the prison system are respected.

Our training also includes disability awareness, human rights in a custodial environment, and special training on issues faced by incarcerated individuals, including those with mental health challenges, older prisoners, incarcerated women, juveniles, and Travellers. Specific attention is also paid to addiction, learning difficulties, and the health needs of various groups.

The Irish Prison Service runs campaigns on the PRISM platform to promote a culture of respect, including the ongoing "No to Racism" and "No Sexual Harassment" campaigns. These serve as permanent reminders to staff of the importance of inclusivity and respect for all.

In line with the National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy, the Irish Prison Service has supported its LGBTI+ staff and prisoners by proudly displaying the rainbow flag during Pride Month and participating in the Dublin Parade. This demonstrates our commitment to celebrating and raising awareness of LGBTI+ diversity and inclusion.

Our commitment to adhering to international standards of detention conditions is unwavering. We aim not only to meet but to exceed international norms, where possible, in providing humane and dignified care to all prisoners. We recognise the varying needs of prisoners, including those with disabilities, and provide tailored care pathways that address their physical, sensory, psychological, and intellectual needs.

In our daily operations, we aim to ensure that the prison regimes we oversee offer appropriate out-of-cell time and opportunities for rehabilitation. When restrictions are necessary, they are applied for no longer than necessary and in ways that uphold prisoners' rights to access essential services, including education, healthcare, and training.

The safety and security of all individuals working, residing, or visiting our institutions are paramount. We are committed to ensuring that all security measures, including searches, are conducted in a manner that respects the inherent dignity of individuals.

As part of our commitment to transparency and accountability, the Irish Prison Service works closely with national and international bodies involved in prison inspections and monitoring. These inspections provide essential feedback and help us continuously improve the standards of care and treatment within our institutions.

Through strong leadership and a commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion, the Irish Prison Service strives to create an environment where human rights are respected, and all individuals, staff and prisoners alike, are treated with dignity and respect.



Staff and Prisoner Initiatives

Recruit Prison Officer Graduation

Our April 2024 conferring ceremony was a great success with 133 Recruit Prison Officers graduating with the Level 6 Higher Certificate in Custodial Care, awarded by the Irish Prison Services academic partners South East Technological University (SETU).

The Higher Certificate in Custodial Care is a bespoke programme co-designed and jointly delivered by experienced Prison Officers and academic staff at South East Technological University. It represents an innovative approach to Prison Officer education. Our annual conferring ceremony takes place in April each year and is well attended by our graduates, their families and a wide range of distinguished guests including colleagues from the Department of Justice, An Garda Síochana, IPSC/SETU Colleagues, IPS Director General and Minister for Justice.

The number of recruit officers graduating is expected to grow in line with our recruitment ambitions, potentially reaching up to 160 graduates achieving the Higher Certificate in Custodial Care.

National Ploughing Championship

The Irish Prison Service was represented at the 2024 Ploughing Championships by a number of staff of various roles and grades from across the Irish Prison Service estate, including, IPSC, PSEC, OSG, Healthcare staff and staff members from the Human Resources Directorate, HQ.

It was the first year that the Irish Prison Service hosted an outdoor stand, in addition to the indoor recruitment stand, which showcased our Canine Unit and dog handlers, PSEC cellular vehicles and some of the necessary control and restraint items used when transferring prisoners. This area proved to be a great success, receiving a large footfall and great engagement from both young and old with our staff and passive dogs present on each of the days.

Through both our recruitment stand in the main Hub and the outdoor stand, the public received a great insight into the very rewarding, diverse and sometimes challenging careers available throughout the Irish Prison Service. The Service as a whole was portrayed in a very positive manner and was received by the public in the same manner, sowing the seeds of employment options in the minds of a large majority of the public who stopped to engage with the staff.

Through this positive engagement with the public, the professionalism of the staff involved and their commitment to the Irish Prison Service mission and values was truly evident.

Castlerea Prison: Nathan Carter Charity Concert

On 11th July 2024, Nathan Carter performed a special concert at Castlerea Prison, raising a total of €7,500. The proceeds were donated to three local causes: the Paediatric Ward at Sligo General Hospital, which will use the funds to purchase new baby monitors and medical equipment; Roscommon Youth Services, supporting a bursary programme for young people aged 10 to 24; and Mayo Roscommon Hospice, contributing to the development of a Sensory and Healing Garden at the new Roscommon Hospice facility.



Women Locked Up: Inside the Dóchas Centre

Women Locked Up: Inside the Dóchas Centre documentary gives a fly on the wall insight to Ireland's biggest female prison. The three-part series was produced by award winning Midas





Productions and directed and produced by Pamela Drynan. The documentary was researched and filmed over twelve months, with its first viewing in October of 2024.

This production received unprecedented access to the workings of the Dóchas Centre and the lives of the women committed to the prison. Along with this, it showed the challenges faced by management and staff from overcrowding to security issues. The three episodes covered the revolving door of first-time addiction, mental health and a perspective of life after prison. Interviews with the women were honest and open and identified issues that resulted in them arriving into prison and the challenges they would face on release. A number of staff were interviewed and they gave their thoughts on working in the Dóchas Centre.

Women in custody is a very different story. They are very vulnerable and their offending categories are very different. This is something the Irish Prison Service hasn't done before. The Women of the Dóchas express themselves very well giving a lot of detail. Their interactions with their roommates, with staff and with the system was very well portrayed. The issues showcased in this documentary include mental health, addiction and everyday life inside the Dóchas Centre.

Open University Graduate

The Dóchas Centre were delighted to host the graduation of a female prisoner being conferred

with a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business Management from The Open University on the 29th of February 2024. This achievement was supported over many years by the CDETB and the dedication of the teaching staff in the Dóchas Centre. The university graduate received her degree from the National Director for Ireland of the Open University, John Darcy.

Presentation of Shamrock

Governor Theresa Beirne and Chief Officer of Work & Training, Mark Walsh from Castlerea Prison were delighted to attend Leinster House at the invitation of Leas Cheann Comhairle, Catherine Connolly and Clerk of the Dáil, Peter Finnegan.

Shamrock which was grown within Castlerea Prison and wooden handcrafted shamrocks, all grown and crafted by prisoners, were presented to the Leas Cheann Comhairle & Clerk of the Dáil on behalf of the Irish Prison Service.



Lá Fhéile Bríde (St. Brigid's Day)

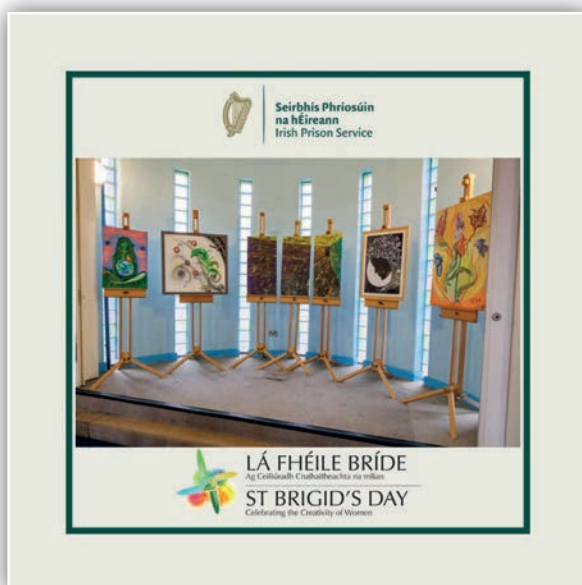
In 2024, The Irish Prison Service in partnership with the Department of Justice were delighted to host an event in the Dóchas Centre to mark Lá Fhéile Bríde (St. Brigid's Day).

In the weeks before the event, the Dóchas Centre held a workshop for the women which



focused on St Brigid's life, the attributes she was said to embody and the miracles attributed to her. Two creative writing coaches, Colm Keegan and Hazel Hogan, worked with the women over a three-week period to help them develop their ideas and create a piece of writing that is unique to them and which reflects their journey, and the relevance of what they have taken from the story of Brigid to that journey.

A number of pieces of artwork created by women in the Dóchas Centre were on display and formed the focal point at the event. The women also presented their written pieces from the creative writing workshop. Other works of art were on display at the event and the Dóchas Choir provided the music.



Prisoner Services

Prisoner Online Payments System (POPS)

The Prisoner Online Payments System (POPS) went live in July 2024. Prisoners' family may send money to a prisoners account for use in the prison shop. The system is a modern, easy to use, efficient and flexible web portal system that allows families to transfer funds directly to the prisoners account. The system incorporates controls that includes a maximum weekly limit of €200 per prisoner being allowed.

Since 1st July 2024, the system has processed over 80,000 transactions with a value of over €4.1 million.

The Prisoner Online Payments System (POPS) can be accessed at the following address; <https://payments.irishprisons.ie>

Domestic Violence Project

A significant number of women committed to Limerick Prison continue to present with complex addiction issues. However, it has become increasingly clear that, for many, addiction is a response to underlying trauma, often stemming from experiences of domestic violence and other forms of abuse. Recognising this, our approach has evolved to focus on trauma-informed care and holistic rehabilitation.

A wide range of supportive and educational programmes are delivered within Limerick Female Prison, all aimed at helping women address personal challenges and prepare for successful reintegration into society. Notable initiatives include:

- ▲ Seeking Safety (delivered by PALLS), which addresses addiction and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), with a particular focus on female experiences.
- ▲ Conflict Management (delivered by Bedford Row), a course tailored specifically for Traveller women.
- ▲ Tides of Change, which offers mediation support and relaxation techniques to help women manage stress and emotional regulation.
- ▲ Coolmine Treatment Centre, which provides both a Relapse Prevention programme and Parenting Under Pressure, supporting women in their roles as mothers.

- ▲ ADAPT, which delivers a Domestic Violence Awareness course alongside individual counselling sessions.
- ▲ Ruhama, offering support in the development of self-care practices and pathways out of prostitution.
- ▲ Merchants Quay Ireland (MQI), providing addiction-focused group work and individual counselling.
- ▲ Rape Crisis, attending the prison twice weekly to deliver confidential one-on-one counselling.
- ▲ IASIO, supporting women in preparing for employment and further education opportunities.
- ▲ Citizens Advice, offering monthly visits to provide legal and practical advice.

These initiatives have had a meaningful impact, equipping the women in our care with essential tools for healing, personal development, and successful reintegration into their communities.

Cloverhill Prison: Committal Unit Information Kiosk

In September 2024, Cloverhill Prison installed a Committal Unit Information Kiosk in each of its committal cells. During the year, Cloverhill Prison processed over 3,700 prisoners into custody, many of whom were entering custody for the first time. A significant percentage of these individuals do not speak English as their first language, which can create challenges in understanding and engaging with the prison regime upon arrival.

The Information Kiosks were specifically

designed to provide newly committed prisoners with a comprehensive overview of the committal process and to provide important information on a wide variety of prison related topics. Topics covered include information on the support services available, including the Red Cross, access to the prison doctor and healthcare services, chaplaincy services, library services, learning and development unit and work training opportunities. It also gives an overview of the prison complaints system and the daily regime within the prison.

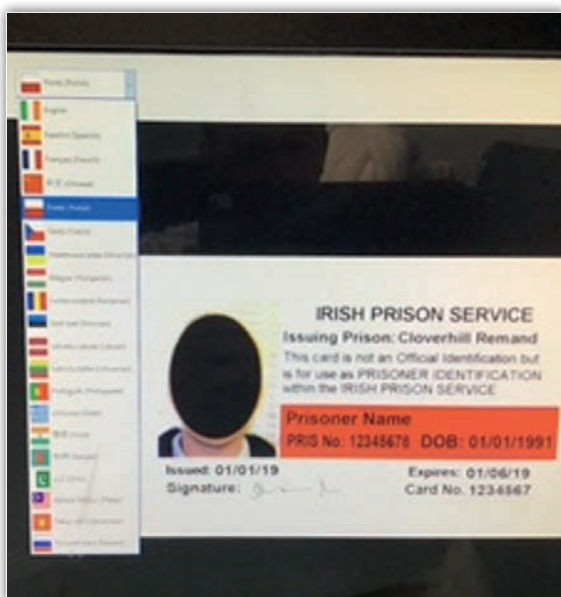
The Kiosk features an 'introduction to prison video' in English along with translations into 21 additional languages to better support non-English speaking prisoners. The inclusion of multilingual content has significantly improved the initial experience for many prisoners and has helped to ensure that many of their concerns are allayed early in their custodial journey.

Work and Training

There are in excess of 120 workshops and service activities across the prison estate with a current daily capacity of 1,486 places. Work and Training provides purposeful activity during time spent in custody and provides valuable skills to assist people in custody gain employment on release. A wide range of training workshops operate within the institutions e.g. printing, hairdressing, braille, woodwork, metalwork, construction skills, industrial cleaning, crafts and horticulture. The Work Training function, staffed by Irish Prison Service Work Training Officers, comprises such essential services as catering, waste management and laundry services. Workshops occasionally operate on restricted hours due to the unavailability of staff.

A review of Work Training activities on a location by location basis continued during 2024. From this ongoing review a number of new Work Training initiatives relevant to the current labour market were introduced including Manufacturing Technology and Vehicle Parts Recycling. Work Training Officers assigned to the new workshops received specialised training and they in turn will deliver an industry recognised program to prisoners.

The year saw the completion of two Work Training pilot programs, one in Nearly Zero Energy Building (NZEB) Retrofitting in conjunction with The National Construction





Training Centre – Mount Lucas and the other in Culinary Skills in conjunction with Technological University of Shannon Athlone. It is planned to expand both programs to other prison locations during 2025.

A Horticulture Training program was introduced during 2024 in conjunction with 'For Us Training'. Work Training Officers assigned to Horticulture duties in the Dóchas Centre, Mountjoy, Wheatfield, Midlands and Portlaoise prisons were trained as instructors in

Horticulture Practice. Newly promoted Work Training Officers to this role will receive training during 2025 and commencement of a Quality & Qualifications Ireland (QQI) program for prisoners will be rolled out in 2025.

In 2024, we also saw the completion of the rollout of Bio Digestors to all prisons. The Bio Digestors anaerobically reduce food waste by 90% with a by-product of a high-grade fertilizer being produced in less than 24 hours.

Work and Training - Average Participation Rates in 2024

Institution	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Arbour Hill	41	42	49	41
Castlerea	29	38	34	38
Cloverhill	9	10	9	9
Cork	16	16	16	11
Dochas	19	21	17	20
Limerick	14	12	6	12
Loughan House	71	62	63	62
Midlands	24	24	24	22
Mountjoy Male	8	8	8	8
Portlaoise	13	12	12	16
Shelton Abbey	37	39	39	42
Training Unit	43	48	56	49
Wheatfield	18	19	18	16
Average All Prisons	26	27	27	27

Note: Participation above is based on a % of Population.



Charity

Durrow Scarecrow Festival

The Midlands Prison Horticulture had two entries at the Durrow Scarecrow Festival in August. This project encouraged prisoners to work collectively, plan and produce their ideas while also teaching them about sustainability.



Midlands Prison at the Durrow Scarecrow Festival.

Best Scarecrow – joint 1st place

The prize money was donated to the Cuisle Centre in Portlaoise.

The Good Bike Project

The Men's Shed in the Training Unit continues to make a significant impact through initiatives like the Good Bike Project, which focuses on refurbishing bicycles. To date, over 400 bikes have been restored and donated to individuals in need, providing essential mobility for those who may not have access to transportation. This project not only supports the community but also offers participants valuable hands-on experience, fostering teamwork, skill development, and a sense of accomplishment.



Crosscare Donation - Curragh

A highlight of 2024 was the restoration of a 40-year-old currach, a traditional Irish boat. Participants in the Men's Shed took great care in refurbishing this historical and culturally significant vessel, which was then donated to Crosscare. The boat is now being used for outdoor activities with marginalised youth, further contributing to the community.





Horses of Hope

This innovative partnership between the Irish Prison Service and the Horse Racing Industry continues to operate in the Equine Centre in Castlerea Prison.

All prisoner participants in the Horses of Hope Equine Centre undertake an accredited course in Horse Care which has been endorsed by the Racing Academy & Centre of Education (RACE) – Ireland's academy for the horse racing industry and international jockey training.

The in-prison Equine Programme can have a positive impact on participants' physical and mental wellbeing while in prison, provide a space to learn new skills, offer preparation for

employment and ultimately make communities safer by encouraging the person to pursue work in meaningful employment as an alternative to a criminal lifestyle.

The Education Centre and Work Training staff in Castlerea Prison perform a critical role in preparing, guiding and supervising prisoners participating in the Horse Care Course.

In 2024, we engaged the National University Ireland Galway to collaborate on research on the psychosocial experiences of participants of the Horses for Hope programme. This research is due to commence in January 2025.





Prison Education

Education programmes in prisons are provided by teachers in 14 prison Education Centres. The teachers who work in prisons are employed by Education and Training Boards (ETBs) and they provide education programmes in partnership with the Irish Prison Service. The Department of Education provides an allocation of 220 whole-time equivalent teachers to the Irish prison estate through ETBs.

Education programmes are adapted to take account of the diversity of the prison population and the complex nature of prison life, including segregation requirements and high levels of turnover.

The state second-level Junior and Leaving Certificate courses are available in all prisons. However, increasing numbers of people in custody require a flexible adult-centred curriculum which has multiple entry and exit points that take account of prior educational attainment. Quality & Qualifications Ireland (QQI) replaced the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) accreditation many years ago in Ireland. QQI is widely used in prison education with assessment by portfolio compilation. All prison Education Centres meet the Quality Assurance standards demanded by QQI.

Expenditure through the Irish Prison Service Vote covers the incidental day-to-day costs of running the Education Centres, including educational equipment purchase and repair, course resource materials and educational software.

The Irish Prison Service spent €1.547million on education materials, fees and equipment in 2024.

The Irish Prison Service Strategic Plan 2023-2027 was launched on 29th November 2023. This Strategy incorporates education strategy and policy into the overall Irish Prison Service strategy and follows on from the previous education strategy (Joint IPS/ETBI Education Strategy 2019-2022 and Irish Prison Service Strategic Plan 2019-2022). The Irish Prison Service Strategic Plan 2023-2027 places an emphasis on digitalisation as a must have for innovating educational programs, policies and practices, and increased digital literacy. Table 1 provides information on average education participation rates in 2024.

Table 1 Education - Average Participation Rates

Institution	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Arbour Hill	79.4	79.2	54.6	89.2
Castlerea	29.3	30.6	18.1	44.0
Cloverhill	18.4	19.4	15.2	22.7
Cork	29.9	31.5	36.5	52.2
Limerick	41.4	35.6	32.4	53.5
Loughan House	69.7	59.8	52.3	80.4
Midlands	39.9	38.7	28.5	55.7
Mountjoy Female	64.6	63.5	47.2	84.7
Mountjoy Male	38.6	34.7	21.5	52.3
Portlaoise	47.4	52.4	42.1	70.0
Shelton Abbey	38.0	37.6	51.6	62.1
Training Unit	48.8	50.4	33.5	53.4
Wheatfield	23.1	29.9	12.2	40.1
Average All Prisons	43.7	43.3	34.3	58.5

Note 1: Participation above is based on a % of Population (the population figure taken each Friday).

Note 2: Participation above is based on attendances input by teachers in the Education Centres. A student is only counted once per week (whether they attend one class or many classes in that week; this is counted as one unique participation).

Note 3: Mountjoy Male includes attendance in Mountjoy Male and Progression Unit. Limerick includes attendance in Male and Female Education Centre

The data below is drawn from the snapshot of persons in custody on 1st December 2024. On this date, there were 5,695 persons in custody – 372 female and 5,323 male



Educational Attainment and Age left School

The majority of persons in custody (64.2%) on 31st December 2024 were early school leavers¹ (Table 2).

