Progress in the Penal System (PIPS)

A framework for penal reform (2018)
The Irish Penal Reform Trust is an independent non-governmental organisation campaigning for the rights of everyone in the penal system, with prison as a last resort.

Irish Penal Reform Trust
MACRO Building,
1 Green Street,
Dublin 7, Ireland.
T: +353 (0)1 874 1400
E: info@iprt.ie
W: www.iprt.ie

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Responsibility for the content of the report lies solely with the author of the report and IPRT.

Michelle Martyn,
Senior Research & Policy Projects Manager, Irish Penal Reform Trust
### List of acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APT</td>
<td>Association for the Prevention of Torture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRIO</td>
<td>Building Recovery Inwards and Outwards</td>
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<td>CAT</td>
<td>Committee against Torture</td>
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<td>CEDAW</td>
<td>Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women</td>
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<td>CMH</td>
<td>Central Mental Hospital</td>
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<td>CoE</td>
<td>Council of Europe</td>
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<td>CPT</td>
<td>European Committee for the Prevention of Torture</td>
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<td>DTC</td>
<td>Democratic Therapeutic Communities</td>
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<td>ECHR</td>
<td>European Convention on Human Rights</td>
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<td>ECtHR</td>
<td>European Court of Human Rights</td>
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<td>EMCDDA</td>
<td>European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction</td>
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<td>HIQA</td>
<td>Health Information and Quality Authority</td>
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<td>HMP</td>
<td>Her Majesty’s Prison</td>
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<td>HRB</td>
<td>Health Research Board</td>
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<td>HSE</td>
<td>Health Service Executive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSU</td>
<td>High Support Units</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICCPR</td>
<td>International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>IHREC</td>
<td>Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission</td>
</tr>
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<td>ILSU</td>
<td>Independent Living Skills Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>IoP</td>
<td>Inspector of Prisons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPS</td>
<td>Irish Prison Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISM</td>
<td>Integrated Sentence Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MQI</td>
<td>Merchants Quay Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MQPL</td>
<td>Measuring the Quality of Prison Life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPM</td>
<td>National Preventative Mechanism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPCAT</td>
<td>Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCMI</td>
<td>Prison Conditions Monitoring Index</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PICLS</td>
<td>Prison In-Reach and Court Liaison Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POA</td>
<td>Prison Officers Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PQ</td>
<td>Parliamentary question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QQI</td>
<td>Quality and Qualifications Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNCAT</td>
<td>United Nations Convention Against Torture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UTE</td>
<td>Units of Therapy and Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC</td>
<td>Visiting Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Acknowledgements

1

## List of acronyms

2

## Executive Summary

4

## Foreword

17

### Part 1: How Progress can be Achieved

21

#### 1.1 Introduction: A Vision for the Penal System in Ireland

21

#### 1.2 Who Are Our Prisoners? Characteristics of the Prison Population

23

#### 1.3 The ‘Changemakers’

25

#### 1.4 IPRT Standards

32

### Part 2: Measuring Progress against the Standards

35

#### A. An effective and humane penal system

35

##### 1: Towards a progressive penal policy

35

##### 2: Imprisonment as a last resort

40

##### 3: Safe custody limits

45

##### 4: Size of prisons

47

##### 5: Minimum prison security settings

48

##### 6: Open prison provision

49

#### B. Prison conditions

51

##### 7: Humane prison conditions

51

##### 8: In-cell sanitation

52

##### 9: Single-cell accommodation

53

##### 10: Separation of remand from sentenced prisoners

54

##### 11: Family contact

56

##### 12: Access to healthcare services

59

##### 13: Mental healthcare **Spotlight 1**

61

##### 14: Drug and alcohol treatments

66

##### 15: Privacy

69

#### C. Regimes

71

##### 16: Out-of-cell time

71

##### 17: Sentence management

73

##### 18: Life skills

74

##### 19: Education

75

##### 20: Community engagement & involvement

79

##### 21: Political and civic participation

80

#### D. Complaints, accountability and inspections mechanisms

82

##### 22: Complaints system

82

##### 23: Independent complaints and appeal mechanism

84

##### 24: Inspections and monitoring

85

##### 25: Investigations into deaths in custody

86

#### E. Safety and protection in Irish prisons

89

##### 26: Solitary confinement

89

##### 27: Violence in Irish Prisons

90

##### 28: Prisoner escorts

95

##### 29: Staff training **Spotlight 2**

96

##### 30: Developing positive relationships and work culture

96

##### 31: Use of Force

99

##### 32: Cohorts of prisoners at risk of discrimination

100

##### 32.1: Women who offend **Spotlight 3**

102

#### F. Reintegration

106

##### 33: Parole system

106

##### 34 and 35: Effective reintegration of prisoners

107

### Conclusion PIPS 2018: Are we making progress in our penal system?

111
Executive Summary

Progress in the Penal System: 2018 examines Ireland’s progress in the penal system over the last year. PIPS 2017 set out a clear vision for the future of the penal system in Ireland as part of this overall project. Standards were set, guided by international best practice and human rights frameworks. Our vision is that as a small wealthy nation, Ireland can go beyond minimum human rights frameworks and has the potential to be a leading model of international best penal practice.

In this respect, IPRT established a number of guiding principles of penal reform. These include:

1. Imprisonment as a last resort
2. Recognition of the harms and costs associated with imprisonment
3. Deprivation of liberty is the punishment
4. Balancing of security, safety and protection of prisoners while ensuring a humane regime
5. Protection and promotion of human rights, equality and social justice
6. Emphasis on rehabilitation and reintegration

Readers should reflect on these principles, in particular on how they should guide the work of the changemakers, as well as their relevance to the various standards.

The Changemakers

PIPS 2018 places emphasis on the changemakers of the penal system. This means identifying those who can play an operative role in achieving change in the system. Changemakers identified in the report include criminal justice professionals (such as the judiciary and probation). However, changemakers also exist beyond the criminal justice sphere. They include state departments in the areas of health, education, housing, employment and children. We also highlight the role of legislators and politicians, the relationship between media and public opinion, and how these actors significantly contribute to the shape of our penal system. In doing this we are looking beyond the prison system itself to examine how we prevent crime, punish and rehabilitate.

Outlined below is a general assessment of developments over the last year; we highlight progress as well as issues of concern, which, if addressed, could make a significant improvement to our penal system:

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   http://www.iprt.ie/files/Progress_in_the_Penal_System.compressed_.pdf
A. An Effective and Humane Penal System

1. Implementation of penal policy
In order to inform penal policy, good quality data and research is imperative. In this respect, one relevant development in 2018 has been the publication of the Data & Research Strategy 2018–2020 by the Department of Justice and Equality. This was an action recommended in PIPS 2017.

IPRT also welcomes the 29 recommendations in the Report on Penal Reform and Sentencing made by the Joint Committee on Justice and Equality in 2018.

While both of these actions are welcome developments in this area, further work must be done to ensure the continual monitoring, evaluation and implementation of penal policy.

2. Imprisonment as a last resort
In 2017, IPRT set a medium-term target to reduce our prison population to 50 per 100,000. This target is far from being met. The current imprisonment rate in Ireland is 83 per 100,000 (July 2018). This compares to 79 per 100,000 in May 2017, demonstrating a net increase in the last year. The central roles of the judiciary (sentencing practice) and probation services (availability and effectiveness of community sanctions) in contributing positively to this goal are outlined in this section.

3. Safe custody limits
Safe custody limits are an important feature of any prison to ensure the safety of both prisoners and staff. If prison populations exceed safe custody limits, this in effect means the prison service will face significant challenges in fulfilling its duty of care to prisoners. Overcrowding remained a feature in Irish prisons in 2018.

4. Smaller prisons
Small prisons (ideally holding a maximum of 250) are likely to be safer prisons and to experience reduced levels of violence. This is a relevant standard for meeting the Irish Prison Service’s mission of ‘providing safe and secure custody’, dignity of care and rehabilitation to prisoners for safer communities.

5 & 6. Lower security settings and open provision
Ireland continues to have minimal low-security settings and open provision across the estate compared to current international leaders in penal systems. Open provision in Ireland remains at 6.7%. This compares poorly to Scandinavian countries, see for example the Finnish rate of 40%.

Women continue to have no access to lower-security prison settings.
B. Prison Conditions

7. & 8. Humane prison conditions
In order to assess prison conditions across the estate, it is of the utmost importance that reports are regularly published by external monitoring bodies.

A prison conditions monitoring index is identified as an innovative international tool that may support and standardise assessment of prison conditions. Monitoring tools like this may highlight particular areas in need of action, as well as track progress that could be replicated across the prison estate.

'Slopping out' still exists in two Irish prisons (affecting 39 men in Portlaoise and 19 men in Limerick) despite IPRT’s call for the elimination of this practice by 2018 and the Concluding Observations of the UN Committee against Torture (2017) “... modernize Limerick prison and ‘Block E’ of Portlaoise prison to eliminate the slopping out system completely”.

9. Single-cell accommodation
The percentage of the prison population currently with access to single-cell accommodation is 52%. IPRT has highlighted that choice of single-cell accommodation is an important feature of an effective and humane penal system. It is difficult to make provision for single-cell accommodation in the prison estate a reality without action in other areas, since prisoner numbers need to be reduced in order to achieve this goal.

10. Separation of remand prisoners from sentenced prisoners
Comparison of snapshot figures for the same day in 2016 and 2017 shows that there was an increase of 101 persons on remand in custody. Figures for July 2018 show that approximately 222 prisoners on remand were sharing cells with sentenced prisoners. In 2017, the UN Committee against Torture recommended the separation of remand prisoners from sentenced prisoners, as well as the provision to the Committee of information on the number of remand prisoners and the length of time prisoners are spending on remand. The Irish Prison Service committed to undertaking research and publishing data on lengths of time prisoners were spending on remand at the UNCAT hearing, however, no such data has yet been published.
11. **Family contact**

IPRT welcomes a statement by the Minister for Justice and Equality (2018) that all prisons now have child friendly visiting conditions. New measures introduced in 2018 include a new family visiting room in Limerick Prison.

The Council of Europe’s Recommendation on Children of Imprisoned Parents (2018) has been published in early 2018; changemakers should consider how this recommendation affects their work, in particular considering children’s rights and the ‘best interests’ of children when decisions are made.

12. **Access to healthcare**

IPRT notes the importance of transferring management of healthcare to the Department of Health, a global trend and a recommendation previously made by the Inspector of Prisons. In mid-2017 the UN Committee observed that the State must urgently undertake an independent, fundamental review of the entire prison health-care system, in keeping with the recommendations of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment two years previously. Little progress appears to be made with no publication of a review.

IPRT welcomes information received by the Irish Prison Service of the appointment of an Executive Clinical Lead in summer 2018, however more visible progress in this area is needed in order to uphold the principles of a ‘continuum’ and ‘equivalence’ of healthcare for those in prison.

13. **Mental health**

29 persons with a severe mental illness were in prison awaiting transfer to the Central Mental Hospital in May 2018. While data is not available on lengths of time individual prisoners wait for transfer, the Clinical Director of the Central Mental Hospital stated in May 2018:

“All of the people on the waiting list are urgent. All of them are severely mentally ill and should not be in prison. They have been on the waiting list for months and this is entirely unacceptable by any clinical standards.”

IPRT identifies a need for more forensic mental health spaces to be made available in Approved Designated Centres.

Prisoners should also have access to a range of mental health supports based on need. In this section, IPRT discusses further options to be considered including increasing provision of High Support Units. However, there is an overall need for an increase in both forensic mental health spaces and adequate community mental health provision so that prisoners receive prompt treatment in an appropriate clinical environment.

14. **Addiction and treatment**

IPRT welcomes the identification of addiction as primarily a health rather than a criminal justice issue in the National Drugs Strategy 2017–2025.