Table 2 Educational Attainment of Prisoners in Custody on 31st December 2024

	Number of Persons			Percentages		
	Female	Male	Overall	Female	Male	Overall
Illiterate/Semi-Literate	12	192	204	3.2%	3.6%	3.6%
Primary Level	48	694	742	12.9%	13.0%	13.0%
Lower Secondary	152	2560	2712	40.9%	48.1%	47.6%
Upper Secondary	86	844	930	23.1%	15.9%	16.3%
Third Level	42	333	375	11.3%	6.3%	6.6%
Other	32	700	732	8.6%	13.2%	12.9%
Total	372	5323	5695	6.5%	93.5%	100%

For those in custody on the 31st December 2024, the average age on leaving school was 14.6 years of age (Table 3).

Among this cohort, females left school later than males.

Table 3 Average Age of Prisoners on Leaving School

	Age (years)
Female	15.5
Male	14.5
Overall	14.6

Employment Status

Early school leavers are three times more likely to be unemployed as non-early school leavers (CSO, 2019). Indeed, the vast majority of persons in custody (76.1%) on 31st of December 2024 reported being 'unemployed' upon committal – 89.2% of women and 75.2% of men were unemployed upon committal (Table 4).

Table 4. Employment Status of Prisoners in Custody on 31st December 2024

	Number of Persons			Percentage (%)		
	Female	Male	Overall	Female	Male	Overall
Employed	34	1,170	1,204	9.1%	22.0%	21.1%
Retired/Pensioner	2	102	104	0.5%	1.9%	1.8%
Student	4	48	52	1.1%	0.9%	0.9%
Unemployed	332	4,003	4,335	89.2%	75.2%	76.1%
Total	372	5,323	5,695	6.5%	93.5%	100.0%

1 Defined as those who leave the education system without a minimum of 5 passes in the Leaving Certificate or equivalent qualification (Combat Poverty Agency, 2001).



Gaisce - The President's Award in Custody 2024

Gaisce - The President's Award is the National Challenge Award from the President of Ireland to young people under the age of 26. Gaisce has been available right across the prison estate since 2002 with over 400 young people achieving Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards in the past five years. The same Gaisce Awards are achieved by people in custody as those in the community.

This year was another exciting year for Gaisce in the Irish Prison Service. Gaisce had the support of former Governor Donncha Walsh to progress Gaisce's efforts in prisons. Implementation Teams are being rolled out in every prison to support the development of the Gaisce Award wherever there are prisoners under the age of 26 with six or more months to serve. Implementation Teams are Governor-led and are supported by a multi-disciplinary team including, ISM officers, Gym Officers, Chief Officer, the Head Teacher and the trained Gaisce PALs (President Award Leaders) in each prison. Implementation Teams alongside dedicated PALs ensured that 254 people in custody were enrolled in the programme, with 104 succeeding in achieving 66 Bronze, 27 Silver and an amazing 7 Gold Awards in 2024.

In addition, in 2024 Gaisce trained 40 prisoners over the age of 26 to become Gaisce Support Leaders (GSLs) to support the Gaisce participants.

The support of the GSL's has proven to be very significant and contributed to the success of the number of participants who completed the programme during 2024. We hope to roll out a more enhanced programme for the GSLs in 2025.

Gaisce in the Irish Prison Service was represented at the International Corrections and Prison Association (ICPA) Conference in Singapore in September 2024. A workshop was co-presented by Marion Irwin-Gowran, Gaisce Project Manager and Donncha Walsh.

The Gaisce Award in custody was included in the Department of Justice's Criminal Justice Reintegration Through Employment Strategy 2025-2027 launched in October 2024. This highlights the importance of Gaisce as a personal development tool to enhance the development of soft skills to support employment following release from custody.

Finally, a Gaisce promotional video was created in 2024 with the support of the Irish Prison Service. The video which will be played in all prisons on the internal In-Cell TV Channel was made with the support of Gaisce participants in custody and includes the voices and inputs from trained Gaisce Support Leaders.



Travellers in Prisons and Education

St Stephen's Green Trust (SSGT) works in prisons to support people in custody and ex-offenders. They contribute by focusing on areas that progress Travellers life chances and participation in Irish society. SSGT strategic goals for 2023-2027 include:

- ▲ Contributing to improving the system of support for families affected by convictions and imprisonment, to improve rehabilitation outcomes;
- ▲ Contributing to the goal of Travellers having full equality in Irish society.

The Traveller Justice Initiative (TJI), formerly the Travellers in Prison Initiative, was developed by SSGT in 2014 as a response to the particular needs and circumstances of Travellers in the criminal justice system in Ireland. TJI is managed by SSGT and is funded by the Irish Prison Service and the Probation Service. TJI seeks to embed changes in policy and practice which have a positive influence on Travellers in prison, their families and their communities.

An interagency Steering Group guides the direction of TJI. Members include representatives from Pavee Point, National Traveller Women's Forum, Irish Traveller Movement, the Irish Prison Service, the Probation Service, the Irish Penal Reform Trust, Mincéirs Whiden, Exchange House, Traveller Counselling Service, HSE Social Inclusion Unit, Irish Association for Social Inclusion Opportunities (IASIO), The Irish Red Cross, the City of Dublin Education and Training Board, Traveller Mediation Service and National Traveller MABS.

Arts

The Irish Prison Service exhibitions programme made a welcome return with a major exhibition titled *Alternative Ways of Seeing*, curated by artist and former prisoner Eddie Cahill in March 2024 at Rua Red, the South Dublin Arts Centre in Tallaght. The exhibition featured art and craftwork made by male and female prisoners in prison education centres and three post-release centres. The work of one man in HMP Maghaberry was included, reflecting links with prison arts in Northern Ireland.

Subsequently, three pop-up exhibitions brought the work to a larger audience, at the Dept. of Justice on Culture Night, Thomond Community

College Limerick and Oberstown Children Detention Centre.

These exhibitions explored the benefits or artistic endeavour for people in custody. The value of their work when presented in an educational setting generated discussion and debate amongst people of all ages.

Throughout the year artists and writers conducted workshops funded by the Artists and Writers in Prisons Schemes. In September 2024, the Read Mór book-gifting event was rolled out in all the prisons by the Arts Council to coincide with Culture Night, with writers acting as reading ambassadors in seven prisons, putting 1,500 books by contemporary Irish authors in the hands of people in custody.

During 2024, record numbers of people in custody entered their poetry and short stories in the Prison Writing Competition at the Listowel Writers Week. A third issue of 'All In', the cross-border magazine of prison art and creative writing appeared, having benefitted from a design refresh and make over.

The annual summer art exhibition by Cork Prison Education Unit at the Spike Island Heritage Centre was one of many local and regional initiatives in prison arts, and many prisoners got in touch with their creativity and potential working with teachers in music, cookery, woodwork, metalwork and crafts classes across the prison education system.

The year ended on a positive note as a review of the arts in prisons commenced with the aim of expanding the existing schemes to include visits to prison classrooms from musicians, actors and other performers and craftspeople in the coming years.



IPS Exhibition Alternative Ways of Seeing at Rua Red the South Dublin Arts Centre 20th March to 27th April 2024 Glass Terrarium from Midlands Prison



IPS Exhibition Alternative Ways of Seeing at Rua Red the South Dublin Arts Centre 20th March to 27th April 2024 Crochet Women's Wing Limerick Prison



IPS Exhibition Alternative Ways of Seeing at Rua Red the South Dublin Arts Centre 20th March to 27th April 2024 Model making Castlereagh Prison

Prison Education Taskforce

A Prison Education Taskforce to improve education and upskilling across the criminal justice system, starting with prison education was established in May 2023. The Taskforce is jointly chaired by the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science and the Minister of State with responsibility for Law Reform in the Department of Justice.

The taskforce membership comprises of representatives from:

- ▲ Department of Justice
- ▲ Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.
- ▲ Irish Prison Service
- ▲ SOLAS
- ▲ National Apprenticeship Office
- ▲ Education and Training Boards Ireland
- ▲ Higher Education Representative
- ▲ Probation Service
- ▲ Experts by Experience

The Irish Prison Service notes that the Prison Education Taskforce remains part of the new programme for Government and looks forward to engaging into the future.

Taskforce Key Achievements in 2024

In 2024, four Further Education and Training (FET) Information sessions were hosted in prisons. Two were held in Wheatfield Prison in April and October 2024. A session was co-hosted with IASIO in Shelton Abbey Open Centre in September and Cork Prison in November 2024. The original objective was to raise awareness of FET availability through the 16 ETBs right across the country. Based on feedback from the first session hosted in 2023, and to progress the information sessions, the provision of vendors was expanded so that information sessions included FET, Higher Education, support services and importantly, employment options for people coming out of prison.

Laois Offaly ETB's Mount Lucas trained Prison Work & Training Officers from both Midlands and Wheatfield Prisons to provide a pilot training programme in Retrofit / Nearly Zero Energy Building (NZEB). Inclusive of attending courses, site visits and shadowing courses, Mount Lucas has also assisted with training specification, assessments, rig design and layout for both Wheatfield and Midlands Prisons. This pilot was completed in 2024 in both locations and it is planned to expand this program to other prison locations during 2025.

Under the Building Bridges Project, Safe Pass Training in Wheatfield Prison was carried out over three separate dates, with 48 people in custody successfully obtaining their Safe Pass certificates. Loughan House Open Centre prison have completed an initial course with 18 successful completions.

Literacy Ambassador Programme

The Literacy Ambassador Programme took place under the Building Bridges Project. The National Adult Literacy Association (NALA) ran the programme in 2023 and it was delivered to approximately 100 students. It took place again in 2024 and delivered in the following prisons:



NALA Literacy Ambassador Programme 2024

Castlerea Prison	Galway and Roscommon ETB (GRETB)
Wheatfield Prison	City of Dublin ETB (CDETb)
Midlands Prison	Laois and Offaly ETB (LOETB)
Mountjoy Main Prison	City of Dublin ETB (CDETb)

The Building Bridges project working with the Irish Prison Service has also funded Trauma Informed Weightlifting Training, Recovery Academy and access to C-Pens.

Chaplaincy Services

Prisons are difficult environments in which to live. Prisoners face many personal challenges in their daily lives and at particular times of crisis, for example, at times of family bereavement, health problems, loss of a court appeal, settling into prison upon committal or preparing for release. The Irish Prison Chaplaincy Service has a significant contribution to make as part of the multi-disciplinary team, addressing the practical, social and spiritual needs of prisoners in a holistic way. An external review of the Chaplaincy Service took place during 2024. The review report is due to be published in 2025.

On the 7th November 2024, the Department of Justice launched its new Employment Strategy. The aim of this strategy is to remove barriers to employment for people with a criminal conviction and to increase opportunities for employment. The Irish Prison Service will work in collaboration with the Department of Justice, Probation Service and other external agencies to progress all actions over the next 3 years.

Irish Association for Social Inclusion Opportunities (IASIO)

The Irish Prison Service continues to work closely with IASIO across the prison estate, supporting the rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners. IASIO provides tailored services in education, employment and resettlement, aiming to reduce reoffending and improve post-release outcomes. Through initiatives like the Linkage Programme and Gate Service, IASIO assists individuals in securing accommodation and finding meaningful employment or training. In 2024, IASIO had 1,670 new clients referred to their Resettlement Service and 627 referred to the Gate Service.

Family Connections

In July 2024, the Irish Prison Service introduced a new post of National Family Connections Officer. Their remit was to examine and implement ways in which the Irish Prison Service can support its prison population to develop, maintain and enhance the relationship between families and significant others. The Irish Prison Service is committed to delivering initiatives throughout the prison estate, that will make a difference to people's lives. As a result, extensive consultation, on behalf of the Irish Prison Service, was undertaken with prisoners, their families, and statutory and community agencies.

A new three-year Family Connections Strategy has been developed, and over the course of the next three years, bespoke initiatives will be introduced throughout the prison estate, in response to this. The Irish Prison Service acknowledges the importance of supporting, and listening to, families affected by imprisonment. The Irish Prison Service is committed to enhancing the visiting experience for children, families and significant others, including those with additional needs. We recognise the importance of establishing clear standards of interagency collaboration with regard to supporting, maintaining and developing family relationships, including those without these ties. During 2025, we shall begin to introduce new initiatives within our prisons, to strengthen these connections.

Visitor Centres

The visitor centres provide a hospitable, safe, caring and supportive environment for children and families of prisoners, some of whom are in a vulnerable state prior to and after a prison visit. They also provide tea and coffee, childcare services, a play area with arts and crafts facilities.

Citizens Information Service

The Citizens Information Service (CIS) provides a vital service within the Irish Prison Service offering free, confidential and impartial information, advice and advocacy to people in custody. Currently, CIS operates in reach services in Arbour Hill, Castlerea



Prison, Cloverhill Prison, Cork Prison, Limerick Prison, Midlands Prison and Portlaoise Prison.

In 2024, CIS met with 755 people in prison, processed 2,151 queries and worked on 165 long-term advocacy cases. Plans to expand the service in the Dóchas Centre, Mountjoy Prison and Wheatfield Prison in 2025 will further enhance access to essential supports. The CIS initiative is a key element in promoting rehabilitation and reducing reoffending, ensuring that prisoners are informed and empowered to plan for life after release.

Alternative to Violence Project

The Alternative to Violence Project (AVP) operates within the Irish Prison Service, aiming to equip prisoners with conflict resolution skills to reduce violence and promote positive change. AVP is a volunteer-led initiative that offers structured workshops focusing on communication, empathy and non-violent problem solving. In 2024, AVP delivered 41 workshops across the prison estate.

Prison Library Service

The prison library service is provided by professional librarians employed by Local Authorities to provide library services in prisons. The primary objective of the prison library service is to provide a library and information service to the prison population, of equivalent standard to that provided to the community outside prisons, subject to the constraints intrinsic to the prison environment. Prison library resources aim to meet the recreation, information, educational and cultural needs of people in custody.

During the course of 2024, library staff provided library skills and training to people in custody to work as library assistants in prison libraries across the service. Library assistants carry out assigned duties to include checking books in and out, take requests, take note of number of visitors to the library, tidy the stock on the shelves, and assist with ensuring that reserves reach those individuals waiting for their requests. If a person cannot go physically to the library space, books/materials can be requested and they are brought by trolleys or carried to the individual in their cell, where appropriate. There are library shelves installed and stocked at various locations within the prison, aimed to encourage reading at all levels.

To bring events from libraries in the community into the prison libraries, the prison library service organised and hosted events, activities and themed book displays. They coincided with nationwide library initiatives including *Mental Health Week*; *One Dublin One Book*, *Read Mór for Culture Night*, *World Menopause Week*, *Ireland Reads*, *International Literacy Day*, and *Dublin History Festival*. The events and activities promoted the library collections and introduced people in custody to new material and new authors.

Psychological Services

Who we are and what we do:

The Irish Prison Service Psychology Service is a national service. It is made up of Senior Psychologists, Psychologists and Assistant Psychologists who are based in local prisons. The service is led by a Principal Psychologist Manager, Principal Specialist Psychologist and Head of Psychological Services. Each local prison psychology service supports Clinical and Counselling Psychologists-in-Training, as well as Masters in Applied Psychology students from UCC. The Irish Prison Service is currently sponsoring four Clinical Psychologist training places. There are also two research assistants based within the psychology service.

Psychologists are embedded within a clinical and operational multi-disciplinary team in each prison. The Irish Prison Service Psychology Service provides an *integrated* care model. This means it accepts referrals for a broad range of mental health *and* criminogenic need, including but not exclusive to:

- a) Mental health presentations: Mood and Anxiety Disorders, Disorders of Personality and Behaviour, (complex)
Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Self-Harm and Suicidal Behaviour, Eating Disorders, Psychosis and
Schizophrenia, Addiction, Developmental Disorders, Intellectual Difficulties, Cognitive Decline, Traumatic Brain Injury.
- b) Offence-specific work: formal offence related risk assessments, preparation of Statutory Parole Board reports, offence related group and individual work, complex case consultation and risk management work / intervention.



Services provided by Psychologists in each prison are organised within a layered care model. The Service works across *all* levels of clinical intensity from primary care mental health through to severe and enduring mental health difficulties and high levels of criminogenic need. The Psychology Service's integrated, layered model of care is bio-psycho-social, strengths-based and recovery focused, and balances this with principles associated with the Risk, Need and Responsivity (RNR) model widely used in clinical forensic services.

Irish Prison Service Psychologists have regular contact with community agencies involved in the support and resettlement of people leaving custody. They also work with the families and carers of those in custody, and where clinically appropriate, may provide time-limited community

intervention(s) to support a client's transition from custody to community.

Irish Prison Service Psychologists provide a critical role in support, consultation, education and training to the broader Irish Prison Service organisation, providing an evidence informed psychological perspective to policy development and implementation, Irish Prison Service working groups and staff training. The Irish Prison Service Psychology Service have a psychologist embedded within the Irish Prison Service College who provides expert training to Prison Officers and Recruit Prison Officers.

The following information provides some details on psychologist ratios, referral details, number of clients seen and wait times.

The average ratio of Psychologists to Prisoners in 2024 was



Number of Unique People Referred to the Psychology Service by Referral Type in 2024:

Type of Referral (Incoming)	No.	Type of Referral (Intervention or Onward Referrals)	No.
Open Referral (<i>typically in relation to mental health, other emotional or behavioural difficulties</i>)	874	Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) Skills	184
Violent Offence (2+ Yr Sentence; No PRSO)	255	Alexithymia Group / 1:1	75
Building Identity Initiative (18 – 24 years old, 1+ Yr Sentence; No PRSO)	143	Primary Care Mental Health (Assistant Psychologist)	94
Triage Screening for Sexual Violence	301	Primary Care (Qualified Psychologist)	62
Life Sentence assessments / Parole Board Reports	213	Secondary/Tertiary Intervention (Qualified Psychologist)	60
		Mentalisation Based Therapy (MBT)	41
		Pathways to Change Group	218
Psychological First Aid (PFA)	N/A	Meta-cognitive Training (MCT) for Psychosis	6
Workshop	751	Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) – Group or 1-1 eqv.	226



Type of Referral (Incoming)	No.	Type of Referral (Intervention or Onward Referrals)	No.
		Psychological Assessment (e.g. Personality/IQ)	23
		Other e.g. self-harm, assessment / intervention for sexual violence, Health Sexuality, case consultation, comprehensive assessment, psychometric assessment, Risk Assessment (no parole report), Building Identity Review	464
Total Incoming Referrals	2,537	Total Intervention Referrals	1,453
Total Referrals in 2023 (Incoming and Intervention):			3,990

Number of 'Unique Clients Seen' and 'Sessions Completed' in 2024:

Clients Seen		Sessions Completed	
Total number	Total	Group	Individual
1,830	9,720	3,517	6,203

Wait Times for clients seen in 2024:

Average wait times for triage (all types) and for intervention for mental health.

2024	< 12 weeks	> 12 weeks
Number of prisoners seen for triage (all types of triage)	196	440
No of prisoners seen for Mental Health intervention	149	397

Examples of interventions by the Irish Prison Service Psychology Service

In considering what interventions to provide people in custody to meet their strengths, risks and needs, the Irish Prison Service Psychology Service considers scientific research evidence, national and international professional expertise, knowledge from stakeholders including lived experience voices and organisational data including outcomes measures. The following provides a sample of the programmes on offer throughout the Irish Prison estate. Many of the groups run by the service are transdiagnostic; people who attend the group may have different mental health difficulties and criminogenic risks and needs but share common experiences.