The European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) (2018) found:

1. Opioid substitution treatment is protective against death in prison for opioid-dependent prisoners.

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25 Recommendation CM/Rec (2018)5 of the Committee of the Ministers to Member States Concerning Children with Imprisoned Parents, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 4th April 2018 at the 1312th meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies: https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?Objectid=09000016807b3175 
28 Information provided to IPRT by the Irish Prison Service on the 30th April 2018 
29 Data provided to IPRT by the Irish Prison Service in May 2018 
32 European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addictions, Interventions in Prisons and the Criminal Justice System (click ‘Evidence’ to be directed to relevant web page) http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/best-practice/briefings/prisons-and-the-criminal-justice-system_en
Progress in the Penal System (PIPS) – A framework for penal reform

2. Substitution treatment is also important in prison in reducing injecting risk behaviours.

3. Continuity of treatment is recommended to prevent overdose death in the period directly following prison release.

More information is required in order to effectively assess this area, including availability and access to addiction services and treatment both within prison and upon release, waiting lists for treatment programmes such as residential and substitution treatment and evaluation of outcomes.

15. Privacy
We highlight the qualified right to privacy of those with convictions and in particular the importance of bodies such as the Press Ombudsman and the Broadcasting Authority in raising awareness of complaints processes and making those processes accessible to all.

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into force on 25th May 2018 and introduces the right to be forgotten which will be of particular relevance in the context of prisoner rehabilitation upon release from prison in some cases.

C. Regimes

16. Out-of-cell time
In 2018, the Oireachtas Joint Committee recommended a minimum of 12 hours’ out-of-cell time.

The Irish Prison Service Census for July 2018 shows that there are currently 536 prisoners on a ‘restricted regime’, which amounts to 13% of the prison population. While data on the lengths of time individual prisoners spend on a restricted regime is not regularly published, a recent response to a parliamentary question (PQ) revealed more than 50 individual prisoners held on a restricted regime for more than a year. Further work must be done to reduce the number of prisoners on a restricted regime.

17. Integrated sentence management
Integrated sentence management is important to ensure a constructive and holistic plan is in place for each prisoner. In September 2018, there were 23 ISM coordinators across the prison estate for the 2,533 prisoners eligible to engage with ISM (ie. those serving sentence of more than 1 year). An additional ISM coordinator was appointed in July 2018 dedicated to the sentence management of prisoners selected to participate in J-ARC, Community Support and Community Return Schemes. Regular publication of data on ISM engagement and caseloads of ISM coordinators is required.

18. Development of life skills
While there is often a focus on formal education and training, life skills are also an important component of rehabilitation including the development of tools that help prisoners in their daily lives; skills such as reflection, thinking and planning. IPRT welcomes the progress made on the establishment of a third Independent Living Skills Unit (Mountjoy Prison), which is due to open in late 2018.

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33 Data Protection Commission, General Data Protection Regulation https://www.dataprotection.ie/docs/GDPR/1623.htm
36 A restricted regime means prisoners spend 19 or more hours a day locked in their cell.
39 Jolley, M (2017) Rehabilitating prisoners: the place of basic life skills programmes, Safer Communities,17(1)
40 This information has been provided by the Irish Prison Service, on an IPRT visit to the Progression Unit, 18th May 2018.
Executive Summary

19. Education
It is important that prisoners have access to education as part of a purposeful and rehabilitative regime. There may be a number of reasons why prisoners participate in prison education such as learning new skills and personal development.\(^{41}\) Figures provided in response to a PQ in April 2018\(^{42}\) show frequent closures of education centres in certain prisons throughout the year. This issue must be urgently addressed.

20. & 21. Community involvement and civic and political participation
Community involvement in prison appears to be positive with many initiatives\(^{43}\) attributed to the Irish Red Cross Programme.\(^{44}\)

However voting in Irish prisons is low. For this year’s referendum on the 36th Amendment to the Constitution,\(^{45}\) 58 prisoners out of the total of 3,897 voted.\(^{46}\) Of these 55 were males and 3 were females. More work is required to encourage prisoners to participate in their civic and political rights.

D. Complaints, Accountability, Inspections and Oversight Mechanisms

22. & 23. Complaints system
There were 70 Category ‘A’ complaints made by prisoners in 2017 in total and 41 Category A complaints were made from January 2018 until the end of June 2018.\(^{48}\) Of 61 investigations completed in 2017, 6 complaints were upheld.\(^{49}\)

In order to ensure that both prisoners and staff have confidence in the complaints system, IPRT has long advocated for the establishment of a prisoner ombudsman or access to the existing Office of the Ombudsman. The Office of the Ombudsman assisted in the revision of the internal complaints system (following recommendations\(^{50}\) made by the Office of the Inspector of Prisons), as well as facilitating a visit to the Office of the Prisoner Ombudsman in Northern Ireland.\(^{51}\) CAT made a number of relevant concluding observations\(^{52}\) to the State on this issue in mid-2017 including establishing a completely independent mechanism for the consideration of prisoner complaints and introducing greater involvement and oversight by an independent body.\(^{53}\) CAT (2017) records state that the government’s timeline for establishing the Ombudsman’s oversight role in the complaints system was expected by the end of 2017.\(^{54}\)

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\(^{43}\) For more on this see various visiting committee annual reports 2016 http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/Prison_Visiting_Committee_Annual_Reports_2016

\(^{44}\) Irish Prison Service, Education and Training Boards Ireland and Irish Red Cross (2017) Community Based Health & First Aid Programme, Irish Support Information Pack, p. 4


\(^{47}\) ‘Category A’ is the most serious type of complaint a prisoner can raise.


\(^{49}\) Ibid.


\(^{53}\) Ibid,22 (a) (b) (c) (d) p. 8

\(^{54}\) Committee against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, Committee against Torture, Sixtieth session, Summary record of the 1548\(^{th}\) meeting, p. 2 available at https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT/2IC/ESR.1548&Lang=en
IPRT believes that the need for prisoner access to the Ombudsman to facilitate the appealing of complaints to an independent body is urgent.

24. & 25. Monitoring, inspections, and investigations
IPRT welcomes the appointment of the Inspector of Prisons Patricia Gilheaney in May 2018.\(^{55}\) In 2018 there has been no prison inspection report published and 13 Deaths in Custody reports published.\(^ {56}\)
IPRT also welcomes the announcement by the Minister for Justice and Equality that legislation will be brought forward to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (OPCAT) by the end of 2018.\(^ {57}\) Ireland and Belgium are the only remaining EU states which have not ratified OPCAT.\(^ {58}\) Ratification of OPCAT would mean all places where people are deprived of their liberty would be subject to independent inspection by a national body as well as subject to inspection by the Sub-Committee for the Prevention of Torture.\(^ {59}\)

E. Safety and Protection in Irish Prisons

26. Solitary confinement
In 2017 there were a number of positive steps taken by the State to reduce the number of prisoners in solitary confinement. The Irish Prison Service published their Elimination of Solitary Confinement\(^ {60}\) policy while there was also an amendment made to the Prison Rules\(^ {61}\) entitling all prisoners to a minimum of two hours ‘out-of-cell time for ‘meaningful human contact’. A Concluding Observation made by CAT to the State (2017) enjoined the State to “ensure that solitary confinement remains a measure of last resort, imposed for as short a time as possible, is never applied to juveniles, is under strict supervision and judicial review with clear and specific criteria for its use, and that prolonged and consecutive disciplinary sanctions of solitary confinement are strictly prohibited”.\(^ {62}\)
In 2018, IPRT launched its report on solitary confinement, Behind Closed Doors: Solitary Confinement in the Irish Penal System,\(^ {63}\) making a number of recommendations. On the launch of the report, the Minister for Justice and Equality made a statement welcoming the report, stating it would “take some time to consider the report and recommendations therein.”\(^ {64}\)
In April 2018\(^ {65}\) the number of prisoners in solitary confinement was 12, while in July 2018 the figure had increased to 35.\(^ {66}\)

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55 Department of Justice and Equality (2018) Minister Flanagan congratulates the new Inspector of Prisons, Patricia Gilheaney
http://justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/PR18000115

56 Department of Justice and Equality, Prisons & Probation,

57 Houses of the Oireachtas (2018) UN Conventions, Parliamentary Question 1, 5th July 2018

58 See OPCAT Database https://apt.ch/en/opcat-database/

59 ‘Ireland has not ratified a protocol to prevent torture in places of detention’, The Irish Times, 8th August 2018

60 Irish Prison Service, Elimination of Solitary Confinement


62 United Nations Committee against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, Concluding Observations on the Second Periodic Report of Ireland,16 (g)p. 6


65 Irish Prison Service, Census of Restricted Regimes, April 2018

66 Irish Prison Service, Census of Restricted Regimes, July 2018
27. Violence in Irish prisons
Figures provided to IPRT by the Irish Prison Service over a five-year period suggests that there has been a decrease in prisoner-on-prisoner assaults from 715 in 2012 to 417 in 2017. The number of prisoner-on-staff assaults has fluctuated over the same period, with 107 recorded in 2012, 151 recorded in 2014 and 104 recorded in 2017. CAT (2017) had a number of relevant Concluding Observations to the State on addressing violence in prisons including (i) undertaking thorough and impartial inquiries into all acts of violence committed in prisons (ii) enhancing measures to prevent and reduce inter-prisoner violence by improving prison management and the ratio of staff to prisoners, and strengthen the monitoring and protection of vulnerable prisoners and those presenting disciplinary issues and (iii) provide training to prison staff and medical personnel on communication with and managing of inmates, including juveniles, and on detecting signs of vulnerability and disciplinary issues.

The Irish Prison Service has developed a new therapeutic unit intended to address prisoners exhibiting the most violent and challenging behaviour. The new unit will be co-led between Psychology and Operations.

This section of the report provides some good examples on how violence can be addressed through conflict-centred strategies and restorative justice practice.

28. Prisoners under escort
A review into escort services conducted by the Department for Justice and Equality in 2017 has yet to be published. CAT (2017) made the following Concluding Observation relevant to this issue: “Ensure that prisoners who are transferred between facilities are not injured during transportation and ensure that handcuffing is used only as an exceptional measure, after appropriate risk assessment.” In 2018 the Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) published a factsheet on this issue.

Ratification of OPCAT in 2018 would mean that all places of detention, including prison escort services, which are not currently inspected, will be subject to independent inspection.

29. & 30. Staff training, relationships and culture
The role and profession of a prison officer can be poorly defined. Careful selection of, as well as support for staff is essential, including training and regular refresher training on human rights. CAT (2017) made a strong recommendation on this, calling for the State to make training on the provisions of the Convention and the absolute prohibition of torture, as well as on non-coercive interrogation methods, mandatory for public officials, in particular police and prison staff.

It further recommended the systematic collection of information on training and the development and implementation of specific methodologies to assess its effectiveness and impact on the reduction of the incidence of torture.

This section discusses the importance of relationships between management, staff and prisoners including proposing the need for independent research on this issue.

31. Use of force
There is little published data on the use of force in Irish prisons. This information is currently not centrally recorded. The Irish Prison Service has developed a protocol, Conflict Management Operations and Training, which aims to minimise force. In this section of the report, restorative justice practices in other jurisdictions are outlined as alternative approaches aimed at minimising use of force.


69 This information has been provided to IPRT by the Irish Prison Service, 3rd July 2018.

70 IPRT Submission (2017) IPRT Submission to the Department of Justice and Equality Value for Money and Policy Review of Prisoner Escort Services in the Criminal Justice Sector (to be published on IPRT website)


72 European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (2018) Transport of Detainees: https://rm.coe.int/16808b631d


75 Ibid, 14th July 2018

Executive Summary

32. Cohorts at risk of discrimination
Implementation of the s.42 duty\(^7\) in Irish prisons is vital to promoting equality and preventing discrimination. Pilot projects\(^8\) have been carried out in the two women’s prisons on the implementation of the public sector duty.