1. Emotion Regulation Group Interventions

The Psychology Service run several group programmes which target emotion dysregulation, a key underlying factor in offending and often a 'symptom' of complex trauma. These include:

a. Alexithymia Groups

Alexithymia refers to difficulty in expressing, naming, and elaborating emotions. Alexithymia

can play a role in reduced emotional expression, aggression (McErlean, Lim, 2020) and violent behaviours (Mannarini, Taccini, Rossi, 2023) and as a result are a focus of psychological interventions in the Irish Prison Service. Alexithymia groups aim to help people become more aware of and identify their emotions.

b. Dialectical Behaviour Therapy Skills Groups

Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) skills groups aim to help manage intense emotions by teaching people skills to regulate and tolerate these more adaptively. The DBT Skills groups run for 16 sessions across four modules in the areas of mindfulness, distress tolerance, emotional regulation, and interpersonal effectiveness.

c. Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction Groups

Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) groups aim to help people be more present and cope with distress through practising mindfulness meditation. These groups particularly target anxiety, anger, emotion regulation, focus, memory and pain.



d. Group Radical Openness

Group Radical Openness (GRO) is a 27-week group therapy programme for people who have difficulties with costly overcontrol, including distance in relationships, having trouble showing emotion and a strong desire for control. The group aims to support improvements in relationships, reduce rigidity and learning to experience and express emotions.

2. Interventions for young people

a. Building Identity Initiative

The Irish Prison Service Psychology Service provides early engagement, psychological assessment and formulation and sentence planning with 18–24 year olds who are serving a sentence of one year or more and are without a post release supervision order (PRSO) with the Probation Service. This intervention focuses on early engagement and helps young people learn more about themselves and why they came to prison, leading to the development of a bespoke care plan ('sentence plan'). This care plan identifies what key rehabilitation services the young person should engage with in order to support desistance on release from prison. Research by Creavin (2022) found that the initiative supported young people establish connection and trust with professionals, often for the first-time, instilled hope and reformulated a sense of self-identity. It also found that young people drew connections between various factors that had influenced their journeys to prison allowing them to look at their behaviour in a more coherent way.

3. Interventions to support motivation

a. Pathways to Change

'Pathways to Change' is a motivational group programme, co-facilitated by psychologists and experts by experience. The group is targeted at motivating people with a history of violence to engage in rehabilitation. Recent research by University College Cork indicates positive impacts in relation to motivation, self-efficacy and more effective sentence planning following the group. The introduction of an expert by experience in recent years has witnessed significant benefits in terms of integrating theory and real-life practice.

4. Offence related interventions

a. Mentalisation Based Therapy

Mentalisation Based Therapy (MBT) is a 25-week programme which aims to improve mentalisation.

Mentalisation is the ability to attend to your own mental states (e.g. your own thoughts, feelings, desires, needs, plans) and the ability to attend to the minds of other people (e.g. their thoughts, feelings, desires, needs, plans) in order to understand behaviours and view alternative perspectives. Mentalising helps people avoid misunderstandings, which are a cause of problems in relationships, and improves people's ability to think rather than act. MBT witnesses a reduction of paranoid thoughts, anger, violence and improved mental health symptoms and psychosocial functioning.

b. Interventions for people convicted of a sexual offence

A review of the Building Better Lives (BBL) Programme was conducted between February 2023 and July 2024 by Canadian expert, Professor Liam Marshall, following the emergence of updated research evidence, practice-based evidence, discussions with field experts, new Council of Europe recommendations, and the new National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence 2022-2026.

The Irish Prison Service has developed a new model of intervention for people who are convicted of sexual offences called 'New Chapters'. This means that anyone committed to custody on or after 1st November 2024 who is convicted of a current sexual offence is being managed under this new model.

Treatment will offer a broad range of programmes targeting the needs, risks and strengths of a much larger number of people in custody. This new model reflects a move away from the concept of a one-size-fits-all treatment for people convicted of a sexual offence. Each programme in 'New Chapters' has been designed to help people to make positive changes in their lives, to address the known risk factors relevant to sexual offending, to reduce the risk of re-offending and to prepare people for release. 'New Chapters' is being rolled out initially in the Midlands and Arbour Hill Prisons, where programmes will be introduced on a phased basis

5. People Serving Life Sentences:

Since April 2017, people serving life sentences have been engaged in various proactive initiatives by the Irish Prison Service Psychology Service, the Probation Service and other members of the



prison-based multi-disciplinary team. Key features of the model (i.e., early assessment, individual sentence plans, active engagement with services, regular reviews, and progressive movement) reflect recommendations made by international human rights standards (e.g., Council of Europe, 2003). A summary of this model was completed by Anna Flynn, PhD student (Flynn & Costigan, 2020).

Psychology Supervision

Psychologists must engage in clinical and line management supervision in order to support good governance and adhere to best practice. The Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI) Supervision Guidelines for Psychologists sets out minimum supervision hours monthly, acknowledging that for specialist services and complex clinical need (such as the Irish Prison Service and associated client group) supervision requirements will be greater. The Irish Prison Service Psychology Service audit the provision of supervision to ensure adherence to PSI Guidelines and supervision provided in 2024 meets (and in many instances exceeds) the minimum PSI requirement for supervision hours per month.

Psychology Continual Professional Development

A number of CPD training events were provided for all staff members in 2024. A variety of training events are provided to the service as part of our annual training programme such as Mentalisation Based Therapy (MBT), Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT), Historical Clinical Management (HCR-20). Each Psychologist was also supported with an individual budget for CPD training. Additional key service led CPD events for 2024 included Group Radical Openness (GRO), Compassion Focused Therapy (CFT), Bereavement training, Clinical Assessment of Psychopathy (CAPP) and Assessment of risk of sexual offending.

Mental Health Week 2024

The Irish Prison Service annual prison-wide Mental Health Week (MHW) took place in February 2024. The aim of this week was to promote positive mental health and wellbeing amongst prisoners and staff; that 'it's okay not to be okay'.

Following months of intensive planning, each prison delivered an extensive week-long programme of mental health related workshops,



activities and events. Some examples included mindfulness and meditation workshops, football leagues, gym competitions, and yoga classes. Experts by experience (i.e. those with lived experience of being in custody) played an integral role during Mental Health Week 2024. Irish Red Cross volunteers spread awareness of MHW 2024 amongst their peers, and helped co-ordinate attendee lists for workshops, activities and events.

Research

Ms Anna Flynn continued her PhD research in conjunction with the School of Law at the University of Limerick and the Irish Prison Service Psychology Service. Anna's research explores the management of people serving life sentences in Ireland, focusing on a new model of engagement developed by the Irish Prison Service Psychology Service and the Probation Service.

Dr Orla Gallagher continued in her role as a Post-Doctoral Researcher, exploring both the role of experts by experience in the Irish Prison Service, and how the service responds to neurodiversity. Orla's work in this role included:

1. A guidance paper on 'Implementing an 'Expert by Experience' Role in the Irish Prison Service' and
2. A report commissioned by Senator Lynn Ruane on 'Neurodivergence in the Irish Prison Service: A Scoping Exercise'.

Two Research Assistants continued to work with the Irish Prison Service Psychology Service in 2024. Ms Isla Donaldson, in conjunction with the School of Psychology at University College Dublin,



has been involved in the implementation and evaluation of an updated treatment model, 'New Chapters' for people convicted of sexual offences.

Ms Amelia Desmond, in conjunction with the School of Applied Psychology at University College Cork, is investigating the development of new programmes for emotion dysregulation in the Irish Prison Service, and evaluating their effectiveness in terms of psychological change. This includes Alexithymia, MBT, DBT, GRO and MBSR groups, in addition to the treatment of deliberate self-harm.

Research Publications in 2024

1. Gallagher, O., Regan, E., & O'Reilly, G. (2024). The Power Threat Meaning Framework 5 Years On - A Scoping Review of the Emergent Empirical Literature. *British Journal of Psychology*, 115(3), 555-576. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjop.12702>
2. Gallagher, O., Regan, E., & O'Reilly, G. (2024). 'Violence is all he knew, and it seemed to work': Using the power threat meaning framework to explore prison officers' understandings of violence in Irish prisons. *Psychology, Crime & Law*, 1-31. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1068316X.2024.2303485>
3. Hume, S., Murphy, K., & Donaldson, I. (2024). A New, Multi-Trajectory Approach to the Understanding and Treatment of Sexual Offending in the Irish Prison Service. *NOTA News*, 97, 13-15.

Conference Presentations & Webinars

In May 2024, Ms Sarah Hume (Acting Head of Psychological Services), Dr Ken Murphy (Acting Principal Specialist Psychologist) and Ms Isla Donaldson (Research Assistant) presented at the NOTA 2024 International Conference in Birmingham, UK. The presentation on 'A New, Multi-Trajectory Approach to the Understanding and Treatment of Sexual Offending in the Irish Prison Service' outlined the Service's plans for a new model of treatment for individuals convicted of sexual offences. A written summary of this presentation was published in NOTA winter newsletter 'NOTA News' in December 2024.

At the North-South Criminology Conference in Belfast in June 2024, Dr Orla Gallagher, Ms Isla Donaldson and Ms Molly Kelly Grealley delivered a symposium on 'Evidence-based practice and

policy in the Irish Prison Service: A snapshot of current research'. In September 2024, Dr Orla Gallagher, Dr Ruth Cleary (Clinical Psychologist) and Ms Isla Donaldson delivered a version of this symposium as a webinar to the Forensic Managed Care Network in Northern Ireland. The webinar had 56 attendees across multiple continents, and the webinar received positive feedback from attendees

Also, in September 2024, Mr Sean Kinsella (Expert by Experience; EbE), Dr Bernie McEvoy and Dr Rebecca Corr (Senior Psychologists) travelled to Singapore and presented at the annual International Corrections and Prisons Association (ICPA). The presentation titled 'Pathways to Change and Collaborative Formulations: Enabling People with violent offences understand their pathway to prison' shared findings from the violent offence focused group delivered by the Irish Prison Service Psychology Service across the prison estate. The presentation also highlighted the value of including an EbE co-facilitator in the delivery of these groups to promote buy in from participants, reduce shame and foster hope and positive pathways for the future to reduce recidivism.

Healthcare

The Irish Prison Service is mandated to provide people in custody with the equivalence of healthcare to that provided to those in the community. Key areas of provision include primary care, mental health and addiction, pharmacy services, health protection including infection control and dental services, as well as specialist services for women in custody and older adults. Chronic disease is a significant feature and complex co-morbidity has become the norm rather than the exception, with patients presenting with various physical, psychological and developmental needs including Intellectual Disability, Autism and ADHD, Foetal Alcohol Syndrome, physical disabilities, malignancies, eating disorders, palliative care needs and beyond.

Prison healthcare is in a transitional state as the service is expanded and improved with additional staff and resources to meet the ever increasing demands of a growing and aging prison population. These changes are being guided by the healthcare needs of prisoners and the supports required by frontline staff along with published reports such as the Health Needs



Assessment report (2023), the High Level Task Force on Mental Health and Addiction (2022), the Office of the Inspector of Prisons and Committee for the Prevention of Torture. An action plan is currently being developed to enable Irish Prison Service Healthcare to continue to adapt dynamically to the challenges ahead. Healthcare standards are being reviewed and updated with a renewed focus on issues of risk and clinical governance to support services to cater for an ever more complex patient group.

Healthcare Services fall under the auspices of the Care and Rehabilitation Directorate and are led by an Executive Clinical Lead.

One of the key achievements of 2024 was the appointment of a National Clinical Lead for Mental Health and Addiction. Significant progress was made relating to sourcing of posts identified in Health Needs Assessment including a Care and Rehabilitation IT Systems Manager, a Pharmacist and Assistant Pharmacist, a Clinical Governance and Risk Manager as well sourcing a female doctor for Limerick Female prison.

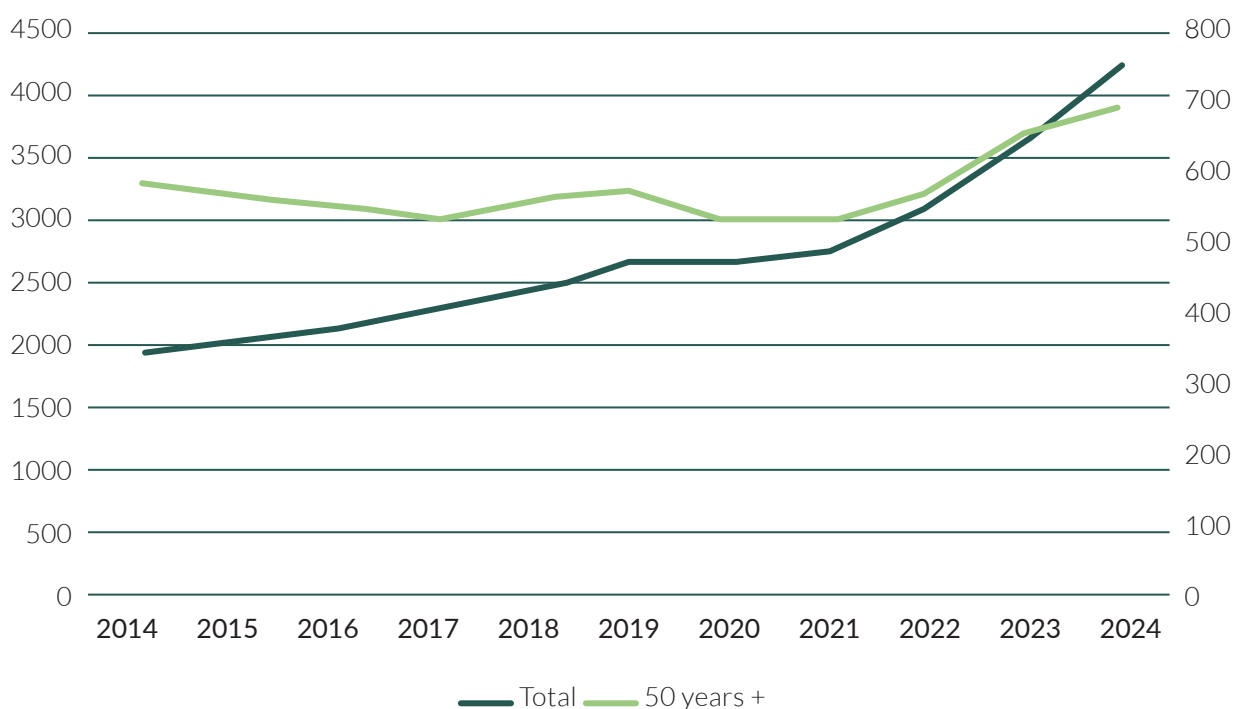
Care of the Elderly

The emerging elderly population across the prison estate presents new challenges for healthcare delivery in the Irish Prison Service. With an increasing life expectancy, more prisoners being committed to prison later in life the level of complexity and morbidity has significantly increased. A significant support in meeting this need is the engagement of Healthcare Assistants in a number of prisons.

The sentenced prison population aged 50 + increased from an average of 343 (10.4% of the sentenced population) in 2014 to an average of 755 (19.3%) in 2024. On the last day of 2024 there were 798 sentenced prisoners over 50.

The elderly population has grown at a much greater pace than the overall growth of the prison population, and within that growth the percentage of prisoners over 60 – who have much higher needs – has been steadily rising as well. As a group, elderly prisoners are also being committed with long sentences, which leads to increasing frailty and support needs during their time in prison. It can be anticipated that in coming years the number of elderly prisoners will continue to grow and that the Prison Service will need to devote increasing resources to their care.

Sentenced Prisoners 2014-24





Primary Care

General Practitioner Services:

There are currently 12 Irish Prison Service contracted General Practitioners (GPs) working across 10 closed prisons. The Irish Prison Service GPs are supported by a locum doctor service in some locations.

Prison	Number of GPs
Arbour Hill	0.5
Cloverhill	2
Cork	1
Dóchas	1
Limerick	1
Midlands	2
Mountjoy	2
Portlaoise	1
Training Unit	0.5
Wheatfield	1

GPs run a comprehensive primary care service to provide prisoners with access to the same scope and quality of health services equivalent to what is available under the General Medical Card scheme in the community. The Irish Prison Service provides primary care services for the assessment, treatment, and support of prisoners. GPs also have a pivotal role in advocating for prisoners at prison management level.

Healthcare were successful in procuring a doctor for Castlereagh prison via a competitive tender process.

In 2024, the Irish Prison Service expanded its partnership with ICGP (Irish College of General Practitioners) training schemes. There were GP trainees in three prisons which has helped to raise the profile of prison healthcare and will ultimately lead to an increase in the quantity and quality of locums available while also aiding recruitment.

2024 also saw the first foray into aligning Irish Prison Service Healthcare services with the HSE Chronic Disease Management programme. A project was undertaken to map the burden of the chronic diseases set out in the HSE programme namely; Diabetes, Asthma, COPD and cardiovascular disease among others. The programme was then implemented in the Training Unit – a prison with a relatively stable older population.

In 2025, it is hoped that further GP recruitment will help bolster the service provided as the prison population continues to grow. It is also planned to enhance the Irish Prison Service's involvement with both undergraduate medicine and post-graduate GP training schemes to raise awareness of the complexities of prison medicine amongst colleagues in training.

Nursing Services:

The Irish Prison Service nursing staff are led by the National Nurse Manager and a team of 14 Chief Nurse Officers (CNOs), with one CNO based in each of the closed prisons and three CNOs based in the Irish Prison Service Headquarters. They are responsible for managing a combined staff of 144.5 Whole Time Equivalent nurses across the prison estate and of agency nursing staff.

Prison	CNO	Prison nurses
Arbour Hill	1	6
Castlereagh	1	9.5
Cloverhill	1	16.5
Cork	1	8
Dóchas	1	8
Limerick	1	13.5
Loughan	0	2
House	0	2
HQ	3	0
Midlands	1	22
Mountjoy	1	24
Portlaoise	1	8
Shelton Abbey	0	2
Training Unit	1	6
Wheatfield	1	17

The CNOs play a crucial role in the organisation, delivery and governance of healthcare services across the estate. Their role includes overseeing the nursing services, ensuring high quality care delivery and managing operational efficiency in conjunction with the Prison Governor. They bridge the gap between administrative goals and clinical practice, implementing policies and ensuring a collaborative approach to care across disciplines. The Irish Prison Service is also supported by agency Healthcare Assistants in several locations who provide essential care for the most vulnerable prisoners.



Recruitment of full-time nursing posts continues through representation of the Irish Prison Service Nursing Service at National Recruitment Fairs and through engagement with final year students across the National University Network that provide undergraduate and post graduate nurse education.

Additionally, the Irish Prison Service has engaged with all universities who provide nurse education in preparing and developing student nurse clinical placements. The facilitation of student nurse placements increases the understanding of nursing within the prison environment.

A rolling programme of permanent nurse recruitment has been maintained and this is supported with a new and updated Nurse Induction Programme for all new entrants to the service.

Nurse prescribing

With the legislative change from supplementary prescribing to independent prescribing for nurses the Irish Prison Service embarked on a project to support and increase the number of active nurse prescribers across the Irish Prison Service. Due to the legislative changes some nurses reduced or ceased prescribing and the Irish Prison Service

responded to this by developing the first national competency based CPD programme for registered nurse prescribers in Ireland. This CPD module was developed with School of Nursing and Midwifery in the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland. This module enables registered prescribers to update their skills and competency in a formal and structured way with the appropriate clinical oversight and governance. The “Irish Prison Service Nurse and Midwife Medicinal Products Prescribing Guidelines” will be rolled out nationally in the coming months. We currently have 17 registered nurse prescribers within the Irish Prison Service and plans are to increase this number over the coming years.