There have also been commitments made in the Irish Prison Service and Probation Service Strategic Plan 2018–2020 to develop innovative responses to certain groups of offenders such as young adults.\(^9\) The Irish Prison Service has been working with Pavee Point,\(^10\) a Travellers’ rights organisation, to amend their Census to include an ethnic identifier.\(^11\) A strategy on older prisoners is currently being finalised,\(^12\) and an older person’s facility is being established.\(^13\) However the LGBT policy has not been published and there is no explicit reference made to developing strategies for other cohorts at risk of discrimination including prisoners with disabilities or foreign-national prisoners.

32.1 Women who offend
Women who offend are more likely to have committed non-violent offences and have a distinct set of needs and therefore a gender-sensitive response is essential.

A snapshot review of the Irish Prison Service, 2018 Prison Populations figures demonstrate (on the first published date of every month in 2018), women’s prisons have been consistently above capacity, peaking at 175% for Limerick prison and 139% for Dóchas on the 1\(^{st}\) June 2018.\(^14\)

CAT urged Ireland to continue efforts aimed at reducing overcrowding and improving material conditions in all places where women are detained.\(^15\)

The judiciary and the Probation Service play a vital role in reducing the number of women in custody through sentencing practice and the availability of gender-specific community sanctions.

The lack of a step-down facility or open provision which would support a gradual release back into society is a continuing significant concern. Despite policy commitments, there have been delays in achieving this goal and in fully implementing the Joint Probation–Prison Service Strategy 2014–2016, An Effective Response to Women Who Offend.\(^16\)

IPRT welcomes the most recent commitment by the Irish Prison Service and the Probation Service in their Joint Strategic Plan 2018–2020 to ‘develop a range of responses for female offenders to afford them more opportunity and help realise their potential.’\(^17\)

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\(^7\) For more information on the Public Sector Duty, see https://www.ihrec.ie/our-work/public-sector-duty/
\(^8\) Information provided by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission at a meeting with IPRT 18\(^{th}\) May 2018.
\(^10\) [http://www.paveepoint.ie/](http://www.paveepoint.ie/)
\(^17\) Irish Prison Service and Probation Service, Strategic Plan 2018–2020, Strategic Action 3, p. 9
E. Reintegration

33. Parole
While IPRT welcomed the Parole Bill 2016, we highlight a number of concerns including a shift from seven years to twelve years for parole candidates to have their first review. Parole should not be a political issue and therefore placing of the Parole Board on a statutory footing is required. This has yet to happen.

34 & 35. Barriers to reintegration
In order for individuals to successfully reintegrate a number of barriers must be overcome. Effective spent convictions legislation has a major role to play in removing barriers to the reintegration of former offenders and prisoners who have demonstrated that they have moved on from past offending behaviour. It was our view that the Criminal Justice (Spent Convictions and Disclosures) Act 2016 is limited and we welcome the recommendation of the Joint Committee on Justice and Equality in February 2018 that the legislation be reviewed.

Inter-agency co-operation between all relevant bodies is vital for successful reintegration, with various bodies in the areas of housing, health and education all having a role to play. In this respect, (at the time of publication), we welcome the First Report of the Interagency Group for a Fairer and Safer Ireland. Effective rehabilitation and reintegration reduces the risk of re-offending which benefits all in society.

Conclusion
In order to ensure that the Irish penal system is effective and humane, the current prison population must be reduced as a first step. While there has been some welcome improvement within the last year, progress is minimal towards meeting the vision to which this project aspires. There are a number of changemakers that can lead the way in making this vision a reality. In 2018, we hope that by identifying the ‘changers’ in the penal system and explicitly recognising their role and potential impact we will encourage reflection, action and ultimately implementation of these standards for the benefit of all.

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89 Department of Justice and Equality, First Report of the Interagency Group for a Fairer and Safer Ireland, July 2018
http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/Penal_Policy_Review
The overall purpose of PIPS is to assess progress across a broad range of issues in Ireland’s penal system over three years. PIPS 2017 developed 35 standards against which the prevailing situation in Ireland’s penal system will be independently tracked and monitored on an annual basis. It includes a series of indicators of progress and short-term actions recommended for implementation each year.

In PIPS 2018, IPRT has used a wide variety of research methods, including the completion of a comprehensive desk review of publicly available information, engaging directly with stakeholders and submitting parliamentary questions to assess the current situation in Ireland’s penal system. In order to track and monitor progress over the year, we have collated this information and analysed any developments against each standard.

On that basis, we have also made a top-line assessment, classifying developments over the last 12 months as ‘Progress’, ‘Regress’, ‘Mixed’, ‘No Change’ or ‘Insufficient Data’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Progress:</strong></th>
<th>Where there has been identified and significant movement towards attainment of the standard.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regress:</strong></td>
<td>Where there has been identified and significant movement away from the attainment of the standard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mixed:</strong></td>
<td>Where there has been both progress towards the standard in some areas and regress away from it in others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No change:</strong></td>
<td>Where there has been neither significant progress nor regress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Insufficient data:</strong></td>
<td>Where sufficient or adequate data is not available to make a reliable assessment of progress towards the standard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard</td>
<td>Theme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1</td>
<td>Progressive penal policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2</td>
<td>Imprisonment as a last resort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S3</td>
<td>Safe custody limits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S4</td>
<td>Size of prisons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S5</td>
<td>Minimum security settings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S6</td>
<td>Open prison provision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S7</td>
<td>Humane prison conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S8</td>
<td>In-cell sanitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S9</td>
<td>Single cell accommodation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S10</td>
<td>Separation of remand from sentenced prisoners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S11</td>
<td>Family contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S12</td>
<td>Access to healthcare services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S13</td>
<td>Mental healthcare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S14</td>
<td>Drug and alcohol treatments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S15</td>
<td>Privacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S16</td>
<td>Out of cell time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S17</td>
<td>Integrated sentence management [ISM]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S18</td>
<td>Life skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S19</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard</td>
<td>Theme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S20</td>
<td>Community engagement &amp; involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S21</td>
<td>Political &amp; civic participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S22</td>
<td>Complaints system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S23</td>
<td>Independent complaints and appeal mechanism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S24</td>
<td>Inspections &amp; monitoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S25</td>
<td>Investigations into deaths in custody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S26</td>
<td>Solitary confinement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S27</td>
<td>Violence in prisons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S28</td>
<td>Prisoner escorts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S29</td>
<td>Staff training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S30</td>
<td>Developing positive relationships and work culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S31</td>
<td>Use of force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S32</td>
<td>Cohorts of prisoners at risk of discrimination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S32.1</td>
<td>Women who offend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S33</td>
<td>Parole system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S34</td>
<td>Reintegration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S35</td>
<td>Inter-agency coordination</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Foreword

It is with great pleasure I write this foreword. For a short period of time I had the honour to serve as Chairperson of the Irish Penal Reform Trust. Then and now I am deeply impressed by its work. It is a unique NGO in Ireland and fulfils a vital role in advocating for the human rights of prisoners.

The efforts of IPRT have already improved the situation of prisoners, as is evident from the present report and from research conducted by my current institution, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA).

This report, and more generally the work of the IPRT, serves as a reminder to duty bearers about their obligations to one of the most vulnerable categories of rights holders. Additionally it is a valuable source of information, which will enable other actors, such as lawyers, journalists and NGOs to better advocate for improvement and reform of penal institutions.

FRA research has shown that international recommendations to treat detention as a measure of last resort should indeed be followed, especially in the context of pre-trial detention and the detention of vulnerable persons. In this regard, and with sustained effort, could become a true pioneer.

Criminal justice serves to protect the rights and safety of victims and society, and one of the means of achieving this goal is to treat prisoners in a humane and decent way. What the IPRT has been reminding us for years – and FRA has also repeatedly stated – is that prisoners should only be punished by deprivation of liberty and not by deprivation of their dignity. In large part thanks to the work of the IPRT, Ireland is getting closer to ensuring the respect of the prisoners’ human rights in practice.

Given this progress, Ireland can and should deliver a penal system informed by the principles of human rights, dignity, humanity and social justice. However, no system can function effectively without independent monitoring, and it will be important to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and establish the National Preventive Mechanism.

Michael O’Flaherty

Director of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
PART 1:
How progress can be achieved

1.1 Introduction: A Vision for the Penal System in Ireland

Progress in the Penal System (PIPS): A framework for penal reform (2017) was published in October 2017, the first in a series of annual PIPS reports. The report outlined a clear vision for the future of the penal system in Ireland. It set out standards, informed by international human rights standards and best practice, and developed indicators to track progress on a yearly basis.

The purpose of the PIPS project is to inform a wide range of stakeholders about the current state of the penal system. The target audience includes criminal justice professionals, policymakers, legislators, politicians, media and the general public. The overall aim of the PIPS project is to inspire stakeholders to lead and work towards a progressive penal system. It asks stakeholders to reflect on their own and each other’s roles and responsibilities, engage in the PIPS process, and act on opportunities for change.

Ireland as a small and wealthy nation has the potential to be a leading model of international best penal practice. This can be achieved through the implementation of IPRT’s PIPS standards. However, the collaboration and commitment of stakeholders is crucial to achieving the implementation of these standards.

PIPS 2018 continues the examination of the penal system across the following themes:

- Creating an effective and humane penal system
- Prison conditions
- Regimes
- Complaints, accountability and inspection mechanisms
- Safety and protection in Irish prisons
- Reintegration

Three key issues are under the spotlight: Mental Health; Women (a new standard which has been added to the report in 2018); and Staff, Training and Relationships. IPRT believes reform and resourcing in these three areas must be prioritised over the coming year. The rationale as to why these key issues are important is outlined in the relevant sections.

Children in detention are intentionally not included in this report. While children in detention form part of the penal system, the system itself has gone through tremendous change with the ending of imprisonment of children at St. Patrick’s Institution in 2017. Children should be treated differently and also benefit from additional human rights treaties including the Convention on the Rights of the Child. IPRT continues to work on reform and improvement of the youth justice system separately from this project.

PIPS 2017 set out the origins of the project, including the process for setting the standards and indicators, and should be read as a complementary document. Notwithstanding, the principles and values that underpin the entire PIPS project and IPRT’s general work are reiterated here:

91 The term ‘penal’ means “relating to, used for, or prescribing the punishment of offenders under the legal system”. See Oxford Living Dictionaries https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/penal
PIPS Guiding Principles of Penal Reform

1. Imprisonment is viewed as a sanction of last resort
2. Recognition of the harms and costs associated with imprisonment
3. Adherence to the ‘Deprivation of Liberty’ principle where the loss of freedom is viewed as the punishment
4. Balance the security and protection of prisoners with provision of a safe and purposeful regime
5. Protection and promotion of human rights, equality and social justice
6. Focus on rehabilitation, desistance and reintegration.

IPRT’s Values of the Penal System

- Safety, protection of life and a duty of care
- Respect, dignity and protection from inhumane, discriminatory or degrading treatment
- Accountability and transparency
- Consistency and promotion of fairness and equality
- Promotion and maintenance of good relationships between prisoners, staff and management

These principles and values are grounded in penal theory and research; a number of other bodies have identified similar principles and values. These principles and values continue to inform PIPS 2018.

Finally, this second edition of PIPS sets out to answer the key question: Are we making progress in our penal system? The concluding chapter answers this question and suggests where we need to go next.