Nurse Training Needs Analysis

In 2024, we partnered with academic colleagues in the University of Limerick to develop and undertake a Training Needs Analysis for nurses. This TNA is focused on determining the level of training required by nurses and identifying the gaps in knowledge or skills and the training required for staff to perform to a high standard.

A staff survey across all nurses in the Irish Prison Service coupled with the provision from one to one interviews with researchers will produce a final report to increase the quality and standard of clinical service provision by:

- ▲ Assisting in the development of a healthcare training strategy
- ▲ Identifying training needs that we are unaware of
- ▲ Indicating priority training needs
- ▲ Focusing training in the right areas
- ▲ Assisting in meeting both the professionals and the organisations statutory obligations to maintaining CPD

Additionally, the Irish Prison Service has engaged with Dublin City University, The University of Limerick and the Office of the Nursing and Midwifery Services Director in developing a report examining the evidence base for nursing indicators that would identify intellectual disabilities in individuals who lack this formal diagnosis but exhibit indications that warrant further nursing assessment. This work will be essential in the future of prison healthcare provision as the under-reporting and diagnosis of intellectual disabilities and neuro-diverse disorders is disproportionately represented in the prison population internationally.





	Arbour Hill	Castlereagh	Cloverhill	Cork	Dóchas	Limerick	Loughan House	Midlands	Mountjoy	Portlaoise	Shelton Abbey	Training Unit	Wheatfield
Addiction counselling	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes
Addiction specialist	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Audiometry	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Chiropody	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dental	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Healthcare Assistants	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Hepatology	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Mobile x-ray	N/A	Pilot	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Pilot	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Occupational therapy	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Optician	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Physiotherapy	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	External	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Psychiatry	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Rape Crisis Centre	As required	As required	As required	As required	Yes	Yes	As required	As required	As required	As required	As required	As required	As required
STI service	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes

In-reach Services:

Prisoners can also access healthcare via a myriad of in-reach services that hold clinics in prisons on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. While it is important to note that in-reach services vary somewhat from prison to prison, examples of these services include, but are not limited to:

- ▲ Consultant-led psychiatric clinics via National Forensic Mental Health Service
- ▲ Addiction counselling via Merchant's Quay Ireland
- ▲ Dentistry
- ▲ Opticians
- ▲ Sexual health clinics
- ▲ Nurse-led Hepatology clinics
- ▲ Chiropody

In 2024, work continued to progress contract reviews and the commencement of a review of non-contractual in-reach services.

Self-Harm Assessment and Data Analysis (SADA)

In 2024, we saw the launch of the fifth SADA annual report for the combined years 2022-23 as we continue to catch up on the research post Covid-19. In line with previous reports, while mental health issues were the most common factor in 2022, difficulties with coping and managing emotions surpassed them in 2023, becoming the most frequent factor recorded for self-harm. This indicates the evolving nature of prisoners' psychological struggles, and a growing need to address emotional dysregulation as a central component of mental health support in prisoner populations.

As we move forward, our focus remains on enhancing the mental and physical health and well-being of all prisoners. The findings in this report not only highlight the areas needing attention but also celebrate the progress made through collaboration, research, and dedicated intervention efforts. Together, with the support of multi-disciplinary teams, we strive to create a safer, more supportive prison environment that upholds the dignity and humanity of every individual.



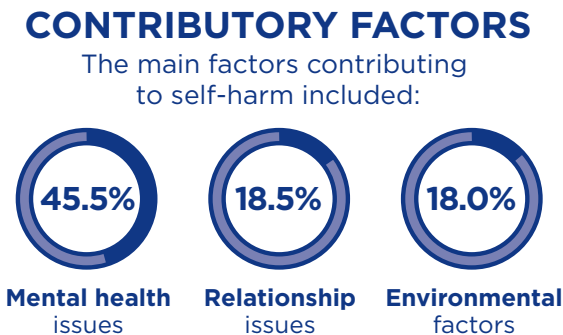
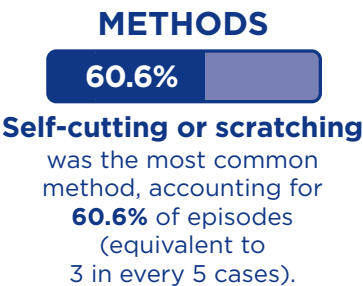
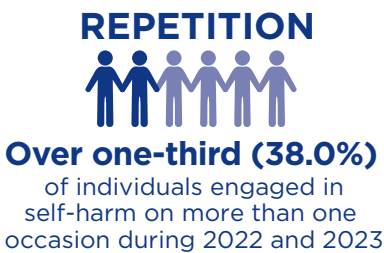
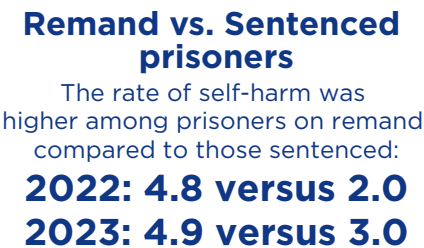
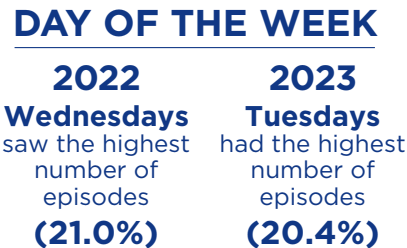
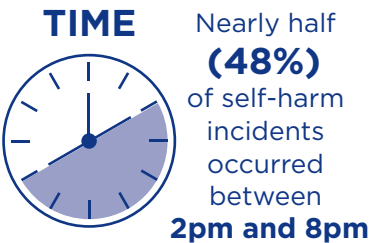
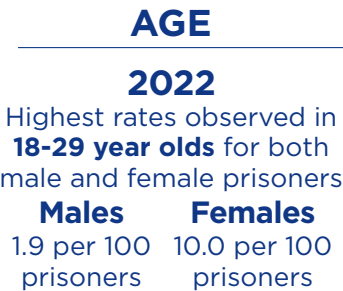
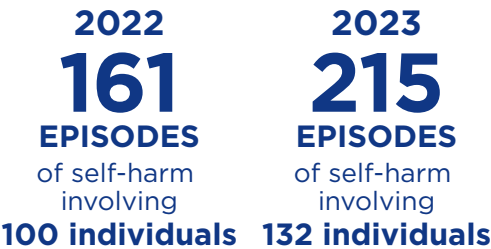
SELF-HARM IN IRISH PRISONS 2022-2023

Self-harm in Irish Prisons 2022-2023: This marks the fifth annual report documenting all recorded episodes of self-harm among individuals in the custody of the Irish Prison Service. The data, collected from all prisons across the Republic of Ireland, spans 2022 and 2023 as part of the Self-Harm Assessment and Data Analysis (SADA) Project.¹ Conducted under the National Suicide and Harm Prevention Steering Group, this work relies on the contributions of multidisciplinary teams across the Irish prison system. The SADA Project offers a

detailed analysis of medical severity, suicidal intent, and patterns of self-harm repetition, both fatal and non-fatal. This evidence informs policies and practices aimed at better supporting individuals in custody, improving their safety and care. The Health Service Executive's National Office for Suicide Prevention and the National Suicide Research Foundation assist the Irish Prison Service with data management, data analysis and reporting.

Irish Prison Service. Self-harm in Irish Prisons 2022/2023. Fifth report from the Self-Harm Assessment and Data Analysis (SADA) Project.
Irish Prison Service/National Suicide Research Foundation.

In Irish prisons in 2022/2023...





Mental Health and Addiction

A multi-disciplinary approach is essential when providing care for people suffering from mental health, addiction or dual diagnosis. Irish Prison Service Primary Care staff (General Practitioners and nurses) work in close cooperation with Psychology colleagues and in-reach providers, in particular the National Forensic Mental Health Service (NFMHS) practitioners and Merchants Quay addiction counsellors. This helps to provide a holistic approach to people's needs, taking into account the biological, psychological and social factors that may be driving their mental health difficulties, addiction or both.

In May 2024 a National Clinical Lead for Mental Health and Addiction was appointed. This person will now leading coordination of the Healthcare response to the Irish Prison Service Drug Strategy and High Level Task Force Report recommendations. The role also involves ensuring statutory compliance with the Central Treatment List (HSE) and National Drug Treatment Reporting System (NDTRS). The NDTRS is Ireland's national epidemiological database on treated drug and alcohol use and is maintained by the National Health Information Systems (NHIS) Unit of the HRB on behalf of the Department of Health.

One key component of this role is building links with external agencies such as HSE addiction services, including the North-East Inner-City Initiative and the HSE Social Inclusion office, to develop care pathways for prisoners. The Irish Prison Service, in collaboration with key partners is working toward a more seamless transition of care for prisoners from custody to release.

The Irish Prison Service is also engaging with the National Drug Treatment Centre to examine the use of an alternate opiate substitute to methadone called Buvidal. This is administered in an injection form usually on a monthly basis. It is expected that this use will be implemented on a phased basis; initially continuing a community prescription and then expand to allow the initiation of a prisoner on Buvidal while in custody.

Drug overdoses

In 2024, the Irish Prison Service witnessed a number of significant overdose scenarios. The Irish Prison Service is tackling the emerging threat from

all illicit drugs and novel psychoactive substances through building awareness among prisoners and staff and forging links with HSE colleagues. To build on this work, prisons have prepared and disseminated key harm reduction information to prisoners during these overdose scenarios. In line with the Irish Prison Service Drug Strategy, a working group, involving a representation of all stakeholders, is being developed to improve the visibility and availability of information relating to drug-related harm across the prison estate.

Work has begun on compiling a national log of all overdoses that have occurred since August 2024. This log will be maintained on an ongoing basis and will help to guide the response to overdose scenario planning going forward. The Irish Prison Service is creating a pathway via the National Drug Treatment Centre for testing of substances found in a timely manner which will inform future planning of overdose scenarios.

Merchants Quay Ireland (MQI)

The Irish Prison Service engages Merchants Quay Ireland (MQI) to provide a prison-based addiction counselling service across the entire Irish Prison Service estate - with the exception of Arbour Hill Prison and the Training Unit where the clinical need is currently under review - The MQI service provides a range of counselling and intervention skills related to substance misuse and dependency. These skills include motivational interviewing and enhancement therapy, a twelve step facilitation programme, cognitive behavioural therapy and harm reduction approaches. People in our custody are offered one to one counselling and group work interventions.

People in custody have access to a growing range of medical and rehabilitative services, such as methadone substitution treatment, addiction counselling, psychological intervention, peer to peer support programmes, psycho-education and the Treatment and Rehabilitation Programme provided by MQI which is, available in the Medical Unit in Mountjoy Prison. All such treatment provided are in line with the National Drug Strategy, the Irish Prison Service Drugs Strategy 2023-2026, the Health Needs Assessment (HNA) and the High Level Taskforce on the mental health and addiction challenges of persons interacting with the criminal justice system.



National Forensic Mental Health Service

The National Forensic Mental Health Service (the NFMHS) is part of the HSE's Mental Health Service and through their in-reach teams, they provide a mental health assessment and treatment to prisoners who may be suffering from a mental disorder. They also provide inpatient mental health treatment to those prisoners who need it at their secure inpatient mental health treatment, the Central Mental Hospital. Furthermore, they provide a prison in-reach court liaison service to divert prisoners with an acute mental illness away from the criminal justice system and into community psychiatric care. The NFMHS in-reach teams are comprised of several disciplines, including Consultant Psychiatrists, Psychiatry Registrars, NFMH nursing staff and social workers. They had approximately 350 prisoners on their case load in 2024.

In 2024, a memorandum of understanding was signed with NFMHS to enhance the care of prisoners with major mental illness and to develop collaborative SOP's.

Recovery College / Recovery Academy

The Irish Prison Service Recovery College Framework is a partnership between the DNNERC (Dublin North, North East Recovery College based in DCU), Recovery Academy Ireland and the Irish Prison Service. It has been agreed that a bespoke Emancipatory Recovery Education Framework will be implemented across the prison estate over the next three years. An initial four prisons Castlereagh, Cork, Dóchas and Midlands will address much of the complex needs associated with prisoners who are living traumatic lives, experiencing mental health, substance use issues and experiencing incarceration. SOLAS has also provided additional funding to allow a bespoke programme to run within the Medical Unit in Mountjoy Prison. A Prison Recovery Co-ordinator was recruited in October 2024 to oversee the implementation of the framework which is currently in the first phase. This programme will be implemented on a phased basis across the prison estate.

Dual Diagnosis

The High Level Task Force recommended that a pilot Dual Diagnosis programme in a prison should be established at the earliest opportunity. This would provide the basis further learning with the potential for a broader rollout across the prison estate. The provision of a specialist dual diagnosis

service would support prisoners with both a mental health condition and a substance misuse disorder.

A number of meetings have been held with HSE Dual Diagnosis Leads in relation to piloting a Dual Diagnosis service in Cork Prison. The service would provide for two referral pathways including mental health and social inclusion. The HSE have been allocated one Clinical Nurse Specialist post which they will assign to the NFMHS in Cork. Governance arrangements are being negotiated between the Irish Prison Service and the NFMHS.

Treatment and Recovery Programme (TARP)

The Treatment and Recovery Programme (TARP) is a bespoke programme that was developed in 2022 by MQI in partnership with the Irish Prison Service to support prisoners who had become drug free in prison to continue their recovery and to support them to continue to lead a drug free life both whilst in prison and post release. A review of this programme was commenced in Q3 2024 and has an expected completion date of Q1 2025.

Samaritans and the Listener Scheme:

The Irish Prison Service continued to work with suicide prevention charity Samaritans to support the mental health needs of prisoners. The Listener scheme is a peer-support scheme within prisons, which aims to reduce suicide and self-harm. Listeners are people in custody who provide confidential emotional support to their peers who are struggling to cope or feeling suicidal. They are specially selected and trained for the role by volunteers in Samaritans branches across Ireland.

More than 2,600 Listener contacts were made during 2024, with Listeners supporting others for over 1,000 hours - demonstrating the need for this crucial lifeline. The main concerns cited by people in custody included family concerns, mental health issues, worries about the first time being in prison and relationship issues.

Samaritans and the Irish Prison Service celebrated 10 years of the Listener Scheme in Cork Prison during 2024, and witnessed newly trained Listeners graduate in prisons across the estate, including in Mountjoy, Arbour Hill, Castlereagh, Loughan House, Shelton Abbey, Midlands, and Cloverhill Prisons.



Samaritans is also one of the freely available numbers on the in-cell telephony in a number of prisons, providing a lifeline to prisoners who are struggling to cope. Last year an average of 15,000 calls were answered on the helpline as people in custody sought emotional support and a listening ear.

Elsewhere, Listener Scheme awareness sessions were delivered to more than 230 newly recruited Prison Officers throughout the year to highlight the scheme and the impact it has on the wellbeing of inmates, especially those newly sentenced.

In 2024, the Samaritans have teamed up with Prison Escort Service Corp (PSEC) to promote the work of the Listener scheme by providing information on the Scheme in the prison fleet. Digital posters highlighting the service were also uploaded onto the prison TV channel for all people in prison.

Volunteers from East Coast Samaritans (Arklow) also attended an open day in Shelton Abbey prison to raise awareness of the service.

Pharmacy Service

The Irish Prison Service employs one Chief Pharmacist who oversees professional general pharmacy services across all prisons on the basis of contracts with a local community pharmacy. The technical (supply) and professional (pharmaceutical care) elements of pharmacy service provision are provided as part of agreed contracts.

The Chief Pharmacist's principal responsibilities also involve undertaking regular audits of prescribing practices within the Irish Prison Service to ensure compliance with all relevant policies, the development of guidelines with regard to the use of medicines and providing expert advice on medications. During 2024, approximately 45,200 medications were dispensed each week.

The Irish Prison Service Drugs and Therapeutics Committee meeting is chaired by the Chief Pharmacist and takes place on a quarterly basis. This meeting is attended by representatives from across the Irish Prison Service primary care teams, our in-reach services and contracted pharmacists. The aim of the Drugs and Therapeutics Committee is to ensure we are providing quality healthcare service to prisoners and assure the provision of safe, effective medication treatment within the available resources of the Irish Prison Service.

In 2024, a rapid overhaul of Benzodiazepine detoxification procedures was successfully introduced in response to Health Products Regulatory Authority guidance. A medication error reporting mechanism was also implemented within the prisons and includes the classification of the error that occurred and the evaluation and analysis outcome.

National Infection Prevention and Control

In line with a safe work environment, the mission of Irish Prison Service infection, prevention and control team is to minimise the risk of acquiring and transmitting infections among prisoners, staff and the wider community. The team consists of a National Infection Control Manager with two additional specialist nurses and a Prison Officer on secondment to the team, supported by an administrator. The in-house Infection Prevention and Control Team engages closely with the HSE and Public Health and are an extremely valuable resource, providing both advice and practical support across the Irish Prison Service estate.

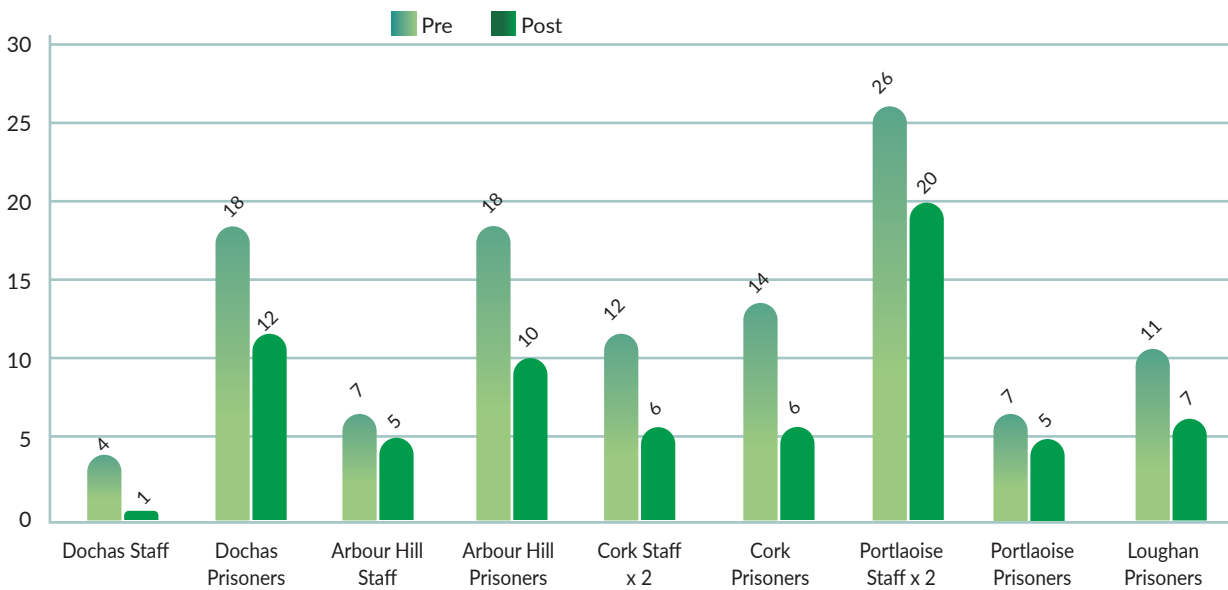
The 2024 reinstatement and development of Infection Control training modules allowed for the delivery of infection prevention and control education to all Recruit Prison Officer, Nurses, Chiefs and Governors.