1. Human dignity: The person feels respected and is recognised as a person.
2. The avoidance of further damage or harm: Prison and alternative sanctions are viewed as the punishment and therefore no additional punishment such as poor prison conditions should be used.
3. The right to develop the self: Individuals should have the opportunity to learn and to be active and productive, with personal responsibility and decision-making emphasised.
4. The right to be important to other people: Individuals should not be isolated and should have the opportunity to contact their social network.
5. A stable and professional organisation: “A stable organization implies a staff and professional staff group which strives continually for ‘whole system integrity’ and ‘professional development’ (through research, evaluation, and reflexivity). Prison and Probation Services should be open minded to new knowledge and taking risks. The organization is able to react flexible and acts in turbulent environment without convulsion. The professionals communicate transparently to society and citizens” (Joldersma, 2016: 147).

See also HM Inspectorate of Prisons (2017) Our Expectations https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmprisons/our-expectations/. HM Inspectorate of Prisons (England and Wales) has developed four key criteria to assess whether a prison is ‘healthy’:

1. Safety
2. Respect
3. Purposeful Activity
4. Resettlement.
Firstly, a key question to ask is: Who exactly are our prisoners?

It has been over 20 years since there was a comprehensive study\(^{95}\) published on the demographic profile of the prison population in Ireland. That study\(^{96}\) showed that 56% of prisoners in Mountjoy Prison came from six districts characterised by high levels of economic deprivation in Dublin. Since then, one study,\(^{97}\) published a decade ago, focused on the geography of prisoner reintegration. This study showed that the most deprived areas in the country had 145.9 prisoners per 10,000 population, compared to a figure of 6.3 for the least deprived areas in the country.\(^{98}\)

Of the current prison population, 4.5% are female.\(^{99}\) Research\(^{100}\) in England shows that 57% of female prisoners have been victims of domestic abuse and 53% had experienced emotional, physical or sexual abuse as a child.

Research\(^{101}\) also shows that children aged 16 and 17 living in residential care are 15 times more likely to be criminalised than their peers. Connections between childhood adversities, trauma and imprisonment have been increasingly acknowledged.\(^{102}\) In describing interviews with prisoners, the Mountjoy Visiting Committee stated: "Many reported a history of deprivation, trauma, intergenerational substance abuse, out of home care and loss of family contact."\(^{103}\) Recent estimates suggest that 15% of males and 22% of females in Irish prisons are Travellers.\(^{104}\) Figures from the *World Prison Brief*\(^{105}\) also show that 15.6% of prisoners are on remand and 13% of the prison population in Ireland are foreign-nationals.

The absence of any recent comprehensive study on the demographic profile of the prison population in Ireland again highlights a gap in data available to support policy making and practice in the criminal justice system.

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\(^{95}\) O’Mahony, P (1997) *Mountjoy Prisoners: A Sociological and Criminological Profile*  
https://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/3464/1/616-mountjoy.pdf

\(^{96}\) Ibid, p. 40


\(^{98}\) Ibid.

\(^{99}\) World Prison Brief, *Ireland, Republic of* (14/08/18)  
http://www.prisonstudies.org/country/ireland-republic

\(^{100}\) Prison Reform Trust (2017) “There’s a reason we’re in trouble”:Domestic Abuse as a Driver to Women’s Offending  

\(^{101}\) Howard League of Penal Reform (2017) *Criminalisation of children in residential care should be a “national concern”*,  

\(^{102}\) The Association for Criminal Justice and Research Development in Ireland hosted a conference: *Toward a Trauma-Responsive Criminal Justice System: Why, How and What Next?* 4th July 2018  

\(^{103}\) Annual Report 2016 from the Mountjoy Visiting Committee to the Minister for Justice Frances Fitzgerald TD, p. 3  


\(^{105}\) World Prison Brief, *Ireland, Republic of* (14/08/18)  
http://www.prisonstudies.org/country/ireland-republic
Evidence shows that social exclusion is closely interlinked with both crime and punishment.106 Between 2015 and 2017, the Irish Prison Service undertook a survey107 with prisoners in three prisons. Based on aggregate data from these surveys, results show that 25.6% of participants had attended no secondary school and 80% of participants left school before completion of the Leaving Certificate.108

Another recent Irish study showed that 17.4% of the prison population were homeless on committal to prison, a figure higher than some international estimates.109 The same research also found that rates for psychoses and alcohol and substance misuse were significantly higher than in the general population.110

The changemakers identified in this report work beyond the criminal justice system, and include a number of government departments including housing, education, health, children and employment. The policies and practices of all departments and agencies in addressing issues of social exclusion and disadvantage must be reflected upon and their direct implications for rates of imprisonment considered.

106 Irish Penal Reform Trust (2012) The Vicious Circle of Social Exclusion and Crime: Ireland’s Disproportionate Punishment of the Poor
http://www.iprt.ie/files/Position_Paper_FINAL.pdf
108 Ibid.
110 Ibid.
Part 1: How Progress can be achieved

1.3 The Changemakers

While the prison system itself is an important part of the penal system, the penal system involves a much wider range of stakeholders. Decisions made by other stakeholders can influence – or indeed limit – what can happen within the prison system itself. For example, if the number of people sent to prison is high, this will result in overcrowding and prisons operating above capacity, which increases the likelihood of violence. An overcrowded prison system also means a reduced focus on rehabilitation. This also subsequently impedes the prospects of successful reintegration into society.

Here, IPRT identifies and examines the role of selected stakeholders outside the prison system who can positively contribute to the shape of our penal system and the lives of those within it. These include:

(1) Judiciary
(2) Legislators
(3) Probation
(4) Media, politics and public opinion.

The principles of penal reform should be kept to the forefront when examining the roles of various stakeholders and how these principles apply to their work.

1. Judiciary

Recent domestic research\textsuperscript{111} indicates significant disparities in sentencing practice across District Court jurisdictions where only in 8 District Courts (out of 23 jurisdictions and the Dublin Metropolitan District) were more community service orders than short-term prison sentences made during 2011 and 2012.\textsuperscript{112} In one District Court, 14 prison sentences were imposed to every one community service order.\textsuperscript{113} In contrast, in another District Court, three community service orders were imposed for every short-term prison sentence.\textsuperscript{114} These findings highlight major inconsistencies in sentencing practice across District Courts in Ireland. This is in spite of the introduction of legislation, section 3 of the Criminal Justice (Community Service) Amendment Act 2011,\textsuperscript{115} which provides that the judiciary when imposing a custodial sentence of 12 months or less shall consider a community service order as an alternative to that sentence. This legislation supports the guiding principle of imprisonment as a last resort.

Earlier research\textsuperscript{116} highlighted possible reasons for the under-utilisation of community-based sentences at that time:

\begin{quote}
While this could indicate a lack of faith in the utility of probation, there are several other possibilities. It may be that judges believed that intensive intervention was not appropriate for minor or first time offenders, reflect the local (un)availability of suitable programmes, or indicate a belief that meaningful change cannot be imposed, but must come from within. Judges sentencing theories may partly explain the relative absence of treatment components.\textsuperscript{117}
\end{quote}

With the last comprehensive review of sentencing\textsuperscript{118} by the Law Reform Commission published over 20 years ago, IPRT recently proposed that the Law Reform Commission review sentencing practice and policy in Ireland as part of its Fifth Programme of Law Reform.\textsuperscript{119} Calls have also been made by other stakeholders\textsuperscript{120} for the introduction of sentencing guidelines through the vehicle of the Judicial Council Bill.\textsuperscript{121} While IPRT has some concerns about the detail of this proposal, in principle we support examining the merits of introducing sentencing guidelines in this jurisdiction where they promote penal moderation and do not unduly fetter judicial independence.

\textsuperscript{111} O’Hara, K (2016) Examining the Comparative Use, Experience and Outcomes of Community Service Orders as Alternatives to Short Prison Sentences in Ireland, Dublin Institute of Technology https://arrow.dit.ie/appadoc/63/
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid.p. 303
\textsuperscript{113} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{120} The Irish Times (2018)’Sentencing: Judges must be given guidelines’, 21st February 2018 https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/editorial/sentencing-judges-must-be-given-guidelines-1.3399213
2. Legislators

Legislators can contribute to achieving practical and positive change in our penal system. One example of this is the introduction of the Fines (Payment and Recovery) Act 2014, which was fully commenced in early 2016. Although further evaluation is required, it appears to have had a positive effect in reducing the number of committals to prison. Figures from the Irish Prison Service demonstrate a 38.5% reduction in committals from 15,099 in 2016 to 9,287 in 2017. There was a 73% reduction in those committed for non-payment of a court-ordered fine. This was a practical legislative measure that has had a positive effect on the number of prison committals.

On the other hand, poorly conceived and reactive legislation – for example the introduction of presumptive minimum and mandatory sentences - can create potential for injustice; is often ineffective as a deterrent; has the potential to undermine the integrity of the criminal justice system; and may impact negatively on both the rate and cost of imprisonment.

The central principles of de-carceration, penal moderation and imprisonment as a last resort are reflected within both Oireachtas Joint Committee Reports (2013 and 2018) and within the Department of Justice and Equality’s Strategic Review of Penal Policy (2014). The cross-party consensus already achieved should inform the work of the legislature going forward.

3. Probation

The Probation Service plays an essential role in offering judges appropriate and effective community sanctions. According to Penal Reform International, probation systems can contribute in four ways to “effective criminal justice”; they can:

1. Reduce the prison population
2. Provide more constructive punishment than prison
3. Offer individuals an opportunity to make a positive contribution to society
4. Provide more effective opportunities for rehabilitation.

Compared to the European average, the number of persons under the supervision of the Probation Service in Ireland is low. Latest figures published by the Council of Europe (CoE) show the total number of persons who started a community sanction or probation under the Probation Service during 2016 was 124.7 per 100,000, compared to the European median of 197.7. The total number of persons under probation supervision (including community service) in Ireland on 31st December 2016 was 120.7 compared to the European median of 170.4. While further analysis of these figures is required, the statistics may indicate the under-utilisation of probation services in Ireland. However, attention must also be paid to ‘net-widening effects’ that occur in many criminal justice systems.

Community sanctions as a direct alternative to imprisonment makes sense. Community sanctions also involve a lower social cost to individuals, communities and the State.

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127 Ibid.
132 Ibid, pp. 23-25
133 ‘Net widening’ is a term used to describe the situation when increased provision of non-custodial sanctions does not reduce prison populations numbers but instead increases the total number of persons under the criminal justice system.
The availability of community sanctions on a nationwide basis is pivotal in supporting and increasing the judiciary’s confidence in community sanctions. In their Concluding Observations, the UN Committee against Torture (CAT) recommended that Ireland:

Consider increasing the use of non-custodial measures and alternatives to detention, in keeping with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (The Tokyo Rules).\(^\text{135}\)

In domestic penal policy, the Strategic Review of Penal Policy (2014) also recommends increasing the use of community sanctions (to directly replace imprisonment), particularly those sanctions that address the root causes of offending behaviour, in order to instil public confidence.\(^\text{136}\) The Oireachtas Joint Committee on Justice and Equality concurred with that recommendation in its Report on Penal Reform and Sentencing (2018):

The emphasis of a progressive penal and sentencing policy should be on investment in community-based sanctions and non-custodial sentences. Prison should be a last resort for minor criminal offences. Community-based sanctions are not only effective in many cases, but can generate community payback and result in enormous savings compared to the costs of incarceration […] The Probation Service must be provided with the necessary resources it would require on foot of a greater emphasis on community-based sanctions.\(^\text{137}\)

Increasing understanding of the work of the Probation Service among key stakeholders, such as the judiciary, is important. Further analysis of judicial decision-making, availability, utilisation, delivery and effectiveness of community sanctions in Ireland would be welcome.

4. Media, Politics and Public Opinion

The media, politics and public opinion have a complex relationship with each other. The media has a responsibility to report fairly and accurately in order to inform the public when reporting on crime and punishment. However, politicians periodically resort to ‘tough on crime’ rhetoric which is transmitted through the media. Reactive policy decisions to adverse events can have significant consequences in contributing to the rise in prison populations. The UK parliament previously highlighted the impact of media, politics and public opinion on the decision-making process:

Wider factors such as the media, public opinion and political rhetoric contribute to risk averse court, probation and parole decisions and hence play a role in unnecessary system expansion. If Ministers wish the system to become sustainable within existing resources, they must recognise the distorting effect which these pressures have on the pursuit of a rational strategy.\(^\text{138}\)

The importance of providing accurate data for the media and general public is highlighted in the new Guidance\(^\text{139}\) on the UN Mandela Rules:

Accurate data can help provide the media and public with a true picture of prison life, including the challenges faced by prison administrations. This is particularly important because many people are ill-informed about the situation in prisons and public and political discourse about such institutions is based on fear-mongering, stereotypes and broader political agendas. Proper record keeping, can in turn, lead to increased public awareness about the problems faced by prisoners and prison staff, and lead to a shift towards more evidence based decision-making.\(^\text{140}\)

Research on the release of life-sentenced prisoners in Ireland, which included interviews with former Parole Board members, found “public opinion was also deemed to be important, while participants were acutely aware of the political landscape

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140 Ibid.
in which parole operates when deliberating on individual cases”. In addition, the research found there was reluctance by the Minister to accept recommendations in high-profile cases, which resulted in a reluctance to recommend release by members of the Parole Board, leading the author to conclude that: “Public opinion, although unknown in empirical reality, impacts on parole outcomes and often in a punitive manner.”

Evidence of a false dichotomy between victims’ and offenders’ rights can be found in research which highlights the interchangeable nature of victimisation and offending, particularly among women and younger offenders. As highlighted by the authors:

\[
\text{Whilst political discourse encourages members of the public to show compassion towards victims and to see them as a vulnerable, but deserving group, it simultaneously casts the actions of “offenders” whilst carelessly ignoring the fact that many individuals might fall into both categories.}\]

5. The role and responsibility of other state bodies

(i.) Department of Education and Skills

Educational disadvantage is a predominant characteristic of the current prison population. Between 2015 and 2017, the Irish Prison Service undertook a survey with prisoners in three prisons. Based on aggregate data from these surveys, results show that:

- 25.6% of participants had attended no secondary school
- 80% of participants left school before completion of the Leaving Certificate
- 1 in 5 prisoners completed the Leaving Certificate compared to 3 in 5 in the general population
- 9% of the prison population had completed some form of higher education.

These statistics demonstrate that educational disadvantage is prevalent across the prison population, one symptom of wider social exclusion. In 2018, IPRT made a submission to the Oireachtas Committee on Education and Skills. In this submission, IPRT highlighted the important role that education plays throughout the whole system, from prevention and early intervention to supporting the person in prison and upon release. Education plays a crucial role in crime prevention; therefore, the education system must consider the high levels of early school leaving by the prison population and respond with innovative methods to engage and re-engage people in education.

(ii.) Department of Health

The late Inspector of Prisons published the Healthcare in Irish Prisons report in 2016 which contained a number of recommendations that have yet to be acted upon. These included that responsibility for the provision of healthcare should be transferred from the Irish Prison Service to the Health Service Executive, and that a health needs assessment of prisoners in all prisons should be undertaken by a clinician immediately, along with a healthcare staffing needs analysis.

142 Ibid, p. 165
144 Ibid, p. 17
146 Ibid.
issues relating to mental health and addiction are outlined later in this report.

The transfer of prison healthcare to ministries of health is a growing international trend. A number of benefits have been identified, including:

- standards of healthcare for prisoners improve
- national health policymakers have a greater understanding of the health needs of prisoners
- recruitment and quality of healthcare staff in prisons improve
- links with community healthcare are strengthened and resources for prisoner healthcare improve where countries have made this transition.

Transferring governance of prisoner healthcare to the Department of Health would also facilitate independent healthcare inspections in prisons by the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) which currently do not take place in Irish prisons.

(iii.) Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government

The Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government plays a crucial role in the reintegration of prisoners. Having stable accommodation is essential for people getting their lives back on track. However, this must be provided in tandem with relevant wraparound supports. The Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice and Equality (2018) recommended a Housing First model where “the outgoing offender is placed in his or her own home and provided with individualised supports based on his or her needs.”

Research highlights that homelessness upon committal to prison in Ireland is higher than some international estimates. While no data is publicly available in Ireland, a report from the UK estimates that six in ten women had no homes to go to upon release from prison, with the research suggesting that women are more likely to lose their homes upon a period of imprisonment. In Ireland, this situation is compounded because of the current absence of any transitional, step-down or open provision facility for women, despite policy commitments made.

(iv.) Department of Children and Youth Affairs

Supporting children and young people early in their lives is one of the best ways to support crime prevention. IPRT previously outlined the need for early intervention and specialised supports to be made available to particular groups including children of prisoners and children in care.

The most recently published statistics of Oberstown Children Detention Campus highlight how 40% of young people there were in state care or had significant involvement with Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, prior to detention, while 36% of children had suffered the loss of one or both parents through death or imprisonment, or had no long-term contact.

Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014–2020 must be acted upon. Some of the transformational goals in the Department of Children and Youth Affairs Framework are of particular relevance to these cohorts of children.

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151 Ibid., p. 6.
155 Ibid.
and examples provide how they might be applied to the needs of these children:

- **Listening to and involving children and young people**: All professionals (e.g. judiciary and police) should be trained and should have a child-centred focus, ensuring that the ‘best interests’ and ‘voice of child’ principles are at the heart of their work for children in care, children of prisoners and children in detention.

- **Strengthen transitions**: One practical example of how the Department can support transitions is by extending the juvenile justice system beyond 18 years and providing aftercare supports (both financial and emotional supports) beyond the age of 18 for every child who has been in the care of the State.

- **Cross-government and inter-agency collaboration and co-ordination**: For example, through creating a mandatory provision in legislation for inter-agency co-operation by the relevant Departments.

The Department of Children and Youth Affairs should also consider its role in supporting young adults in the criminal justice system up until the age of 24 in line with its current policy framework.

(v.) **Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection**

The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection plays a role in promoting and supporting opportunities for the training and employment of people with experience of the criminal justice system. Access to stable employment is associated with desistance. Criminal convictions and weak spent convictions legislation continue to be a barrier to reintegration for many individuals.

While the Irish Prison Service has made progress in this area through the recent Social Enterprise Strategy, there is scope for further support for people with criminal convictions in accessing employment opportunities. One point of focus might be strengthening inter-agency working,

highlighted in the Irish Prison Service and Probation Service Joint Strategic Plan 2018–2020, which states that “linking with statutory services such as local authorities and the Department of Social Protection can mean for some that a sentence can be utilised to improve contact with public services”.

Notably, May 2018 was the first time in ten years that Ireland’s unemployment rate fell under 6% (at 5.8%). With Ireland heading for full employment, people coming out of prison should be prepared and equipped with the skills necessary to access employment upon release. (This issue will be discussed further in the Reintegration section of this report.)

Other government departments and state agencies have the potential to contribute to and make a substantial difference in changing the landscape of penal policy in Ireland. This is a challenge and one that requires ‘buy-in’ from numerous stakeholders. However, through active engagement and cross departmental, cross-agency collaboration, it is an ambition that can be fully realised.

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160 For more information on this, see IPRT (2015) Turnaround Youth: Young Adults in the Criminal Justice System–The case for a distinct approach [http://www.iprt.ie/files/IPRT-Turnaround-web-optimised.pdf]


162 This means anyone who has experience of the criminal justice system, including those who may have previous conviction(s) or former experience of imprisonment.


165 Irish Prison Service and Probation Service, Joint Strategic Plan 2018–2020, p. 3

## 1.4 IPRT Standards

<p>| Standard 1: | Penal policy is continually monitored, implemented, evaluated and evolving. |
| Standard 2: | Imprisonment is used as a last resort. This principle is enshrined in domestic legislation, with focus on the promotion and proportionate use of alternatives to custody. |
| Standard 3: | Every closed prison is operating at least 10% below its recommended maximum capacity. |
| Standard 4: | Each prison is limited to a prison population not exceeding 300, but ideally a maximum of 200–250. |
| Standard 5: | Prisoners are detained in the least restrictive prison security setting, as determined through risk assessment. |
| Standard 6: | Open prisons comprise 30%-35% of the prison estate. |
| Standard 7: | Every prisoner is provided with respect, dignity and humanity and has access to decent living conditions. |
| Standard 8: | Every prisoner has 24-hour access to toilet facilities that respect the dignity and privacy of the individual. |
| Standard 9: | Every prisoner has access to single-cell accommodation. |
| Standard 10: | Remand prisoners are held separately from sentenced prisoners across the entire prison estate. |
| Standard 11: | Every prisoner is encouraged and facilitated to maintain positive family and close, significant relationships. |
| Standard 12: | The healthcare needs of individual prisoners are met. Every prisoner has access to healthcare that goes beyond the ‘equivalence of care’ principle, with a full range of preventative services and continuity of healthcare in the community. |
| Standard 13: | People with serious mental health issues are diverted from the prison system and receive the appropriate treatment and supports in a timely manner. |
| Standard 14: | People with addiction issues are diverted from the prison system and receive the appropriate treatment. Where imprisonment is the only appropriate response, treatment is made available within prison, with a continuum of care upon release. |
| Standard 15: | A prisoner’s right to privacy, and that of his/her family members, is respected and protected. |
| Standard 16: | Every prisoner spends a minimum of five hours a day engaged in structured meaningful activity for five days a week, in addition to a further minimum seven hours’ out-of-cell time. |
| Standard 17: | Every prisoner and his/her family members, where desired, are facilitated and actively involved in his/her sentence planning from the beginning of sentence through to the point of release. |
| Standard 18: | Prisoners are encouraged and facilitated to develop and maintain life skills and assume personal responsibility while in prison. |
| Standard 19: | Every prison provides each prisoner with access to a range of educational activities that meet the individual’s needs and take into account their aspirations. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Civil society access to prisons is encouraged, and there are opportunities for prisoners to participate and engage in the community through structured forms of temporary release.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Prisoners are encouraged to engage with their political and civic rights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Prisoners have access to a robust and effective complaints mechanism. All complaints are dealt with in a timely manner, and the outcome of a decision is clearly communicated to the prisoner, with a satisfactory resolution if the complaint is upheld.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Prisoners have access to an external, independent complaints and appeal mechanism, including access to a prisoner ombudsman or equivalent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Structures are in place for the regular inspection and monitoring of prisons. Inspection reports are made publicly available within a clear timeframe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>The death of, or serious incident involving, a prisoner is investigated by an independent body immediately, and the investigation report published promptly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Solitary confinement is used as a last resort and only in exceptional circumstances. It is used for the shortest period possible and for a maximum of 15 days. Reasons for and lengths of time a prisoner is held in solitary confinement must be recorded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Prisoners and everyone in the prison system feel safe and protected from violence in the prison environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>The health and welfare of prisoners is prioritised while they are under escort.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>All staff receive relevant ongoing training and supports in order to effectively carry out their duties to a high standard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Good relationships between management, staff and prisoners are facilitated and encouraged. Management ensures that a positive working culture is created in the prison.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Prison protocols emphasise de-escalation and conflict resolution approaches. Use of force and restraint are a measure of last resort.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Management in the prison system takes a proactive approach towards protecting anyone who is at risk of discrimination due to their age, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, disability or other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>A gender-sensitive approach should be adopted across the criminal justice system to respond to the distinct needs of women who offend.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>The parole system is fair, transparent and removed from political control.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>All prisoners have comprehensive preparation and structured plans for release. National policy and legislation provides for a structured release system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Protocols are in place for inter-agency co-ordination in order to ensure the successful reintegration of prisoners on release.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PART 2:
Measuring Progress Against the Standards

A: An Effective and Humane Penal System

In 2017, IPRT developed indicators against which to assess each PIPS standard on an annual basis. This year we use these indicators to assess progress against these standards within the last 12 months.