During 2024 significant health protection work continued. This included smoking cessation programmes for both prisoners and staff. This “whole of prison approach” involved peer supported smoking cessation initiatives for prisoners and HSE supported staff programmes. These programmes were significantly successful

in the “quit rate” that they achieved. The smoking cessation programme continues for seven weeks. The graph below shows the persons signing up to the programme in blue and those still non-smoking after seven weeks. This quit rate is evidenced below illustrates a quit rate of 61.5%.

Smoking Cessation Pre Intervention and Post Intervention



This smoking cessation initiative is part of the wider smoking cessation group which involves key stakeholders across the estate.

Improving the health and wellbeing of the population is a key goal of the Healthy Ireland strategic plan (2013) which is underpinned by a whole of government approach. Under the auspices of Healthy Ireland, the Department of Health (DOH) in collaboration with Institute of Public Health, the Irish Prison Service and the Department of Justice are striving towards the development of a healthy prisons framework.

The NICT were invited by Healthy Ireland to develop a healthy prisons strategy in line with national policy. In order to tackle the challenge of improving the health of our marginalised community within prisons, the DOH have agreed to fund a post to implement the healthy prisons

strategy across the prison estate. Given the complexities associated with the prison setting, it is envisaged that two frameworks would be developed to encompass those who work in prisons and those who live in prisons, which would support the development and progression towards healthy workplaces and addressing health inequalities of those in custody. Work is progressing on this project at present with data gathering projects to commence in earnest in April 2025.

The vaccination programme continued throughout the year with a renewed emphasis on the MMR vaccine due to measles circulating in the community. The numbers vaccinated across the estate were:

COVID-19	Flu	MMR
491	172	26



During 2024, the NICT were invited to attend the national measles guideline development group to develop national measles guidelines for Ireland to include prisons. The NICT were also included in the development of the Elimination of Hepatitis in Prisons Toolbox. This communication allowed prisoners to positively contribute to the project under the guidance of the NICT.

The reinstatement of Infection Control modules within the Irish Prison Service College in 2024 allowed for the delivery of infection prevention and control education to all Recruit Prison Officer, Nurses, Chiefs and Governors.

Finally, NICT has taken over responsibility for the Service Level Agreement with the Irish Red Cross and Community Based Health and First Aid programme in prisons, as outlined below.

Irish Red Cross and Community Based Health and First Aid (CBHFA)

The CBHFA programme is operating in prisons through a partnership between the Irish Red Cross, The Irish Prison Service, the Education and Training Boards and the Probation Service. The approach to prison community health was an innovation to recruit and train inmate Irish Red Cross volunteers to fill a community health gap between the formal prison health structures and the prisoners in their cells. The programme aims to identify health and wellbeing issues through a community assessment and supports volunteers to develop and roll out projects aimed at improving those issues identified.

In 2024, one hundred and nine peer volunteers graduated from the CBHFA programme. These volunteers, along with the support of prison teams, implemented 184 projects across the prison estate – all falling under the programme's five target subjects of infection control, health topics, mental health, social inclusion, and non-communicable diseases. Common projects included the Staying Alive at Christmas campaign, vaccine awareness promotion, the SunSmart Campaign, and ongoing meet-and-greet programmes to support committal and vulnerable prisoners.

Furthermore, in 2024, a number of inmate volunteers trained to become facilitators of the Irish Red Cross workshops- Overdose Prevention, Violence Prevention and Relapse Prevention.

These workshops are peer-led, meaning they are facilitated by inmate Irish Red Cross volunteers for other prisoners to help provide information and raise awareness.

1. There were 92 Irish Red Cross inmate volunteers trained to facilitate Overdose Prevention. Regular Overdose Prevention workshops were facilitated for prisoners in all prisons in 2024.
2. Inmate volunteers from the Dóchas Centre, Portlaoise and Limerick prisons were trained as facilitators of the Relapse Prevention workshops. These volunteers went on to provide this workshop for their peers during 2024.
3. In Mountjoy and Portlaoise Prisons and Loughan House Open Centre, inmate volunteers were trained and facilitated Violence Prevention workshops.

Post workshop evaluations in all of the workshops have indicated an increase in awareness in the topics covered. The CBHFA team plan to recruit a research coordinator in 2025 who will be responsible for evaluating the impact of these workshops and inform future workshops.

Dental

The Irish Prison Service employs contracted dentists across the entire prison estate. This is to provide dental treatment to prisoners of an equivalent standard to that normally available in the general community and covered by the General Medical Services Dental Treatment Services Scheme.

Healthcare worked closely with IT to develop and installation programme for Romexis allowing each dentist have access to prisoners' files across the estate resolving a Health Needs Assessment recommendation and HIQA standard on image sharing across practices.

It is intended to develop reporting of an annual service schedule of dental equipment to ensure compliance with the National Dental Council and HIQA requirements.

National Infection Control Team to work closely with Business Services Department for the provision of local decontamination units (LDUs) in line with Dental council and HIQA standards



Clinical Governance

In 2023, an in-depth rationalisation commenced of all extant Healthcare Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's), Protocols and Policies. 384 Policies, Protocols and SOP's were identified for review. 98 of these were archived. The remaining 286 were catalogued into folders and are being updated under the following headings:

- ▲ Clinical
- ▲ Emergencies
- ▲ Managerial
- ▲ Medication
- ▲ Mental Health
- ▲ Addiction
- ▲ Healthcare forms
- ▲ Professional
- ▲ Education

By the end of 2024:

- ▲ 11 SOPs were revised, approved and published.
- ▲ 12 SOPs were at the approval stage prior to being published.
- ▲ 6 pharmacy SOPs were either created or updated, approved and published.

Many of these have evolved as a new conjoined approach on development developed with operational areas and other relevant disciplines for multi-disciplinary SOPs.

The major outcome of this is the newly purposed Clinical Seclusion Use of Safety Observation Cell (SOC) SOP. A new SOC Log Book has also been created to improve records.

This is in its final stages and plans are in place for a national roll out in 2025.

It is intended to have four further SOPs approved and published in the first half of 2025 with the remained to be approved by the end of 2025.

A new Healthcare portal was agreed and will be available to all staff in 2025. It will contain all Healthcare SOPs and policies, standardised Healthcare documents and forms, an easy to access information section for all Healthcare related issues and meetings. Engagement with ICT has commenced on this project and plans are to be available to all staff in 2025. Engagement and compliance with Remedial Action Plans will continue.

Mobile x-ray pilot in Castlerea and Mountjoy

In 2024, the Irish Prison Service entered into a pilot programme to trial an on-site mobile x-ray service in Castlerea and Mountjoy prisons. The pilot programme was introduced to bring several benefits to the Irish Prison Service including:

- ▲ improved quality of care through fast diagnostics ensuring a timely treatment plan to be implemented.
- ▲ decrease security risks by bringing the personnel and technology to the prison therefore eliminating the need for transportation to hospital.
- ▲ reduce overall costs by reducing the number of staff members required to escort a prisoner to the hospital.
- ▲ decrease staff downtime allowing staff to remain in their post where they are needed.
- ▲ digitally share all images and reports with the Irish Prison Service for the prisoner's health records.

In the first five months, the pilot brought an average financial saving of €22,045 between both prison sites along with associated vehicle expenses. The rapid reporting of clinical findings (average 1-2 hours) reduced the risk of clinically compromising the prisoner. The mobile x-ray unit enabled quick x-ray access for acute cases and made planned routine x-rays easier and more efficient to manage. The on-site nature of the unit also led to a reduced risk to staff, prisoners, members of the general public and reduced the risk of the procurement/trafficking of contraband into the prison. There was also a positive impact on availability of staff to provide delivery of other prison services and prisoner supports. Economies of scale will be more significant in prisons where travel distances to an x-ray centre are larger. In 2025 it is planned to roll this out nationwide.

Staff Educational Achievements

In 2024, Training Unit Chief Nurse Officer Orlagh Finn received a Fellowship by Election from the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland. The fellowship of the Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery RCSI (FFNMRCIS) is exclusively offered by the RCSI University of Medicine and Health Sciences and is one of the most prestigious professional qualifications awarded to nurses and midwives in the country.



Deirdre Lang, Director of Nursing and National Lead for Older People who nominated CNO Finn remarked “CNO Orlagh Finn was a student of mine during her training and she stood out to me then as a leader who was not afraid to put the needs of patients first. When I met Orlagh recently in Training Unit I could see that passion remains and was so proud to see her work with older prisoners. Fellowship by election is a prestigious award and I was delighted when the board agreed that Orlagh was a worthy recipient. She holds true to the core values of nursing: Care, Compassion and Commitment. Well done Orlagh”.

Training Unit Prison Nurse Sreejith Ramachandram and Mountjoy Prison Nurse Aoife Cronin both obtained a Masters from the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland in Advance Leadership.



L-R Dr David Joyce (acting ECL), Emmett Conroy (Infection Control Manager), Sarah Hume (acting Head of Psychology) and Enda Kelly (National Nurse Manager)

International Conference Presentations 2024

Enda Kelly, National Nurse Manager, Emmett Conroy, National Infection Control Manager Dr David Joyce, Acting Executive Clinical Lead and Sarah Hume, Acting Head of Psychology, attended the World Health Organisation conference in Amsterdam on 'Health in prisons and places of detention international conference: mental health and well-being in focus'. Enda Kelly delivered a presentation on 'Solitary confinement presentation'.

Dr David Joyce and Anne Collins, National Clinical Lead for Mental Health and Addiction attended the Meeting of the National Drug Coordinators of the EU in Ghent. Dr David Joyce presented 'Drugs in Prison - An Irish Perspective'.

Anne Collins and Dr David Joyce attended the Council of Europe Conference on Improvement and safeguards of health conditions of persons deprived of their liberty with substance use disorders in Strasbourg. Anne Collins delivered a presentation on 'Responding to the needs of prisoners with co-morbidities'.

Dr David Joyce delivered a presentation on 'Synthetic opioids' at the British Irish Council opioid workshop.

Dr David Joyce presented 'Drugs in Prison - An Irish Perspective' to the National Oversight Committee of National Drug strategy who report to the Minister of State at the Department of Health.

The Irish Prison Service Employee Assistance Programme

The Irish Prison Service Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) supports all serving and retired members of the Irish Prison Service. The EAP also provides support services to the Human Resources Directorate, Governors/Managers and the Prison Officers' Association through engagement with employees who are experiencing difficulties. The EAP team in 2024 consisted of Assistant Governor Shane Kitson, Employee Assistance Officers (EAOs) David Shanaghy and Colin Tormay and Office Manager, Evelyn Harrington.

In addition, a seventy-eight strong team of Staff Support Officers (SSOs) were voluntarily available to colleagues across all prisons and support units in 2024. Appointments to this role, following competitive process, were made at Cork, Mountjoy, Wheatfield and Dóchas during the year. The EAP Board of Management, comprised of representatives from the Human Resources Directorate and the Prison Officers' Association provide operational direction to the EAP.

Access to the Irish Prison Service EAP is via; self-referral, management referral, HR referral, Union referral, concerned friend/colleague or family.

Referral through any of these means can be directed to a local SSO or directly to the EAP team at Bow Street, Dublin 7.

The EAP at a Glance 2024

A key facet of maintaining effective service delivery is ensuring our personnel receive appropriate training in responding to current issues. Training for Staff Support Officers on pensions and entitlements was offered at the Irish Prison Service College, Portlaoise in May 2024 and Induction Training for new appointees was delivered in November.

An Irish Prison Service EAP Conference was held in Galway on October 3rd and 4th 2024. SSOs from across the prison estate attended and enjoyed presentations on the following; Grief in the Workplace, Alcohol & Drug Addiction, Mental Health Awareness, Psychological Support and Stress Management / Self-Care.

Delegates enjoyed a Conference Dinner and were addressed by Seán Holly, Director of Human Resources Irish Prison Service and Karl Dalton, General Secretary of the Prison Officers' Association. The Conference was closed by Caron McCaffrey, Director General of the Irish Prison Service.

The Director General highlighted the contribution of the EAP to the members of the Irish Prison Service over thirty-six years as incalculable and noted the voluntary contribution of SSOs towards that objective, as remarkable.

After many months of consideration, the Irish Prison Service EAP were delighted to launch a

new logo and tagline 'Supporting You' on the 3rd October 2024 coinciding with the EAP Conference in Galway.



The use of different colours in each of the figures involved in the image, illustrates the support extended to all Irish Prison Service personnel and represents diversity and inclusion. The hand within whose palm the figures are placed, is a green protective hand symbolising care, support and guidance.

Essentially, the logo design conveys a sense of unity, support, and well-being, which aligns well with the mission of the Irish Prison Service Employee Assistance Programme.

October 2024 witnessed the Conferring of the award of Bachelor of Arts Employee Support & Wellbeing on the 33-strong SSO cohort who had pursued the qualification at the South Eastern Technological University, Waterford. This group were joined by fellow EAP practitioners from An Garda Síochána and Defence Forces. In line with best practice, Officers appointed as an SSO are required to undertake this bespoke programme



Staff Support Officers from across the estate, pictured with Seán Holly, Director of Human Resources, Seán Sullivan, Personnel Officer, Karl Dalton, General Secretary and Gabriel Keaveney, Deputy General Secretary of the Prison Officers' Association and the Central IPS EAP team.



of education (or equivalent). Five additional SSOs enrolled in the course for the 2024/2025 academic year, we wish them well in their studies.

On May 8th 2024, the Irish Prison Service EAP team were honoured to be the recipients of two Excellence & Innovation Awards from Director General of the Irish Prison Service, Caron McCaffrey.

The awards were in recognition of the introduction of the '50808' Text Support Service in 2022 and the successful Amber Flag Initiative in 2023.

On June 20th 2024, the EAP team were delighted to attend the Civil Service Excellence & Innovation Awards ceremony at Dublin Castle, joined by Seán Sullivan, Personnel Officer, Irish Prison Service. The Amber Flag Initiative being one of three projects shortlisted in the 'Workplace & Organisation of the Future' category.

Through our membership of a National EAP Steering Group, the Irish Prison Service EAP consolidated and developed working relationships

with our colleagues at the Civil Service Employee Assistance Service, the Health, Wellbeing & EAP at TUSLA and EAP at HSE in 2024. This collaborative approach supports good governance, ensures best practice in the provision of services and creates opportunities for learning.

In June 2024, the supports offered to our serving and retired colleagues and their families by the Irish Prison Service EAP, were highlighted in a presentation to a visiting delegation from the Singapore Prison Service. An online meeting facilitated by the Irish Prison Service EAP with our colleagues at the Romanian Prison Service in October had a similar focus.

Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) is an important suite of interventions providing Psychological First Aid to colleagues exposed to trauma. EAP oversees CISM across the Prisons Estate. Significant investment in training, resources and promotional materials bolsters the consistent and effective delivery of CISM, supported by a network of 130 trained personnel nationwide.



Evelyn Harrington, Office Manager, EAO David Shanaghy, Caron McCaffrey Director General, Assistant Governor Shane Kitson and EAO Colin Tormay



EAO David Shanaghy with Recruit Prison Officers at the Irish Prison Service College.

Presentations on the Irish Prison Service EAP were delivered to all Recruit Prison Officer Groups in training and to colleagues attending Pre-Retirement Courses across 2024.

The Irish Prison Service EAP team remains available to support our colleagues throughout the coming year.

The prominent presenting issues to Employee Assistance Officers in 2024 were as follows;

- ▲ Mental Health
- ▲ Stress
- ▲ Sick Leave & Attendance
- ▲ Physical Health
- ▲ Family / Marital Relationships



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THE PRISON ESTATE



IRELAND'S PRISONS

There are 13 institutions in the Irish prison system consisting of 10 traditional “closed” institutions, two open centers, which operate with minimal internal and perimeter security, and one “semi-open” facility with traditional perimeter security

but minimal internal security and is mainly used to house older prisoners (the Training Unit). The majority of female prisoners are accommodated in the Mountjoy Female Prison (Dóchas Centre), with the remainder accommodated in Limerick Prison.



Fig 3.: The Irish Prison Service Estate 31 December 2024



ARBOUR HILL PRISON

Arbour Hill
Dublin 7 D07 YV40

Operational Capacity: 137 at year end

Arbour Hill Prison is a closed, medium security prison for adult males. Its prisoner profile is largely made up of long term sentenced prisoners.

Prisoner Population: The daily average number in custody in 2024 was 134.



Governor III
Amanda Sutton

CASTLEREA PRISON

Harristown
Castlerea
Co. Roscommon F45 X330

Operational Capacity: 346 at year end

Castlerea Prison is a closed, medium security prison for adult males. It is the committal prison for remand and sentenced prisoners in Connaught and also takes committals from counties Cavan, Donegal and Longford.

Prisoner Population: The daily average number in custody in 2024 was 390.



Governor I
Theresa Beirne



Governor III
Graham Maher

CLOVERHILL PRISON

Cloverhill Road
Clondalkin
Dublin 22 D22 WC84

Operational Capacity: 433 at year end

Cloverhill Prison is a closed, medium security prison for adult males, which primarily caters for remand prisoners committed from the Leinster area.

Prisoner Population: The daily average number in custody in 2024 was 492.



Governor I
Kevin O'Connell



Governor III
Mary Kennedy



CORK PRISON

Rathmore Road
Cork City T23 Y642

Operational Capacity: 296 at year end

Cork Prison is a closed, medium security prison for adult males. It is the committal prison for counties Cork, Kerry and Waterford.

Prisoner Population: The daily average number in custody in 2024 was 335.



Governor II
Liam Spacey



Governor III
Gerard Manley

LIMERICK PRISON

Mulgrave Street
Limerick V94 P8N1

Operational Capacity: 286 (males) and 56 (females) at year end

Limerick Prison is a closed, medium security prison for adult males and females.

It is the committal prison for males for counties Clare, Limerick and Tipperary and for females for all six Munster counties. All females sentenced in these counties are sent to Limerick Female Prison.

Prisoner Population: The daily average number in custody in 2023 was 331 males and 74 females.



Governor II
Mark Kennedy



Governor III
Andrew McCarthy



LOUGHAN HOUSE

Blacklion
Co Cavan F91 NY76

Operational Capacity: 143 at year end

Loughan House is an open, low security prison for adult males who are regarded as requiring low levels of security.

Prisoner Population: The daily average number in custody in 2024 was 123.



Governor III
Mark Lydon

MIDLANDS PRISON

Dublin Road
Portlaoise
Co. Laois
R32 F796



Governor I
David Conroy

Operational Capacity: 875 at year end

Midlands Prison is a closed, medium security prison for adult males. It is the committal prison for counties Carlow, Kildare, Kilkenny, Laois, Meath, Monaghan, Offaly, Westmeath, Wexford and Wicklow.

Prisoner Population: The daily average number in custody in 2024 was 962.



Governor II
Martin Galgey



Governor III
Claire Hurley



MOUNTJOY MALE PRISON / MOUNTJOY FEMALE PRISON (DÓCHAS CENTRE)

North Circular Road
Dublin 7
D07 YC97



Governor I
Raymond Murtagh



Governor III
Lorraine McCarthy (Dóchas)



Governor II
David Treacy



Governor III
David Mulligan

Mountjoy Female Prison (Dóchas Centre) is a closed medium security prison for adult females. It is the committal prison for females committed on remand or sentenced from all courts outside the Munster area all females committed to prison on remand or pending trial by the Special Criminal Court.

Operational Capacity: 146 at year end

Prisoner Population: The daily average number in custody in 2024 was 177.

Mountjoy Male Prison is a closed, medium security prison for adult males. It is the main committal prison for Dublin city.

Operational Capacity: 755 at year end

Prisoner Population: The daily average number in custody in 2024 was 863.