The six key standards that IPRT believes would help support the overarching long-term vision of an effective and humane penal system are outlined below.

Towards a progressive penal policy

Standard 1: Penal policy is continually monitored, implemented, evaluated and evolving.

Rationale

Penal policy in Ireland should reflect the guiding principles and values of penal reform (see Part 1). At the same time, policy should maintain a level of flexibility to adapt to emerging issues, the needs of the prison population, and the changing prison environment. Therefore, implementation, regular review and evaluation of penal policy are imperative.

Current context

In the 2017 PIPS report, the significance of two national policy documents on penal reform was outlined: the Oireachtas Sub-Committee Report on Penal Reform (2013) and the Strategic Review of Penal Policy Final Report (2014). At the time of writing, the Implementation Oversight Group had submitted five reports to the Minister for Justice and Equality on the latter.

Following another review of penal reform, in May 2018 the current Oireachtas Joint Committee published its Report on Penal Reform and Sentencing, with 29 recommendations. Progress on the five key recommendations of the 2013 Committee and how they align with recommendations made by the 2018 Committee are outlined below.

http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/PB14000244
171 Other recommendations made by the Oireachtas (2018) will be referred to in relevant areas of the PIPS report.
Table 1: Key recommendations made by the Oireachtas Joint Committee (2013)\textsuperscript{172} and repeated/similar recommendations by Oireachtas Joint Committee (2018)\textsuperscript{173}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Reduce the prison population by one-third over ten years.</td>
<td>The Committee made an enhanced recommendation that Government adopt a clear strategy to reduce the prison population by half over a fixed timescale.</td>
<td>Daily Average Number of Persons in Custody\textsuperscript{174}</td>
<td>At the current rate, the daily prison population will not be reduced by one-third by 2023.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2013: 4,158</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>2014: 3,915</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2016: 3,718</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2017: 3,680</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Commute sentences of less than six months imposed for non-violent offences and replace with Community Service Orders.</td>
<td>A repeated recommendation made by the Committee (2018) that sentences of less than six months should be replaced with Community Service Orders.\textsuperscript{175}</td>
<td>Number of Persons in Prison for less than six months (snapshot figures):\textsuperscript{176}</td>
<td>Snapshot figures (30\textsuperscript{th} November of each year) provided in IPS annual reports show an increase in the daily number of persons in prison serving sentences of less than six months.\textsuperscript{178}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2013: 153</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>2014: 126</td>
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<td>2017: 201</td>
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<td>2012: 2,267</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2015: 1,622</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2016: 1,518</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2017: 1,755</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Committals under Sentence of 6 months or less (excl. fines committals)\textsuperscript{177}</td>
<td>Snapshot figures on the same date (30\textsuperscript{th} November 2017) show that only 55 individuals were on the Community Support Scheme.\textsuperscript{179} This is a much lower number than the number serving a sentence of less than six months in 2017 and may need further interrogation as to the reasons for this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2011: 2,342</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2012: 2,267</td>
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<td>2013: 1,964</td>
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<td>2015: 1,622</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2016: 1,518</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2017: 1,755</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


\textsuperscript{176} See Irish Prison Service, Annual Reports, https://www.irishprisons.ie/information-centre/publications/annual-reports/


\textsuperscript{178} These figures are based on sentence lengths of six months and do not provide information on the type of offence committed

\textsuperscript{179} The Community Support Scheme is a structured release programme for those serving a sentence of 3–12 months. See http://careafterprison.ie/community-support-scheme/

<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Increase remission from 25% to 33% for all sentences over one month, and establish an enhanced remission scheme of up to half a sentence.</td>
<td>The Oireachtas Committee (2018) made no new recommendation on this.</td>
<td>Little progress has been made on this.</td>
<td>There have been no developments in increasing remission levels or developing an enhanced remission scheme. However, a review of enhanced remission has been carried out. This review has not been published.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Introduce a single piece of legislation that would form the basis of a structured release system.</td>
<td>While the Oireachtas did not make a new recommendation on this, it welcomed the success of the Community Return Programme and recommended that eligibility criteria for this programme be expanded.</td>
<td>Little progress made in this area.</td>
<td>IPRF has previously advocated for a single piece of legislation that would form the basis of a structured release system, explicitly outlining the criteria for prisoners who can avail of early release programmes. This has not happened.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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187 The Minister for Justice and Equality stated at the ACJRDP Parole Board Conference, May 2018, that the Bill was due to move to report stage shortly.

--- | --- | --- | ---
5. **Address overcrowding and prison conditions with increased use of open prisons.** | The Committee\(^{189}\) in 2018 recommended capping numbers in each prison. A step-down approach to prisoners post release was recommended, in particular the Housing First model\(^{190}\) | Regress. | According to daily prisoner population figures, as of 29\(^{th}\) June 2018, five out of twelve prisons are operating above the Inspector of Prisons’ recommended maximum capacity, with female prisons the worst affected.\(^{191}\)

In 2017, the *PIPS* report identified a reduction in open provision in Ireland from 9% in 2016 to 6.7% in 2017. Despite plans and commitments to increase open provision including a step-down facility for females and open prison provision for males in Dublin, these plans have yet to be progressed.

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\(^{190}\) Ibid, Recommendation 27, p. 59

Strategic review of penal policy: implementation of penal policy recommendations

Since the publication of PIPS 2017, the fourth and fifth Reports of the Implementation Oversight Group have been published. In its fifth report, three out of 43 actions received an ‘A’ status with the majority of actions receiving a ‘D’ status, meaning little progress on the recommended actions has been achieved. The three actions that received an ‘A’ status were the completion of the H Indicators for Standard 1 Department of Justice and Equality, Penal Policy Review. 


Progress in the Penal System (PIPS) – A framework for penal reform

**Actions required**

**Action 1.1:** The Department of Justice and Equality must fully implement five key recommendations outlined in the Strategic Review of Penal Policy by end 2018.

**Action 1.2:** The Oireachtas Committee on Justice and Equality should track and monitor the implementation of the recommendations made in their 2018 report.

**Action 1.3:** All criminal justice bodies should publish relevant data to inform research, policy and practice.

**Action 1.4:** The identified changemakers should consider formal adoption of and commitment to IPRT’s standards in order to progress penal policy in the right direction.

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**Indicator S1.3:** Implementation of IPRT (PIPS) Standards.

IPRT has received significant engagement on the PIPS standards from the Irish Prison Service, which we welcome. We have also received some engagement from the Department of Justice and Equality.

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**Imprisonment as a last resort**

**Standard 2:** Imprisonment is used as a last resort. This principle is enshrined in domestic legislation, with focus on the promotion and proportionate use of alternatives to custody.

**Rationale**

IPRT’s core guiding principle is the use of ‘imprisonment as a last resort’. The damaging impact of imprisonment on the individual, as well as its ripple effects on families and communities, is enormous. IPRT’s research has previously documented the benefits of community-based alternatives to custody for individuals, including the opportunity to develop ‘soft’ skills such as self-esteem and confidence, as well as the ability to maintain familial and other relationships in the community.

---

**Current context**

This guiding principle of imprisonment as a last resort is as relevant as ever with the United Nations Economic and Social Council adopting in 2017 a resolution entitled ‘Promoting and encouraging the implementation of alternatives to imprisonment as part of comprehensive crime prevention and criminal justice policies.’

Figures from the Irish Prison Service Annual Report 2017 demonstrate:

- On 30th November 2017, the total number of prisoners in the system was 3,738. The largest offence category of sentenced people was Theft and Related Offences (563).
- Of total sentenced committals to prison in 2017, the largest offence categories were: Offences against Government, Justice Procedures and Organisations of Crime (1,496), followed by Road and Traffic Offences (982) and Theft and Related Offences (919).
- The numbers committed under sentence of six to twelve months decreased by 14.9% from 1,039 in 2016 to 884 in 2017.
- There was a slight increase in the use of Community Service Orders in 2017 at 2,215 compared with 2,067 in 2016.

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206 Ibid, p. 28

207 Ibid, p. 31

208 Ibid, p. 35

209 Ibid, p. 27

Part 2: Measuring Progress against the Standards

**Indicators for Standard 2**

**Indicator S2.1:** Ireland’s imprisonment rate (committal rates, daily prisoner population rates and release rates) compared to European rates.

**Imprisonment Rate (World Prison Brief July 2018)**

The imprisonment rate in Ireland was 83 per 100,000 in July 2018, much higher than rates of Nordic countries including Finland at 52 per 100,000 and Iceland at 38 per 100,000. However, Ireland is closer to Nordic rates than those of England and Wales, which is positive.

In the most recent, *World Prison Brief*, Ireland’s rate of imprisonment is 83 per 100,000, ranked thirty-ninth from highest to lowest out of 56 countries.

- In 2015, the rate of entries into Irish penal institutions was 371.7 per 100,000 compared to the CoE median of 167.3, and the fourth-highest rate in the EU. The average was 203.5.
- In 2015, the rate of releases from Irish penal institutions was 376.3 per 100,000 compared to the CoE median of 135.1, and the highest rate in the EU. The average was 157.2.

The statistics show Ireland’s high prison ‘turnover ratio’ of 82.8 compared to a European average of...
52.3. High turnover rates (where individuals move in and out of the prison system quickly) are one indicator which shows that imprisonment is not being used as a sanction of last resort.

Table 2: Daily prison population numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>January</td>
<td>02/01/2017</td>
<td>3,574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>February</td>
<td>01/02/2017</td>
<td>3,715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>March</td>
<td>01/03/2017</td>
<td>3,819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>April</td>
<td>03/04/2017</td>
<td>3,753</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>May</td>
<td>01/05/2017</td>
<td>3,732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>June</td>
<td>01/06/2017</td>
<td>3,714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>July</td>
<td>03/07/2017</td>
<td>3,704</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>August</td>
<td>01/08/2017</td>
<td>3,753</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>September</td>
<td>01/09/2017</td>
<td>3,536</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>October</td>
<td>02/10/2017</td>
<td>3,589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>November</td>
<td>01/11/2017</td>
<td>3,673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>December</td>
<td>01/12/2017</td>
<td>3,711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>January</td>
<td>01/01/2018</td>
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<td></td>
<td>February</td>
<td>01/02/2018</td>
<td>3,812</td>
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<td></td>
<td>March</td>
<td>01/03/2018</td>
<td>3,846</td>
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<td></td>
<td>April</td>
<td>02/04/2018</td>
<td>3,890</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>May</td>
<td>01/05/2018</td>
<td>3,945</td>
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<td></td>
<td>June</td>
<td>01/06/2018</td>
<td>3,994</td>
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<td></td>
<td>July</td>
<td>02/07/2018</td>
<td>3,994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>August</td>
<td>01/08/2018</td>
<td>4,022</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lowest prison population. Highest prison populations.

Indicator S2.2: The percentage of sentences of less than 12 months.

Snapshot figures show that 463 sentenced prisoners were serving a sentence of less than a year on 30th November 2017. This compares to 415 prisoners on 30th November 2016.


Indicator S2.3: An increase in the use of alternatives to custody as a substitute for short-term sentences.

It is difficult to determine whether alternatives to custody are being used as a direct substitute for short-term sentences. IPRT has previously highlighted that the provision of community sanctions often produces ‘net-widening effects’, drawing more individuals into the criminal justice system. Evidence from the Council of Europe suggests that Ireland is under-utilising Probation/Community Sanctions.

Despite the introduction of legislation to encourage the use of Community Service Orders in Ireland, the Criminal Justice (Community Service) (Amendment) Act 2011, there is little evidence of any real increase in the deployment of Community Service Orders in Ireland, and an evident reduction in the number of Community Service Orders since 2011.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Community Service Orders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>2,738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>2,569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>2,354</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2,190</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>1,937</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>2,067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>2,215</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PROGRESSIVE PRACTICE**

**Principles-Based Practice: The Netherlands**

A change in penal policy took place in the Netherlands in response to a recidivism rate of 70% (within a period of seven years), which the Government deemed unacceptable.

Successive Dutch governments have focused on principles such as: public safety, self-reliance, humanity, proportionality, normalisation and reintegration. These principles appear to be preserved independent of the politics of the government in power.

**Community Return, Ireland**

Community Return is a programme which allows certain prisoners to complete unpaid community work in exchange for their early release. The programme is available to those who are serving more than one year but less than eight, and who have completed at least 50% of their sentence. Since its establishment in 2012, the Community Return Scheme has maintained a compliance rate of approximately 90%.

IPRT raises concerns on the decreasing number of offenders placed in community return, which has halved since the introduction of the programme.

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225 Irish Statute Book, Criminal Justice (Community Service) (Amendment) Act 2011

226 Information collated from relevant Probation Service Annual Reports
http://www.probation.ie/EN/PB/WebPages/WP16000121


228 Ibid, p. 131

229 Probation Service, Community Return
http://www.justice.ie/EN/PB/WebPages/WP16000037

230 Ibid.

231 Department of Justice and Equality, ‘Minister FlanaganWelcomes Progressive Achievements of Irish Prison Service and Probation Service in 2017’
http://justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/PR18000177
### Number of Offenders on Community Return as of 31st December

<table>
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<th>Number of Offenders on Community Return</th>
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<td>2016</td>
<td>66</td>
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<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This information is contained in the relevant Probation Service Annual Reports [http://www.probation.ie/EN/PB/sectionpage?readform](http://www.probation.ie/EN/PB/sectionpage?readform)


### Actions required

**Action 2.1:** Legislators must enshrine the principle of ‘imprisonment as a last resort’ and along with reducing the prison population by half over a fixed timescale as recommended by the Oireachtas Joint Committee (2018).

**Action 2.2:** Judiciary, probation and prison services should work towards the goal of reducing the prison population from the current 83 per 100,000 to 50 per 100,000.

**Action 2.3:** Legislators should introduce legislation that commutes all sentences of less than six months for non-violent offences and replace these with Community Service Orders.

**Action 2.4:** The criteria for and suitability of prisoners to access the Community Return Programme and the Community Support Scheme should be reviewed with a view to expanding the eligibility criteria.

**Action 2.5:** Legislators should examine the merits of introducing sentencing guidelines.
**Safe custody limits**

**Standard 3:** Every closed prison is operating at least 10% below its recommended maximum capacity.

**Rationale**

All prisons should operate below the Inspector of Prisons’ recommended maximum capacity in order to protect the safety of everyone in the prison system. It is important that published capacity figures reflect the lived reality in Irish prisons, and that figures do not distort that reality—for example, the impact on capacity as result of closures for refurbishments of prison wings. The impact of overcrowding is reduced quality of living conditions, as well as adverse effects on prisoners’ privacy.

**Current context**

The Oireachtas Joint Committee on Justice and Equality (2018) recommended the capping of prisoner numbers in each institution, along with the adoption of a clear strategy by the Government to reduce the prison population by half over a fixed time scale. Outlined below are prison capacity figures for April 2018 and how they compare to figures for 2017.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prison</th>
<th>Numbers in Custody 10th of April 2018</th>
<th>Prison Capacity</th>
<th>% Bed Capacity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arbour Hill</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castlerea</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloverhill</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cork</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limerick (m)</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>108%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limerick (f)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>143%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midlands</td>
<td>803</td>
<td>870</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountjoy (M)</td>
<td>691</td>
<td>755</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountjoy (F)</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>122%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portlaoise</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheatfield</td>
<td>442</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,894</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,899</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only three closed prisons were operating at least 10% below capacity in April 2018.

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A stark difference this year is the reduction in the number of usable cells in Wheatfield Prison and the Dóchas Centre women’s prison on the snapshot date. (This may be attributed to the closure of a wing/houses.)

### Actions required

**Action 3.1**  All stakeholders in the criminal justice field must work to reduce the prison population by 1000. Legislators should consider whether governors should be given the power to refuse new prisoner committals when capacity levels exceed safe levels.

**Action 3.2**  The Inspector of Prisons must review and publish operational capacity levels for each prison in 2018.

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238 Information provided by the Irish Prison Service on the 1st June 2018


http://www.iprt.ie/files/Progress_in_the_Penal_System.compressed_pdf
Size of prisons

Standard 4: Each prison is limited to a prison population not exceeding 300, but ideally 200–250.

Rationale
Smaller prisons reflect community life more closely, and reduce the likelihood of violence, as well as facilitating the development of positive staff–prisoner relationships.

Current context
In total, 7 of 12 prisons meet this standard. However, further analysis shows that of the seven that meet this standard, one is a female prison and two are open prisons. There are five prisons operating above this number. Only five prisons meet the ideal standard of a prison population of below 250.

Indicators for Standard 4
Indicator S4.1: The number of prisons in the Irish prison estate below the maximum prison size of 300 prisoners:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prison</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Standard met</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cloverhill</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cork</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limerick (Male and Female)</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midlands</td>
<td>870</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountjoy (Female)</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountjoy (Male)</td>
<td>755</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portlaoise</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheatfield</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arbour Hill</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castlerea</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loughan House</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelton Abbey</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Action required
Action 4.1: The Department of Justice and Equality should ensure that any future prison renewal programme is guided by a commitment to prison sizes of less than 300, ideally 250.
Minimum prison security settings

Standard 5: Prisons are detained in the least restrictive prison security settings as determined through risk assessment.

Rationale

Having access to less restrictive prison security settings is important as it provides for the ‘normalisation’ principle and thus reduces the risk of institutionalisation, making the transition to life on the outside easier.

Current context

The Joint Committee on Justice and Equality (2018) recommended as follows:

There is a need for different mixes of restriction and supervision. Construction of future prisons should be done in a flexible manner, organised around self-contained units. Regimes should be programme-driven and open to the possibilities of individual change. Future infrastructural development within the prison system should involve the use of more innovative, community-based, semi-open facilities, avoiding the one-size-fits-all model.

While there are currently two open prisons in Ireland, there are also some parts of the prison estate that operate a lower security regime. These include the Grove Unit in Castlerea Prison.

The Irish Prison Service has highlighted in its Capital Plan a need to "upgrade existing and develop a small number of new open, semi-open or low security centres in appropriate locations to supplement the minimal existing low-security capacity".

Indicator for Standard 5

Indicator S5.1: the number of prisoners accommodated in low-security settings: In May 2018, 235 prisoners out of a total of 3,992 prisoners in custody were accommodated in low-security prisons. Information provided by the Irish Prison Service shows that on the same date, a further 42 individuals were in the Grove Unit in Castlerea Prison, which is a low-security regime within a medium-security prison.

Action required

Action 5.1: The Department of Justice and Equality and the Irish Prison Service should increase the number of prisoners having access to less restrictive prison settings.

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241 Council of Europe (2016) Situation of Life-Sentenced Prisoners, European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, https://rm.coe.int/16806cc447


245 Information provided by the Press Office 1st June 2018
Open prison provision

**Standard 6:**
Open prisons comprise 30%–35% of the prison estate.

**Rationale**
Open prisons differ from closed prisons in their philosophy. Open prisons have many benefits including a reduced likelihood of institutionalisation, and provide for a gradual transition to life on the outside.

**Current context**
Following the closure of the semi-open facility, the Training Unit, in April 2017, open provision in Ireland currently comprises only 6.7% of the prison estate. There is currently no open prison for women. Plans for open-provision and low-security regimes are included in the Irish Prison Service Capital Strategy. The Masterplan of Mountjoy Campus has yet to be published, despite a statement that the plan would be published in Autumn 2016.

**Indicators for Standard 6**

**Indicator S6.1:** Open provision in the prison estate: Provision remains the same in mid-2018 as in mid-2017 at 6.7%.

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**Open Prisons: Finland and Denmark**

In Finland, the daily proportion of prisoners in open prisons is almost 40%. In Denmark the number of sentenced men in open prisons exceeds the number of men in closed prisons, for example, average occupancy of sentenced prisoners in closed prisons was 884 compared to 1,309 in open prisons in 2012.

**Bastoy Open Prison, Norway**

Bastoy Open Prison facilitates 115 prisoners and has 69 employees. Bastoy is an example of a prison that reflects the CoE principle that prison life should reflect community life. There are ‘pod’ communities within the prison. Houses accommodate up to six people. Every prisoner has their own bedroom and shares communal facilities.

Bastoy is described as an ‘ecological’ prison where prisoners help run the farm, undergo training programmes, and prepare for release. Prisoners can apply for a place in Bastoy when they have up to five years left of their sentence. Any type of offender can apply as long as they meet criteria around motivation to change.

Prison officers receive three years’ training. The relationship between prison officers and prisoners is central to Bastoy’s success. Only five prison officers stay on the island overnight. Bastoy is known for its low re-offending rate of 16%, compared to the European average.

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252 Gindin, M (2017) ‘Why the world’s cushiest prison is also among its most effective’ http://allthatsinteresting.com/bastoy-prison
253 Council of Europe Committee of Ministers, Recommendation Rec (2003) 23 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on the management of prison administrations of life sentence and other long-term prisoners, Point 4 https://pjp.eu.coe.int/documents/3983922/6970334/CMRec+%282003%29+on+the+management+of+life+sentence+and+other+long+term+prisoners.pdf/bb16b837-7a88-4b12-b9e9-803c734a8117
255 Ibid.
of 70%. A ‘Continuing Care’ policy is in place whereby everyone released has access to services and is provided with a job 18 months prior to leaving prison.

One reason given for the success of the penal system in Norway is that it is largely left to the stakeholder experts to examine penal policy, with little political interference.

### Actions required

- **Action 6.1:** The Irish Prison Service should increase open prison provision across the estate, with a goal of similar rates to the Nordic countries, matched with a reduction in closed prison provision.

- **Action 6.2:** The Mountjoy Campus Masterplan should be published.

- **Action 6.3:** The Irish Prison Service should establish open prison provision for women.

257 Gindin M (2017) Why the world’s cushiest prison is also among its most effective http://allthatinteresting.com/bastoy-prison

258 World Economic Forum (2017) This Norwegian prison is the nicest in the world, 2nd June 2017 https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/06/this-norwegian-prison-is-the-nicest-in-the-world/
Part 1: How Progress can be achieved

B: Prison Conditions

Humane prison conditions

Standard 7: Every prisoner is provided with respect, dignity and humanity and has access to decent living conditions.

Rationale

Prison conditions should not be viewed as additional punishment. Prisoners retain their human rights although their liberty has been taken. As highlighted by Penal Reform International: “Living conditions in a prison are among the chief factors determining a prisoner’s self-esteem and dignity.”\(^{259}\)

Good prison conditions are likely to reduce conflict and violence, and support a ‘healthy’ prison environment, which in turn improves the prospects of rehabilitation for individual prisoners.

Current context

The standard of prison living conditions in Ireland can vary both within and across the prison estate. External insights into these conditions can be gained only through the timely publication of reports by independent external monitoring bodies, such as the Inspector of Prisons\(^{260}\), Prison Visiting Committees\(^{261}\) and the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture.