TRAINING UNIT PLACE OF DETENTION

Operational Capacity: 96 at year end

The Training Unit is a facility housing older male prisoners.

Prisoner Population: The daily average number in custody in 2024 was 98.



PORTLAOISE PRISON

Dublin Road
Portlaoise
Co. Laois
R32 KN97



Governor I
Michael O'Mahoney

Operational Capacity: 226 at year end

Portlaoise Prison is a closed high security prison for adult males. It is the committal prison for males committed to prison on remand, pending trial or under sentence by the Special Criminal Court.

Prisoner Population: The daily average number in custody in 2024 was 237.



Governor III
Thomas Kennedy

SHELTON ABBEY

Arklow
Co Wicklow
Y14 T638

Operational Capacity: 111 at year end

Shelton Abbey is an open, low security prison for adult males who are regarded as requiring lower levels of security.

Prisoner Population: The daily average number in custody in 2024 was 99.



Governor III
Joseph Donohue

WHEATFIELD PRISON

Cloverhill Road
Clondalkin
Dublin 22
D22 Y2VS



Governor I
Des O'Shea



Governor III
James Kelly

Operational Capacity: 610 at year end

Wheatfield Prison is a closed, medium security prison for adult males.

Prisoner Population: The daily average number in custody in 2024 was 626.



IRISH PRISON SERVICE SUPPORT UNITS



Building Services Division

Governor II:
Ronan Dunning

Building Services Division (BSD), provides a technical / advisory support service in relation to the maintenance of prison facilities and prison capital projects. It also provides the specialist prison's locking service.

Building Service Division (BSD), Unit 2,
Airways Industrial Estate, Santry
Dublin 17 D17 HW



Operational Support Group

Governor III:
Constantin Cazac

The Operational Support Group (OSG) supports Prison Governors in preventing contraband entering prisons, to prevent the direction of crime from prisons and to detect prohibited articles within prisons and are in operation in all closed prisons with the exception of Arbour Hill.

Operational Support Group, Árd na Gaoithe,
Arbour Hill, Dublin 7 D07 YV40.



Irish Prison Service College

Governor III:
Mark Callanan

The **Irish Prison Service College (IPSC)** provides all training within the Irish Prison Service.

Irish Prison Service Training College, Stack House, Dublin Road, Portlaoise, Co. Laois R32 NX53.



Prison Service Escort Corps

Governor III:
William Holligan

The **Prison Service Escorts Corps (PSEC)** provides the prisoner escorting service. PSEC is sub divided into three regional areas, Munster, Connaught and Leinster. Ulster is incorporated into Connaught and Leinster.

Prison Service Escort Corps, Cloverhill Prison, Cloverhill Road, Clondalkin, Dublin 22 D22 WC84.



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**Seirbhís Phríosúin
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Irish Prison Service

STATISTICAL NOTE



OVERVIEW 2024 STATISTICS

COMMITTALS TO PRISON 2024 OVERVIEW



8,704

Overall
Committals to
Prison in 2024



9.6%

Increase in Overall
Committals from
2023 to 2024



7,193

No. of Persons
Committed to
Prison in 2024



10.7%

Increase
in Persons
Committed from
2023 to 2024



77%

of Sentence
Committals
were for 12
months or less

From 2023 to 2024, committals under sentence increased in all areas except for those receiving a life sentence, this figure remained the same.

The number of committals for the non-payment of court ordered fines decreased in 2024, from 552 to 507. Of this 76.3% were male and 23.7% were female.

Overall committals during 2024

There were 8,704 committals to prison in 2024, a 9.6% (+766) increase on the number of committals in 2023 (7,938).

In 2024, there were 7,193 persons sent to prison compared with 6,495 in 2023, an increase of 10.7% (+698). Of those persons committed, 87.7% were male and 12.3% were female.

Total sentenced during 2024

There was an increase of 385 or 6.9% in the total number of persons sentenced during 2024 from 5,588 in 2023 to 5,973 in 2024. Of the 5,973 who were sentenced, 882 individuals were committed in a previous year and subsequently convicted in 2024.

When fine defaulters are excluded from these figures:

- ▲ The number of persons under sentence have increased by 430 or 8.5%, from 5,036 in 2023 to 5,466 in 2024.
- ▲ Those who received a sentence of less than 3 months has increased by 229 or 29.2%, from 783 in 2023 to 1,012 in 2024.
- ▲ Those who received a sentence of 3 to less than 6 months has increased by 13 or 0.9% from 1,471 in 2023 to 1,484 in 2024.

- ▲ Those who received a sentence of 6 to <12 months has increased by 58 or 6.3% from 923 in 2023 to 981 in 2024.
- ▲ Those who received a sentence of 1 to <2 years has increased by 17 or 3.1% from 556 in 2023 to 573 in 2024.
- ▲ Those who received a sentence of 2 to <3 years has increased by 38 or 8.0% from 476 in 2023 to 514 in 2024.
- ▲ Those who received a sentence of 3 to <5 years has increased by 51 or 10.1% from 507 in 2023 to 558 in 2024.
- ▲ Those who received a sentence of 5 to <10 years has increased by 16 or 6.5% from 247 in 2023 to 263 in 2024.
- ▲ Those who received a sentence of 10 years plus has increased by 8 or 14.5% from 55 in 2023 to 63 in 2024.
- ▲ Those who received a Life sentence has remained the same in 2024 as in 2023. A total of 18.

Persons detained under Immigration Laws

In 2024, there were 209 committals in respect of immigration issues involving 204 detainees. This represents a 65% (+82) increase in such committals on the previous year.

Daily average number of prisoners in custody

The overall daily average number of prisoners in custody in 2024 was 4,941 compared to 4,582 in 2023, an increase of 7.8% (+359). The daily average number of female offenders in custody was 251, a 17.3% (+37) increase on the 2023 average of 214. There was a 7.4% (+322) increase in the daily average number of male offenders in custody, from 4,368 in 2023 to 4,690 in 2024.



DAILY AVERAGE NUMBER OF PRISONERS IN CUSTODY

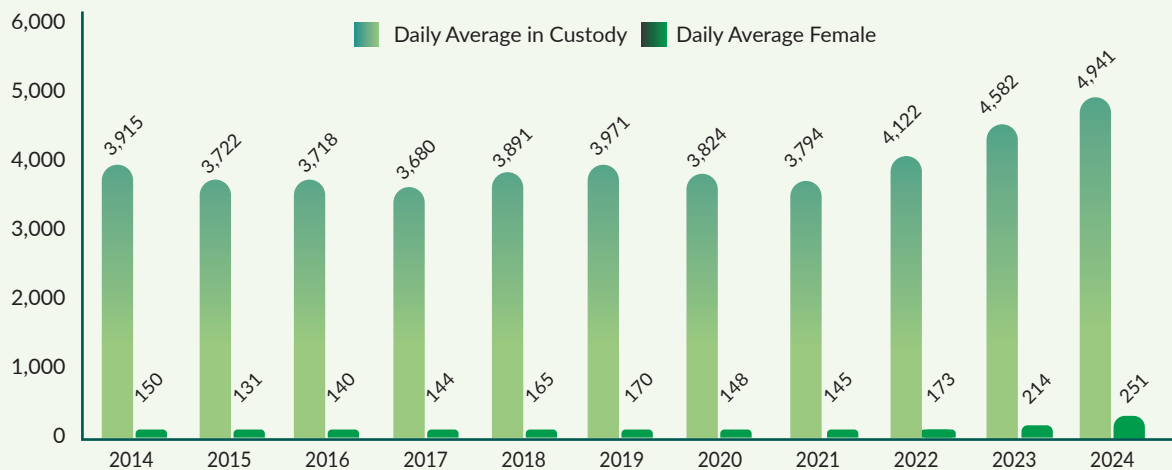


Fig. 4: Daily Average 2014 - 2024

COMMITTAL STATUS

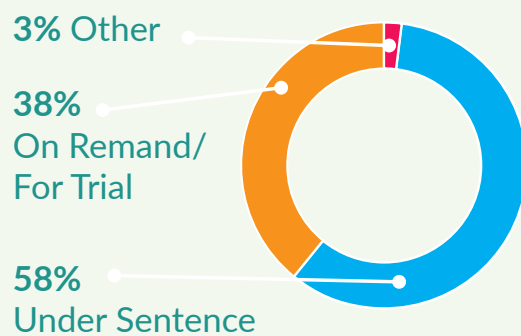


Fig. 7: Committal Status broken down by type

GENDER

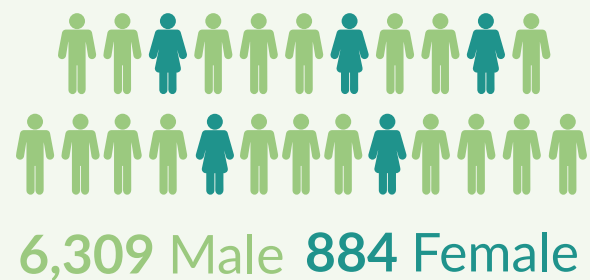
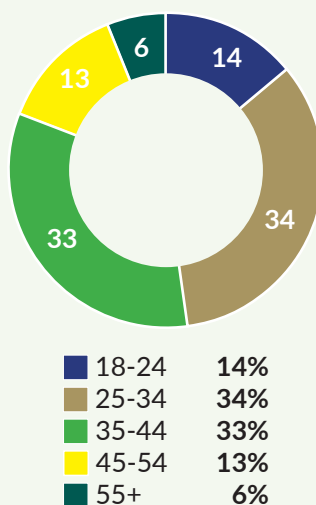


Fig 8: Persons Committed to Prison 2024, broken down by gender

AGE GROUP



SENTENCE LENGTH

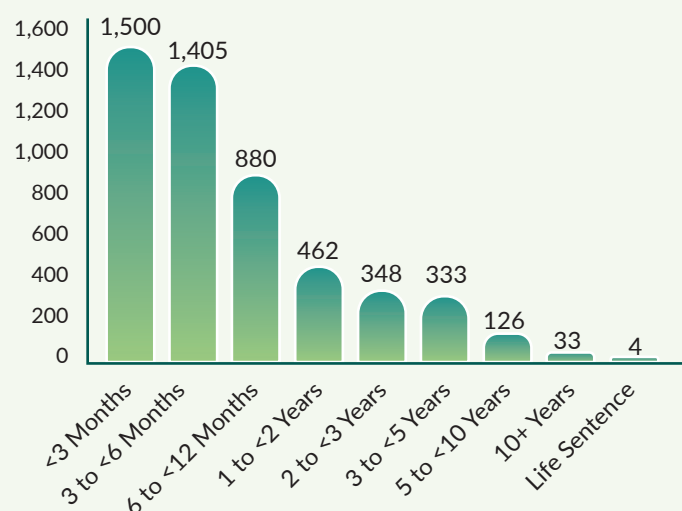


Fig. 9: Sentenced Committals during 2024, broken down by Sentence Length and Age Group



COMMITTALS TO PRISON IN 2024

Total Number of Committals to Prison in 2024

There were 8,704 committals to prison in 2024.



Fig. 10: Committals 2014 to 2024

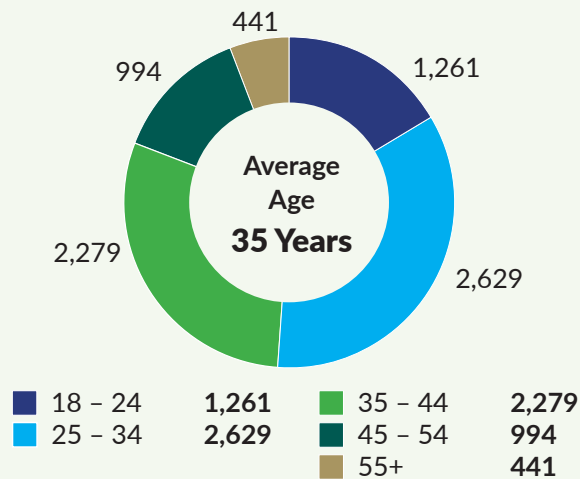
Number of persons committed to prison in 2024

A total of 7,193 persons accounted for the 8,704 committals. This figure relates to persons newly committed to prison (i.e. not already on remand or serving another sentence).

The total of 8,704 committals comprised of:

- ▲ 5,091 under sentence,
- ▲ 3,352 on remand,
- ▲ 40 for European Arrest Warrant Extradition,
- ▲ 209 under Immigration Law and
- ▲ 12 for Indefinite Contempt of Court.

AGE PROFILE OF MALE COMITTALS



AGE PROFILE OF FEMALE COMITTALS

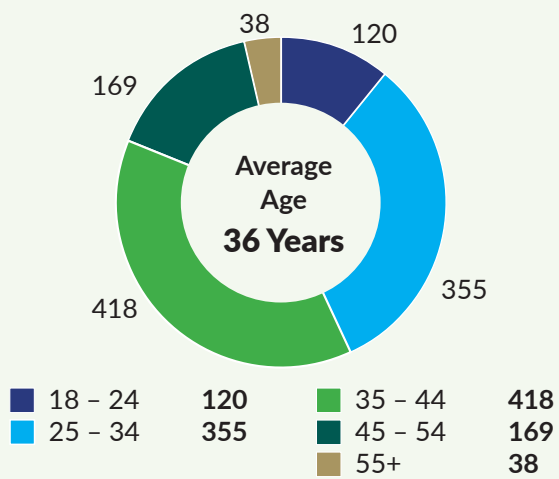


Fig. 11: Age Profile of Committals in 2024, broken down by Gender

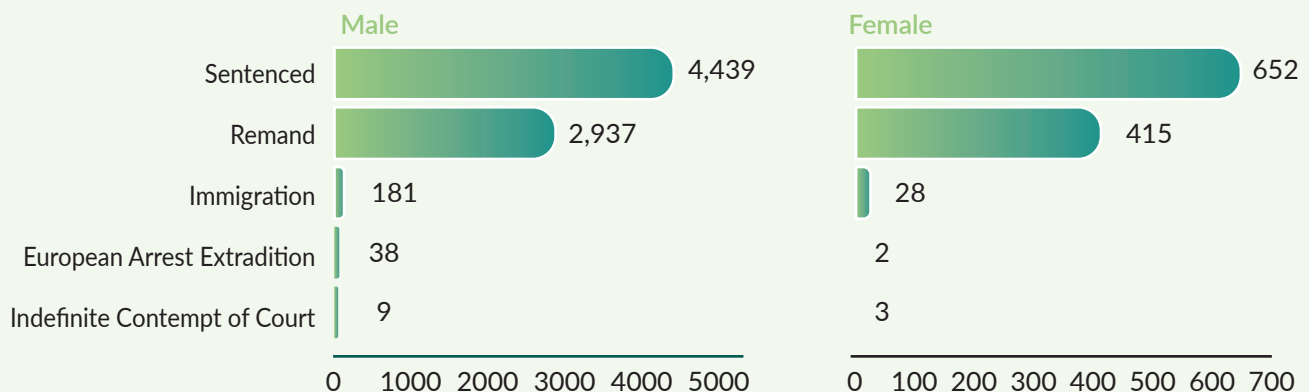


Fig. 12: Most Serious Offence in the Custodial Period, Committal Type broken down by Gender



County and Country of Origin of Persons Committed to Prison in 2024

Over one third (34.1% or 2,454) of all persons committed to prison declared Dublin as their county of residence. Cork was the second most commonly declared county of residence (7.2% or 518), followed by Limerick (5.1% or 365) and Kildare (3.2% or 233). People who declared they had no fixed abode accounted for 11.6% (835) of all committals in 2024.

During the year 75.3% (5,419) of persons committed to prison self reported as Irish nationals. Other European Union nationals (excluding Irish) accounted for 11.7% (844) of persons committed. British accounted for 1.9% (135). Other European nationals (excluding European Union nationals) accounted for 1.7% (119) of persons committed. African nationals accounted for 4.2% (304) of persons committed, Asian nationals for 2.5% (183) and South

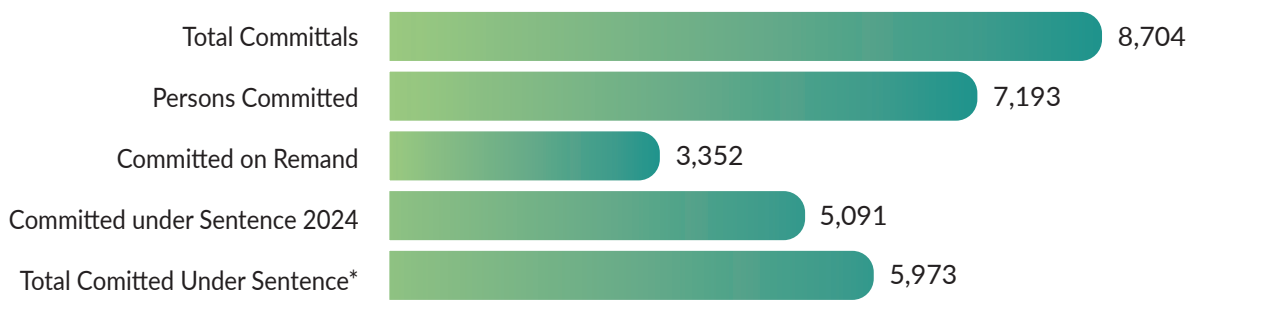
American nationals for 1.2% (86) of persons committed. Other nationals, including those from Middle East, North & Central American, Oceania and The Caribbean, accounted for 1.5% (105) of persons committed.

A full breakdown by county of residence and country of origin is available on our website: www.irishprisons.ie.

Total Sentenced during 2024

There were 5,091 committals under sentence in 2024. When an additional 882 prisoners, who were already in custody at the start of the year on remand/awaiting trial and who were subsequently convicted are included, the total number of prisoners received on conviction in 2024 was 5,973.

There was a 6.9% increase (+385) in the total number sentenced in 2024 compared with 2023 (5,588).



**Includes the 882 prisoners who were on remand at the start of the year and who were subsequently convicted*

Fig. 13: Total Sentenced during 2024

Under Sentence by Age Group

Age Group	Total	%
18 to 24	840	14.1
25 to 34	2,058	34.4
35 to 44	1,921	32.2
45 to 54	774	12.9
55 years+	380	6.4
Total	5,973	100.0

Fig. 14: Total Sentenced during 2024 by Age Group



Total Sentenced during 2024 broken down by Offence Group

Offence Group	Female	Male	Total	%
GP01 Homicide Offences	4	40	44	0.8
GP02 Sexual Offences	0.7	320	327	5.9
GP03 Attempts/Threat to Murder, Assaults, Harassments and Related Offences	4	370	374	13.5
GP04 Dangerous or Negligent Acts	6.3	151	165	3.0
GP05 Kidnapping and Related Offences	66	671	737	0.4
GP06 Robbery, Extortion and Hijacking Offences	12.3	69	77	1.4
GP07 Burglary and Related Offences	21	164	185	5.5
GP08 Theft and Related Offences	3.1	793	1,030	18.4
GP09 Fraud, Deception and Related Offences	0	15	15	2.1
GP10 Controlled Drug Offences	0.2	506	546	9.8
GP11 Weapons and Explosives Offences	7	88	95	3.0
GP12 Damage to Property and the Environment	1.6	258	270	4.8
GP13 Public Order and Social Code Offences	20	292	312	6.2
GP14 Road and Traffic Offences	5.2	409	441	7.9
GP15 Offences against Government, Justice Procedures and Organisation of Crime	250	762	1,012	16.7
GP16 Offences Not Elsewhere Classified	16.9	33	42	0.8
Total	18	135	153	100.0

Fig. 15: Total Sentenced during 2024 by Offence Group



SNAPSHOT 30 NOVEMBER 2024 - KEY POINTS

The total number of persons in custody was 5,087 on 30 November 2024.

Of the 3,986 sentenced prisoners, 386 prisoners (9.7%) were serving life sentences and another 345 (8.7%) were serving determinate sentences of 10 years or more.

30 offenders were serving sentences of less than 3 months representing 0.8% of sentenced prisoners.

Temporary Release

There were 558 prisoners on temporary release on 30 November 2024. Of these 558 prisoners, no prisoners was serving less than 3 months solely for fines. 95 were on the Community Return Programme and 113 were on temporary release to the Community Support Scheme.

7 prisoners were on structured temporary release from an open centre, 126 were on temporary release serving less than 6 months for non-fine offences, and

217 were on other temporary release including under the supervision of the Probation Service.

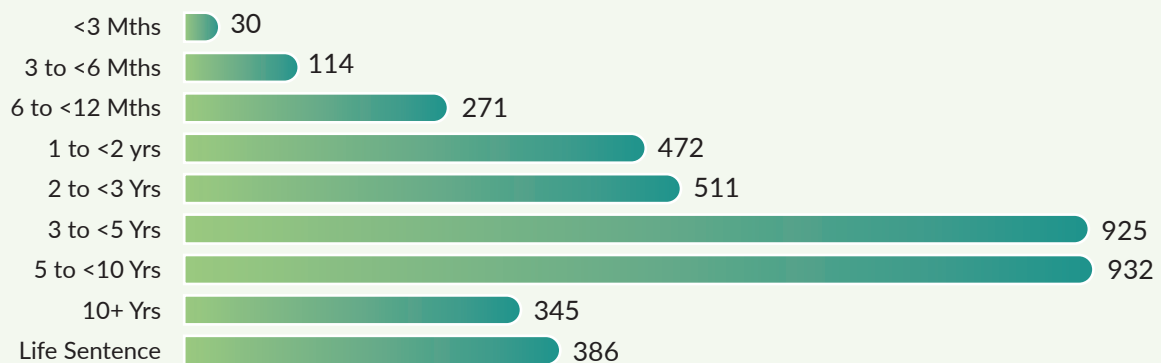


Fig. 16: Sentence length of Prisoners in Custody under Sentence on 30 November 2024

Males Under Sentence

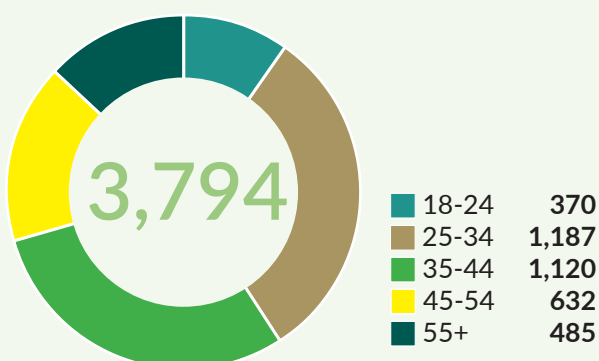


Fig. 17: Male Prisoner Population Under Sentence on 30th November 2024, broken down by Age Group

Females Under Sentence

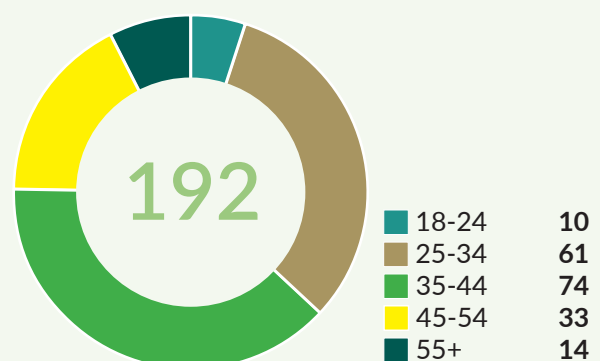
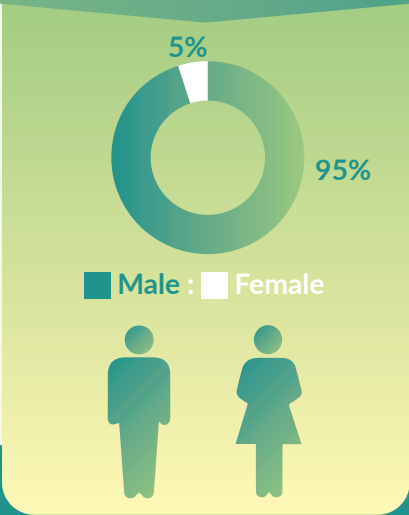
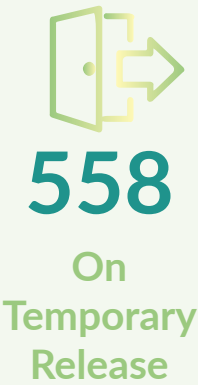


Fig. 18: Female Prisoner Population Under Sentence on 30th November 2024, broken down by Age Group



SNAPSHOT OF PRISON POPULATION ON 30 NOVEMBER 2024





Seirbhís Phríosúin
na hÉireann
Irish Prison Service

STRATEGY STATEMENT 2023-2027



New Strategy Rollout

The research, analysis and consultation stage of developing a new strategy for the Irish Prison Service commenced in 2022 and concluded in 2023. This planning provided a clear understanding of the Irish Prison Service challenges and opportunities. The new Statement of Strategy clarifies the strategic pillars, initiatives and priorities and outlines a timeframe in the roadmap for delivery whilst being cognisant of the short term business needs of the Irish Prison Service. In developing this strategy, we undertook a review of our operating environment to identify the internal and external factors which could significantly impact upon future Irish Prison Service capacity, priorities, strategy, implementation and delivery. The new plan for our Service has been informed through extensive engagement and consultation with staff and stakeholders, including the Department of Justice; the Office of the Inspector of Prisons; the Probation Service; staff representative bodies; the Visiting Committees, and people in our custody. The plan was formally launched by Minister of State, James Browne TD, in 2023. The Strategy Statement will undergo a midterm review in 2025 to assess the implementation of the actions identified under the new strategy and make any necessary adjustments.

Strategic Plan

The Irish Prison Service Strategic Plan 2023-2027 sets forth a clear and actionable path to transform

the prison system by focusing on rehabilitation, staff support, and improving operational services. By addressing both current challenges and anticipating future needs, the plan aims to contribute significantly to safer communities through improved management and rehabilitation of prisoners. This strategy aligns with broader criminal justice reform efforts, aiming to create a more humane and effective prison system that respects human dignity and fosters positive societal outcomes.

Overview and Strategic Context

The strategic plan was developed through extensive consultations with a wide range of stakeholders, including justice departments, prison staff, and rehabilitation services. It addresses the challenges of an aging prison population, increasing prisoner numbers, and the rising mental health needs among inmates. The plan also integrates learnings from the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in maintaining and advancing prison operations under constrained circumstances.

Strategic Goals and Pillars

The strategy is structured around five main pillars: Prisoner Pathways, Employee Experience, New Business Processes, Digital Platforms, and Governance Framework. Each pillar targets specific improvements and is supported by detailed actions and measurable outcomes.

Our five strategic pillars

1. Prisoner Pathways: We will evolve existing and develop alternate prisoner pathways to better reflect sentence types, increase capacity within the system and achieve better outcomes for prisoners.

2. Employee Experience: We will continue to embed a person centred innovative, collaborative and transparent culture that reinforces our efforts to renew the organisation, underpinned by more efficient and effective people processes.

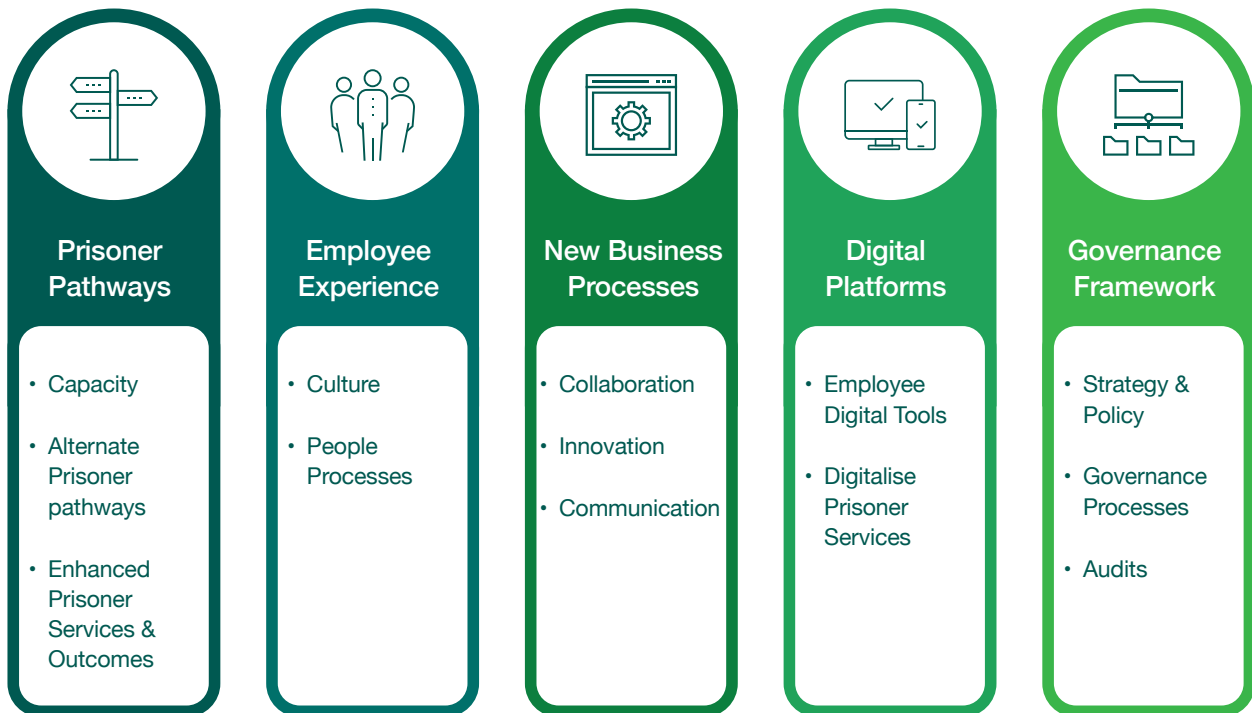
3. New Business Processes: We will continuously improve the quality of services provided to our stakeholders through new business processes that place collaboration, innovation and communication as the foundational principles for our ways of working.

4. Digital Platforms: We will modernise our services through digital development that enable more transparent and tailored services, support innovation and improve efficiency and effectiveness in a cohesive and holistic manner.

5. Governance Framework: Will we strengthen our internal controls and governance arrangements to support corporate capacity and maintain and ensure consistency, transparency and accountability for the services we provide on behalf of the State.



Key aims of each pillar



Key Challenges and Responses

The strategy acknowledges the dynamic and challenging environment of the Irish Prison Service, particularly the complexities introduced by the evolving profiles of the prison population. Key responses include:

- ▲ Implementing infrastructure projects to accommodate specific prisoner cohorts.
- ▲ Increasing the focus on health services, especially addressing mental health and substance abuse issues.
- ▲ Enhancing educational and training opportunities to support rehabilitation and reduce recidivism.

Progress Report on the Irish Prison Service Strategy Statement 2023-2027 for the Year 2024

Implementation of the strategic plan is guided by a phased roadmap through 2027, ensuring that the initiatives are rolled out in a timely and effective manner. The performance and progress will be monitored through this and future annual reports as well as audits, and stakeholder feedback mechanisms.

Our efforts in 2024 were focused primarily on consulting, developing and initiating the first phases of our five strategic pillars: Prisoner Pathways, Employee Experience, New Business Processes, Digital Platforms, and Governance Framework. Each pillar has been crucial in directing our actions towards a more efficient, transparent, and rehabilitative-oriented service.

Prisoner Pathways

We continue to develop alternate prisoner pathways throughout our estate and services. These pathways aim to reflect the diverse needs of our prison population more accurately, increase system capacity, and improve rehabilitative outcomes. A critical part of this effort was the enhancement of our infrastructure to better accommodate the specific needs of different prisoner cohorts, including the aging population and those requiring mental health interventions.



1. Prisoner Pathways					
	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
1.1 Capacity	Implement National Flow Plan				
	Explore Capacity Opportunities				
		Harmonise Escorts & Staff Rostering Process			
			Develop infrastructure to meet capacity requirements		
1.2 Alternate Prisoner Pathways	Identify Alternate Prisoner Pathways				
		Align Pathways with Criminal Justice Agencies			
			Implement Alternate Pathways		
1.3 Enhanced Prisoner Services & Outcomes	Reinforce Prisoner Services Model				
		Enhance Primary Care Provisions & Evolve Drugs Strategy			
		Strengthen Psychology Intervention Programs			
		Expand Education & Work Training Opportunities			
			Constructively Engage Prisoners & Families		

Employee Experience

Understanding that our staff are our most valuable resource, we have embarked on initiatives to enhance the workplace environment and provide our employees with the tools and support needed to excel.

2. Employee Experience					
	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
2.1 Culture	Culture Audit				
		Develop Culture Roadmap			
		Design & Roll-out a Staff Health & Wellbeing Model			
			Implement Culture Roadmap		
2.2 People Processes	Implement an Annual Deliverables Process				
	Implement Functional Planning Framework				
		Strengthen People Planning Process			
			Enhance PMDS Process		



New Business Processes

Innovative business processes are at the heart of our operational improvements. We have focused on enhancing our collaboration with other criminal justice agencies and stakeholders to ensure a unified approach to prisoner management. This includes better stakeholder engagement and the implementation of new communication strategies that enhance clarity and efficiency.

3. Innovation Collaboration & Communication					
	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
3.1 New Business Processes	Innovation Process				
	Stakeholder Collaboration Process				
		Communication Framework			

Digital Platforms

The planning for digital transformation of our services has commenced in earnest. We will prioritise the deployment of digital tools that reduce manual tasks and improve operational services.

4. Digital Platforms					
	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
4.1 Employee Digital Tools	Implement Organisation Dashboard				
		Digitalise Prison Report Books			
			Implement Staff Scheduling & Training Portal		
4.2 Digital Prisoner Services	Digitalise Prisoner Services				

Governance Framework

Strengthening our governance framework has been a critical focus. As the Service prepares to go forward on a statutory footing as a Scheduled Office we continue to strengthen internal controls and governance arrangements to support corporate capacity and maintain and ensure consistency, transparency and accountability for the services we provide on behalf of the State. We have worked diligently to enhance our policy management processes and implement a robust auditing system that aligns with both our strategic objectives and regulatory requirements. This foundational work is vital for ensuring accountability and transparency across all levels of our service.



5. Governance Framework					
	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
5.1 Strategy & Policy	Strategy Rollout		Strategy Review		
	Enhance Policy Framework				
	Sustainability Policy Development & Implementation				
5.2 Organisation Processes	Upgrade Financial Governance Processes				
	Implement a Prisons Operations Manual				
	Strengthen Data & Information Requests Process				
		Upgrade Complaints Process			
5.3 Audits	Consistent Approach for External Audits				
		Develop & Rollout Self Audits			

An outline the progress on the implementation and the delivery of actions during 2024 are highlighted below:

National Flow Plan

The Irish Prison Service commenced reconfiguration of the accommodation spaces available across the estate for both male remand and male sex offenders. Work is ongoing with regard to male remand with the East Division in Wheatfield Prison being identified for this cohort. This will allow the consolidation of this cohort in west Dublin. It is anticipated that this accommodation will be reconfigured in 2025. Male sex offenders accommodation was reconfigured in 2024 with this cohort now being housed in Mountjoy West.

Align Pathways with Criminal Justice Agencies

In 2024, the Irish Prison Service and the Probation Service continued their commitment to a multi-agency approach to offender management and rehabilitation. The fourth Joint Strategic Statement was finalised and builds on previous strategies, reinforcing collaborative efforts to reduce re-offending and improve rehabilitation outcomes.

Aligned with Government policy, the strategy enhances through care, promotes a health-led approach for individuals facing mental health and addiction challenges, and expands alternatives to

imprisonment. It incorporates key findings from the Review of Policy Options for Prison and Penal Reform (2022-2024) and the Final Report of the High-Level Task Force on Mental Health and Addiction in the Criminal Justice Sector.

This strengthened partnership ensures accountability while providing pathways for rehabilitation, addressing complex challenges such as mental health, addiction, employment access, and homelessness. The strategy also enhances community sanctions and alternative sentencing options, fostering better outcomes for individuals, families, and communities across Ireland.

Culture Audit & Roadmap

The Irish Prison Service identified a business need within its strategic priorities to undertake a survey and evaluation of its culture to support improving the collective performance of our service, share expectations for accomplishing strategic goals, align strategic direction, build on trust and support and respect individual differences. The Employee Experience pillar supports the value that the Irish Prison Service places on developing a skilled, engaged, diverse, and dynamic workforce.

In 2024, the Irish Prison Service engaged an independent organisation to support to work with the organisation to design and implement a culture survey for all staff that includes reviewing and assessing the current culture, meet with focus groups and also develop and present a report highlighting key actions and areas of focus.



Implement an Annual Deliverables Process

Defining annual deliverables is a critical process aimed at aligning the Irish Prison Service strategy and operational priorities with the specific goals and deliverables of its Directorates and Prisons. This process ensures that strategic and operational priorities are translated into clear, actionable, measurable objectives, facilitating the PMDS process and driving focused operations each year.

The process was outlined in 2023 and piloted across the directorates in 2024. Additionally, the process was introduced to the Prison Leadership team in 2024 to gather input and ensure that the process was clear and reflective of prison operations and their priorities. In 2025, the roll-out of the process will be system-wide, integrating directorate deliverables with prison priorities and subsequently cascading them throughout the organisation.

Design Functional Planning Framework

The Function Director is responsible for leading and directing functional stewardship for their Directorate in alignment with the strategy, governance model and deliverables of the Irish Prison Service. Each Director defines the functional leadership model and working groups for their directorate and is responsible for providing strategic leadership to the functional governors and Lead Governors as required. The aim of this model is to align functional activities and reporting structures and to build close working relationships between the respective directorate functions and the prison and to support the delivery of the primary function of the Service in providing safe and secure custody with dignity of care for people committed to prison and reduce the risk of harm to the public and the likelihood of reoffending by providing rehabilitation for people in prison.

A redesign of the functional management structure was confirmed and was successfully piloted in Cork and Midlands Prisons during 2024. It is envisaged that there will be further roll out of these HR business partnering roles in other locations.

Digitalise Prison Report Books

The Irish Prison Service engaged in an innovation workshop within the Department of Justice to

further develop the process of digitising prisoner journals. This initiative is designed to enhance the management of prisoner data and improve operational efficiency. Additionally, the Irish Prison Service has collaborated with a service provider on a pilot project to design an application that supports key functionalities within prisons, while also optimising data quality.

This builds on the findings and developments from the 2023 report, which highlighted key areas such as the assessment of prison reports, the identification of report hierarchies, and the reduction of duplication. As outlined in the previous report, workshops with stakeholders were conducted to evaluate the current system, and a wireframe was created to map out potential solutions and their interactions with the necessary databases.

Looking ahead, the insights gained from these activities will guide the continued work in 2025, with a focus on refining and scoping a tailored solution that meets the evolving needs and objectives of prison staff and services.

Technology Transforming Custody

Building on the foundational work undertaken in 2023, the Irish Prison Service continued to make progress in advancing its digital transformation agenda under the Technology Transforming Custody initiative. Throughout 2024, we have continued to align our IT strategy with business needs to modernise services, enhance transparency, and drive operational improvement.

Key developments in 2024 include:

- ▲ **Portfolio Charter and Digital Programme:** We have developed a Portfolio Charter and Digital Programme to provide a framework for prioritising and delivering digital initiatives in line with organisational goals.
- ▲ **Confirming Priorities:** We have worked closely with stakeholders to validate and refine key IT project priorities, ensuring alignment with the strategic objectives of the Irish Prison Service.
- ▲ **Reviewing Organisational Capacity:** A review of our internal capacity to deliver digital transformation was undertaken, with a focus on skills, resources, and governance structures.
- ▲ **IT and Business Alignment:** Efforts have been made to strengthen the alignment between IT and business functions.
- ▲ **Project Management Approach:** A review of



project management supports was considered to enhance governance, risk management, and delivery processes.

- ▲ Through these initiatives, the Irish Prison Service continues to drive digital transformation, reinforcing our commitment to modernisation and service excellence.

Implement Organisation Dashboard

The Irish Prison Service Organisation Dashboard is a web based comprehensive internal management tool that tracks key organisational metrics and data point in a visually intuitive format, highlights areas requiring attention.

The dashboard allows integration of data from multiple Irish Prison Service sources, provides a shared understanding of data, saves Irish Prison Service staff time compiling and interpreting data and supports improved decision making by focusing on what really matters,

Ernst & Young (EY) were commissioned in 2022 to build the Irish Prison Service Organisation Dashboard. EY built a tailored web based tool using tableau. The project was done in 3 phases and was completed in Q1 2025

Phase 1, 2 & 3 delivered 73 metrics with 413 supporting data points.

Design Stakeholder Collaboration Process

A stakeholder mapping exercise was conducted across all directorates from 2023 to 2024. In 2024, a similar exercise was carried out for Cork and Midlands Prisons, with plans to extend it to all prisons in 2025. Once the stakeholder maps are completed, efforts to eliminate duplication will be prioritised. The purpose, outputs, frequency, and attendees of meetings will be reviewed to optimise resources, enhance efficiency, and improve communication across the organisation.

Develop & Rollout Self Audits

The development of a self-audit process commenced in 2023. The purpose of this procedure is to further ensure the appropriate implementation, maintenance, review and improvement of the organisations policies and procedures by conducting scheduled and regular self-assessments. The process will strengthen governance, performance, risk management and quality assurance and utilise the outputs from the dashboards.

In 2023, an Infection Control audit was developed and successfully implemented across Irish Prison Service using the MEG ICT tool. Additionally, a Psychology audit was designed the same year and piloted in 2024.

Building on these developments, work commenced in 2024 on a prison self-audit initiative, with initial audits scoped for prison receptions and grounds. A pilot implementation for these self-audits is planned for 2025.

Looking ahead, plans for 2025 include transitioning the Psychology audit to the MEG tool and aligning the audit methodology and scoring framework for Infection Control, Psychology, and the prison self-audits. This alignment will establish standardised criteria across all Irish Prison Service audits, ensuring consistency and a unified approach to evaluation. Furthermore, efforts are underway to align the self-audits with the Prison Operations Manual, minimising duplication and enhancing overall efficiency across Irish Prison Service auditing processes.



Seirbhís Phríosúin
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Irish Prison Service

Annual Report 2024



**Seirbhís Phríosúin
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Irish Prison Service

APPENDICES



APPENDIX I

Persons in custody under sentence on 30 November 2024 - Offence group classified by sentence length

Offence	<3 Mths	3 to <6 Mths	6 to <12 Mths	1 to <2 Yrs	2 to <3 Yrs	3 to <5 Yrs	5 to <10 Yrs	10+ Yrs	Life	Total
GP01 Homicide Offences	0	0	0	6	6	13	30	16	370	441
GP02 Sexual Offences	0	3	7	44	69	132	262	199	14	730
GP03 Attempts/Threat to Murder, Assaults, Harassments and Related Offences	3	19	44	123	131	213	124	47	2	706
GP04 Dangerous or Negligent Acts	1	3	7	20	18	28	18	2	0	97
GP05 Kidnapping and Related Offences	0	0	0	0	1	6	13	12	0	32
GP06 Robbery, Extortion and Hijacking Offences	0	0	1	11	34	31	37	4	0	118
GP07 Burglary and Related Offences	0	9	28	54	44	121	109	14	0	379
GP08 Theft and Related Offences	11	22	89	97	74	146	104	6	0	549
GP09 Fraud, Deception and Related Offences	0	8	9	21	26	25	14	4	0	107
GP10 Controlled Drug Offences	1	9	18	32	65	142	141	14	0	422
GP11 Weapons and Explosives Offences	1	2	11	8	14	22	36	16	0	110
GP12 Damage to Property and the Environment	0	7	11	16	17	34	24	3	0	112
GP13 Public Order and Social Code Offences	5	14	10	17	3	3	1	0	0	53
GP14 Road and Traffic Offences	1	5	17	6	0	1	0	0	0	30
GP15 Offences against Government, Justice Procedures and Organisation of Crime	3	11	18	13	5	4	15	7	0	76
GP16 Offences Not Elsewhere Classified	4	2	1	4	4	4	4	1	0	24
Total	30	114	271	472	511	925	932	345	386	3,986



APPENDIX II

Daily average number of prisoners per Institution 2024

Institution	Bed Capacity at Year end	In Custody	On Temporary Release	On Remand/ Trial
Arbour Hill Prison	137	134	1	0
Castlerea Prison	346	390	21	83
Cloverhill Remand Prison	433	492	6	387
Cork Prison	296	335	70	113
Limerick Female Prison	56	74	27	19
Limerick Male Prison	286	331	58	74
Loughan House	143	123	11	0
Midlands Prison	875	962	41	85
Mountjoy Female Prison	146	177	66	48
Mountjoy Male Prison	770	863	147	30
Portlaoise Prison	226	237	5	21
Shelton Abbey	111	99	8	0
Training Unit	96	98	1	0
Wheatfield Prison	610	626	43	113
Total	4,531	4,941	505	973



APPENDIX III

Committals to prison 2003 to 2024

Year	Total	Change from previous year - %	Persons	Change from previous year - %	Male	Female
2024	8,704	9.6	7,193	10.7	6,309	884
2023	7,938	12.7	6,495	11.9	5,708	787
2022	7,043	14.8	5,801	12.0	5,171	630
2021	6,133	-3.3	5,179	-1.6	4,692	487
2020	6,340	-29.1	5,263	-26.6	4,707	556
2019	8,939	10.8	7,170	10.5	6,276	894
2018	8,071	-13.1	6,490	-13.3	5,724	766
2017	9,287	-38.5	7,484	-40.5	6,403	1,081
2016	15,099	-12.2	12,579	-11.3	10,033	2,546
2015	17,206	6.5	14,182	5.8	11,264	2,918
2014	16,155	2.7	13,408	2.7	10,723	2,685
2013	15,735	-7.6	13,055	-5.8	10,729	2,326
2012	17,026	-1.7	13,860	-0.7	11,709	2,151
2011	17,318	0.8	13,952	1.4	12,050	1,902
2010	17,179	11.4	13,758	11.5	12,057	1,701
2009	15,425	13.8	12,339	12.9	10,880	1,459
2008	13,557	13.6	10,928	12.5	9,703	1,225
2007	11,934	-1.8	9,711	0.1	8,556	1,155
2006	12,157	14.1	9,700	11.7	8,740	960
2005	10,658	0.0	8,686	-1.5	7,780	906
2004	10,657	-9.5	8,820	-10.1	7,914	906
2003	11,775		9,814		8,669	1,145



APPENDIX IV

Total Sentenced in 2024 - classified by sentence length and offence group

Offence Group	<3 Mths	3 to <6 Mths	6 to <12 Mths	1 to <2 Yrs	2 to <3 Yrs	3 to <5 Yrs	5 to <10 Yrs	10+ Yrs	Life	Total
GP01 Homicide Offences	0	0	1	8	3	5	8	2	17	44
GP02 Sexual Offences	9	17	30	60	53	80	81	43	1	374
GP03 Attempts/Threat to Murder, Assaults, Harassments and Related Offences	47	162	124	137	126	106	26	9	0	737
GP04 Dangerous or Negligent Acts	26	74	23	18	17	22	5	0	0	185
GP05 Kidnapping and Related Offences	0	0	0	2	1	2	10	0	0	15
GP06 Robbery, Extortion and Hijacking Offences	1	4	10	16	32	18	14	0	0	95
GP07 Burglary and Related Offences	8	46	85	46	44	63	19	1	0	312
GP08 Theft and Related Offences	166	328	267	89	68	76	18	0	0	1,012
GP09 Fraud, Deception and Related Offences	14	29	28	36	29	13	4	0	0	153
GP10 Controlled Drug Offences	39	100	122	80	87	113	54	8	0	603
GP11 Weapons and Explosives Offences	18	46	54	17	9	13	9	0	0	166
GP12 Damage to Property and the Environment	48	76	66	22	22	33	11	0	0	278
GP13 Public Order and Social Code Offences	289	124	39	21	14	5	0	0	0	492
GP14 Road and Traffic Offences	108	274	38	2	0	0	0	0	0	422
GP15 Offences against Government, Justice Procedures and Organisation of Crime	626	181	88	12	5	5	3	0	0	920
GP16 Offences Not Elsewhere Classified	120	23	6	7	4	4	1	0	0	165
Total	1,519	1,484	981	573	514	558	263	63	18	5,973



APPENDIX V

Total Sentenced by sentence length 2011 - 2024

	<3 Mths	3 to <6 Mths	6 to <12 Mths	1 to <2 Yrs	2 to <3 Yrs	3 to <5 Yrs	5 to <10 Yrs	10+ Yrs	Life Sentence	Total
Year 2024	1,519	1,484	981	573	514	558	263	63	18	5,973
Year 2023	1,335	1,471	923	556	476	507	247	55	18	5,588
Year 2022	994	1,334	923	484	434	412	213	44	17	4,855
Year 2021	827	1,171	784	307	274	355	165	39	19	3,941
Year 2020	796	1,023	778	352	320	337	164	21	12	3,803
Year 2019	1,552	1,609	1,153	402	339	401	188	37	9	5,690
Year 2018	1,070	1,494	995	336	338	342	183	33	21	4,812
Year 2017	2,704	1,312	884	346	299	276	167	27	22	6,037
Year 2016	8,820	1,137	1,039	295	290	344	183	39	16	12,163
Year 2015	10,229	1,273	1,028	423	432	362	185	36	19	13,987
Year 2014	9,361	1,249	986	350	343	346	165	28	25	12,853
Year 2013	8,663	1,422	1,097	348	335	398	173	31	22	12,489
Year 2012	8,837	1,734	1,273	461	447	494	227	31	22	13,526
Year 2011	8,070	1,786	1,358	636	380	472	227	39	22	12,990
% Change '23 to '24	13.8	0.9	6.3	3.1	8.0	10.1	6.5	14.5	0.0	6.9

APPENDIX VI

Total Sentenced (excluding fines) 2011 - 2024

	<3 Mths	3 to <6 Mths	6 to <12 Mths	1 to <2 Yrs	2 to <3 Yrs	3 to <5 Yrs	5 to <10 Yrs	10+ Yrs	Life Sentence	Total
Year 2024	1,012	1,484	981	573	514	558	263	63	18	5,466
Year 2023	783	1,469	923	556	476	507	247	57	18	5,036
Year 2022	790	1,333	923	484	434	412	213	44	17	4,650
Year 2021	593	1,171	784	307	274	355	165	39	19	3,707
Year 2020	511	1,023	778	352	320	337	164	21	12	3,518
Year 2019	693	1,607	1,153	402	339	401	188	37	9	4,829
Year 2018	618	1,491	995	336	338	342	183	33	21	4,357
Year 2017	460	1,295	884	346	299	276	167	27	22	3,776
Year 2016	468	1,050	1,039	295	290	344	183	39	16	3,724
Year 2015	484	1,138	1,026	422	432	362	185	36	19	4,104
Year 2014	540	1,091	986	350	343	346	165	28	25	3,874
Year 2013	723	1,241	1,097	348	335	398	173	31	22	4,368
Year 2012	780	1,487	1,273	461	447	494	227	31	22	5,222
Year 2011	846	1,496	1,358	636	380	472	227	39	22	5,476
% Change '23 to '24	29.2	0.9	6.3	3.1	8.0	10.1	6.5	14.5	0.0	8.5



APPENDIX VII

Number of Committals per Month in 2024

Month	Number of Committals
January	735
February	830
March	779
April	720
May	788
June	696
July	840
August	451
September	666
October	848
November	780
December	571
Total	8,704



APPENDIX VIII STATEMENT ON THE IRISH PRISON SERVICE SYSTEM OF INTERNAL CONTROLS

I can confirm that the Irish Prison Service ensures an effective system of internal control is maintained and operated. This responsibility takes account of the relevant provisions of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies. I confirm that the 2024 Irish Prison Service Annual Report and Comprehensive Report has been submitted to the Minister for Justice.

Any system of internal financial control can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, transactions authorised and properly recorded, and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or would be detected in a timely manner. Maintaining the system of internal financial controls is a continuous process and the system and its effectiveness are kept under ongoing review.

A system of internal control, which accords with guidance issued by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, has been in place in the Irish Prison Service for the year ended 31 December 2024 and up to the date of approval of the financial statements.

Financial Control Environment

A control environment containing the following elements is in place:

- ▲ Financial responsibilities have been assigned at management level with corresponding accountability.
- ▲ Reporting arrangements have been established at all levels where responsibility for financial management has been assigned.
- ▲ Formal procedures have been established for reporting significant control failures and ensuring appropriate corrective action.
- ▲ There is an Audit Committee to advise the Secretary General and the Department Management Board in discharging responsibilities for the internal financial control system.

Administrative Controls and Management Reporting

A framework of administrative procedures and regular management reporting is in place

including segregation of duties and a system of delegation and accountability and, in particular that:

- ▲ There is an appropriate budgeting system with an annual budget which is kept under quarterly review by Senior Management of the Irish Prison Service and the Department of Justice.
- ▲ There are monthly reviews by the Department of Justice Financial Management Committee of Irish Prison Service periodic and annual financial reports which indicate financial performance against forecasts.
- ▲ A risk management system operates within the Irish Prison Service.
- ▲ There are systems aimed at ensuring the security of the ICT systems.
- ▲ There are appropriate capital investment control guidelines and formal project management disciplines in operation.
- ▲ Processes for ensuring documented procedures are in place in respect of all key business activities.
- ▲ There are systems in place to safeguard the assets.

A Data Analytics system has been successfully developed and is now operational. This advanced system provides comprehensive analysis across various Irish Prison Service data sources, playing a critical role in supporting the organisation's strategic objectives and driving improved compliance throughout the system.

Procurement

I confirm that the Irish Prison Service has procedures in place to ensure compliance with current procurement rules and guidelines and that during the year 2024 the Irish Prison Service complied with those procedures.



Risk and Control Framework

An enhanced Risk Management Framework was adopted by the Irish Prison Service in 2021 following the appointment of a Head of Risk, Assurance and Compliance. The Irish Prison Service continued to develop its risk management strategy and an assurance mapping project was finalised in mid-2022. The assurance maps are used to inform the organisation's broader risk management processes by identifying key activities and related oversight mechanisms, thereby helping to demonstrate how assurance is provided. They also provide a structured framework for further strengthening the Irish Prison Service's internal controls.

Senior management continued to identify and review key risks and contribute to the Corporate Risk Register on a quarterly basis. Throughout 2024, the Corporate Risk Registers were informed by risk registers maintained at prison level. The Prison Risk Registers, which are designed to capture local risks, were also updated on a quarterly basis in 2024.

I confirm that a control environment containing the following elements is in place:

- ▲ Procedures for all key business processes have been documented;
- ▲ Financial responsibilities have been assigned at management level with corresponding accountability;
- ▲ There is an appropriate budgeting system with an annual budget which is kept under review by senior management;
- ▲ There are systems aimed at ensuring the security of the information and communication technology systems.

Review of Effectiveness

I confirm that the Irish Prison Service has procedures to monitor the effectiveness of its risk management and control procedures. The Irish Prison Service's monitoring and review of the effectiveness of the system of internal financial control is informed by the work of the internal and external auditors and the senior management within the Irish Prison Service responsible for the development and maintenance of the internal financial control framework.

Internal Audit and Audit Committee

The Department has an internal audit function with appropriately trained personnel, which operates in accordance with an approved written charter. Its work is informed by the analysis of key risks. The annual internal audit plans are approved by the Audit Committee and take account of this analysis.

These plans aim to cover the key controls on a rolling basis over a reasonable period. The internal audit function is reviewed periodically by the Audit Committee. An agreed system for tracking progress on implementing audit recommendations is in place and regular updates are presented to the Audit Committee. In late 2019, the Department seconded an Internal Audit Manager to the Irish Prison Service to develop an internal audit capacity and a related annual action plan. The Internal Audit Manager meets with the Irish Prison Service's Head of Risk, Assurance and Compliance on a regular basis.

DPER Public Spending Code

I confirm that the appropriate requirements of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform's Public Spending Code are being complied with.

Internal Control Issues

No weaknesses in internal control were identified in relation to 2024 that require disclosure in the Financial Statements.

Caron McCaffrey | Director General



IRISH PRISON SERVICE CONTACT INFORMATION

Arbour Hill Prison Arbour Hill, Dublin 7 D07 YV40	Tel: 01 4724000	Loughan House Open Centre Blacklion, Co. Cavan F91 NY76	Tel: 071 9836021
Castlerea Prison Harristown, Castlerea, Co. Roscommon F45 X330	Tel: 094 9625213	Midlands Prison Dublin Road, Portlaoise, Co. Laois R32 F796	Tel: 057 8672110 / 057 8672100
Cloverhill Prison Cloverhill Road, Clondalkin, Dublin 22 D22 WC84	Tel: 01 6304530 / 01 6304531	Mountjoy Prison North Circular Road, Dublin 7 D07 YC97	Tel: 01 8062800
Cork Prison Rathmore Road, Cork City, Cork T23 Y642	Tel: 021 2388000	Portlaoise Prison Dublin Road, Portlaoise, Co. Laois R32 KN97	Tel: 057 8621318
Dóchas Centre North Circular Road, Dublin 7 D07 YC97	Tel: 01 8858987	Shelton Abbey Open Centre Arklow, Co. Wicklow Y14 T638	Tel: 040 242300
Irish Prison Service Headquarters IDA Business Park, Ballinalee Road, Longford N39 A308	Tel: 043 333 5100	Training Unit Place of Detention Glengarriff Parade, North Circular Road, Dublin 7, D07 YN30	Tel: 01 806 2177
Limerick Prison Mulgrave Street, Limerick V94 P8N1	Tel: 061 204700	Wheatfield Prison Cloverhill Road, Clondalkin, Dublin 22 D22 Y2V5	Tel: 01 7789400

PRISON SUPPORT UNITS

Building Services Division	Unit 2, Airways Industrial Estate, Santry, Dublin 17 D17 HW53	Operational Support Group	Árd na Gaoithe, Arbour Hill, Dublin 7 D07 YV40
Prison Service College	Stack House, Dublin Road, Portlaoise, Co. Laois R32 NX53	Prison Service Escort Corps	Cloverhill Prison, Cloverhill Road, Clondalkin, Dublin 22 D22 WC84

Irish Prison Service Headquarters, IDA Business Park, Ballinalee Road, Longford N39 A308
Tel: 043 333 5100 **E-mail:** info@irishprisons.ie **Web:** www.irishprisons.ie



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