Indicators for Standard 7

Indicator S7.1: Standards within the prison estate regarding: state of repair and cleanliness; natural light; ventilation and heating; sanitary facilities:

Conditions between prisons vary widely. While each Prison VC\(^{262}\) publishes an annual report, these reports are not standardised and the quality varies. The most recent annual reports published by Visiting Committees were for 2016, a clear time lag in terms of reporting on current conditions.

The most recent VC report on Mountjoy Prison highlighted that:

> prisoners also expressed frustration, hopelessness and at times anger about conditions of their custody including, prevalence of gang culture giving rise to the need for protection, widespread abuse of drugs in prison, lack of drug free environment in prison and drug free accommodation on release.\(^{263}\)

The most recent VC report (2016) on Wheatfield Prison described the prison as an “excellent institution”.\(^{264}\) However, the same report noted broken windows.

A number of issues were also raised by the VC in the Dóchas Centre, including: unacceptable conditions of the Dóchas Centre, as well as overcrowding.\(^{265}\)

The Irish Prison Service has taken some steps to provide for more internal audits across the system, including the establishment of a National Infection Committee to assess the levels of hygiene across the prison estate.\(^{266}\) The Irish Prison Service has introduced this type of audit to take place on a quarterly basis.\(^{267}\)

Indicator S7.2: Prisoners’ access to a balanced diet, religious practice, legal representation, family contact, gratuity payments and tuckshop:

There is a 28-day nutritionally advised menu cycle across the prison estate.\(^{268}\) The Irish Prison Service has undertaken a review of tuckshop prices, which identified that prices have increased by 10% generally and 37% for cigarettes.\(^{269}\) The gratuity rate is currently being reviewed.\(^{270}\)

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261 See Department of Justice and Equality, Prison Visiting Committee Annual Reports [http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/Prison_Visiting_Committee_Annual_Reports_2016](http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/Prison_Visiting_Committee_Annual_Reports_2016)
262 Department of Justice and Equality, Visiting Committee Annual Reports [http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/Prison_Visiting_Committee_Annual_Reports_2016](http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/Prison_Visiting_Committee_Annual_Reports_2016)
266 Information provided by the Irish Prison Service on 30\(^{th}\) April 2018
267 Ibid.
268 Ibid.
269 Ibid.
270 Ibid.
International Practice: Prison Conditions Monitoring Index

The Centre for the Study of Democracy has created a Prison Conditions Monitoring Index (PCMI). The purpose of the index is for prison governors to collect and promote the collection of comparable, official and detailed data for creating informed policies concerning prisons and prison populations. The PCMI is composed of indicators in the areas of:

1. Living conditions
2. Social work, free time and contacts with the outside world
3. Security and safety
4. Employment
5. Healthcare.

The PCMI has been tested in a number of countries such as Bulgaria, Spain, Germany and Lithuania. While there have been issues with availability of data, it found that many of the prisons were unsatisfactory (though not at a critical level).

Action required

Action 7.1 The Prison Service should carry out regular internal inspections to ensure that prisons comply with minimum human rights standards, rules, regulations and legislation. Applying a Prison Conditions Monitoring Index is one approach to assessing conditions between prisons and within prisons over time in order to identify learnings and good practice that could be replicated across the whole estate.

In-cell sanitation

Standard 8: Every prisoner has 24-hour access to toilet facilities that respect the dignity and privacy of the individual.

Rationale

In 21st-century Ireland, while the practice of ‘slopping out’ has been almost eradicated, a considerable proportion of prisoners in the estate continue to be forced to toilet in the presence of others.

Current context

Overall, the reduction in slopping out over the past five years has been significant, from 24.8% of the prison population slopping out in 2012 to 1.3% of the prison population today. In July 2018 the Supreme Court agreed to hear an appeal from an individual prisoner which may have further implications for 1,000 slopping-out cases. The appeal will address important legal issues such as what criteria is applied when determining whether or not treatment of a prisoner is inhuman or degrading. This appeal is against a judgment that found a breach of the constitutional right to privacy and dignity, but no breach of the individual prisoner’s right not to be subjected to inhuman or degrading treatment.

In 2017, the UN Committee against Torture (2017) concluded that the State should “... modernize Limerick prison and ‘Block E’ of Portlaoise prison to eliminate the slopping out system completely.”

272 Ibid.
273 Ibid, pp. 9–15
274 Ibid, p. 83
Part 1: How Progress can be achieved

Indicators for Standard 8

**Indicator S8.1:** Number of prisoners currently slopping out: 56 in April 2017, 53 in April 2018.

Latest published census figures from July 2018 show there are currently 58 prisoners slopping out.

**Indicator S8.2:** Number of prisoners using a toilet in the presence of others: 41% in April 2017, 44% in April 2018.

Latest published census figures show that 45% (1,781) of prisoners were toileting in the presence of others.

While IPRT recommended in 2017 that the practice of slopping out be eliminated by the end of 2018, along with a reduction in numbers toileting in the presence of others by one-third, this has not happened.

**Actions required**

**Action 8.1:** The Irish Prison Service must eliminate the practice of slopping out by the end of 2018.

**Action 8.2:** The Irish Prison Service should reduce the number of prisoners who have to toilet in the presence of others by a third during 2018 with a medium-term goal of ensuring that every prisoner has 24-hour access to a toilet in private.

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**Single-cell accommodation**

**Standard 9:**
Every prisoner has access to single-cell accommodation.

**Rationale**

It is important that prisoners have the choice of single-cell accommodation. Access to single-cell accommodation promotes a prisoner’s right to privacy, and helps reduce violence. The Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT) identified that:

*If prison represents the place where people in detention live, their cell and dormitory may be considered as their “home”. This is where they spend most of their time, at least at night, and often the entire day. The configuration and material conditions of their accommodation represent essential aspects to alleviate the harmful effects of deprivation of liberty.*

**Current context**

The Joint Committee on Justice & Equality (2018) made a key recommendation that ‘Prisons should aim for an accommodation policy of one person, one cell, and the necessary resources should be made available to realise this aspiration.’

In theory, prisons such as Dóchas women’s prison operate single-room occupancy. However, with increasing prisoner numbers, this is difficult to achieve in practice. The changemakers referred to earlier – such as the judiciary and the Probation Service – have a vital role to play in keeping prisoner numbers down so that access to single-cell accommodation is possible.

**Indicators for Standard 9**

**Indicator S9.1:** The number of prisoners accommodated in a single cell: In 2017, according to the Irish Prison Service Census figures, 54% (2,040) of prisoners were accommodated in a single cell.

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278 Irish Prison Service, Census of Cell Occupancy and In-Cell Sanitation April 2017

279 Irish Prison Service, Census of Cell Occupancy and In-Cell Sanitation April 2018

280 Irish Prison Service, Census of Cell Occupancy and In-Cell Sanitation July 2018

281 Irish Prison Service, Census of Cell Occupancy and In-Cell Sanitation April 2017

282 Irish Prison Service, Census of Cell Occupancy and In-Cell Sanitation April 2018

283 Irish Prison Service, Census of Cell Occupancy and In-Cell Sanitation July 2018

284 APT Detention Focus, Accommodation, Section on Analysis
https://www.apt.ch/detention-focus/en/detention_issues/43/


286 Irish Prison Service, Census of Cell Occupancy and In-Cell Sanitation April 2017
same time in 2018, according to the Irish Prison Service Census, 53% (2,047) of prisoners were accommodated in a single cell, a 1% decrease. 287 682 cells accommodated two prisoners (1,364), 111 cells accommodated three prisoners (333) and 38 cells accommodated four or more prisoners (150). 288 The most recently published Census figures,289 from July 2018, show that 2,054 (52%) were accommodated in single-cell accommodation, 738 cells accommodated two prisoners (1,476), 107 cells accommodated three prisoners (321 prisoners) and 28 cells accommodated four or more prisoners (116 prisoners).

**Indicator S9.2: The proportion of single cells across the prison estate:** Latest census figures290 from July 2018 show that 52% (2,054) were accommodated in single-cell accommodation within the context of a prison population of 3,967.

**PROGRESSIVE PRACTICE**

**Single-Cell Accommodation**

Denmark, the Netherlands and Iceland all provide single-cell accommodation for prisoners.291

**Actions required**

**Action 9.1:** The Irish Prison Service should ensure that all prisoners have access to and choice of single-cell occupancy. Where this is not possible, a full cell-sharing risk assessment must always be carried out.

**Action 9.2:** Other criminal justice stakeholders must also continue to contribute to efforts to reduce prison numbers in order to achieve single-cell occupancy across the estate.

**Separation of remand prisoners from sentenced prisoners**

### Standard 10: Remand prisoners are held separately from sentenced prisoners across the entire prison estate.

#### Rationale

Article 10(a) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)292 makes clear that remand prisoners should be held separately from sentenced prisoners. As remand prisoners have not been found guilty of an offence they should be held separately from sentenced prisoners.

#### Current context

Figures provided by the Irish Prison Service show that there has been a growth in the number of prisoners on remand over the last 12 months. Snapshot figures show there were 736 individuals on remand on 30th November 2017,293 an increase of 101 persons from 30th November 2016 when there were 635 people on remand.294

The UN Committee Against Torture was critical of the lack of data on persons held on remand by the State:

> Regarding remand prisoners. We appreciate very much your replies regarding this particular category of prisoners, but since again you have not provided any statistics regarding the average length of time prisoners spend in remand, we do not get an objective picture of their situation. The excessive duration of remand detention represents permanent concerns of this committee, this is why it is important for us to have these statistics and we hope that the information on length of remand will be published.295

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287 This is actually an increase of seven people having access to single-cell accommodation. Irish Prison Service, Census of Cell Occupancy and In-Cell Sanitation April 2018 https://www.irishprisons.ie/wp-content/uploads/documents_pdf/April-2018-In-Cell.pdf

288 Note: 46 of these were in dormitory-style accommodation in Shelton Abbey, an open prison. Census of Cell Occupancy and In-Cell Sanitation April 2018 https://www.irishprisons.ie/wp-content/uploads/documents_pdf/April-2018-In-Cell.pdf


290 Ibid


293 Ibid, p. 28


295 UN Web TV, Consideration of Ireland (Cont’d):1551th Meeting 61st Session Committee Against Torture at 2:08.08 to 2:08.50 http://webtv.un.org/watch/consideration-of-ireland-contd-1551st-meeting-61st-session-committee-against-torture/5526421662001?term=
While the Irish Prison Service stated that it does not compile data on the lengths of time people spend on remand, at the UNCAT hearing a commitment was made to undertake research and publish information on lengths of time prisoners are spending on remand in its quarterly statistics. This has not yet happened.

Reducing the number of those being detained on remand is one approach to reducing the current prison population. As highlighted by the European Parliament:

**Criminal procedure reforms are also needed to reduce both the use of pre-trial detention and its length; such reforms could include giving priority to trials involving persons held in pre-trial detention, and ensuring better implementation of the principle according to which pre-trial detention should be reviewed at regular intervals to assess whether it remains justified.**

### Indicators for Standard 10

**Indicator S10.1: Number of remand prisoners held alongside people serving a prison sentence:** As of 4th July 2018, there were 743 remand prisoners in custody, of whom 222 were sharing a cell with a sentenced prisoner. This compares to a figure of 92 remand prisoners mixed with sentenced prisoners on 6th July 2017. These figures demonstrate that the prison system did not have sufficient separate accommodation for the sharp increase in the number of remand committals over the period.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Total number of prisoners on Remand</th>
<th>Number of remand prisoners sharing a cell with a sentenced prisoner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arbour Hill Prison</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castlerea Prison</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloverhill Prison</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cork Prison</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dóchas Centre</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limerick Prison</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midlands Prison</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountjoy Prison</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portlaoise Prison</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheatfield Place of Detention</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>743</strong></td>
<td><strong>222</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Actions required

**Action 10.1:** The Irish Prison Service should publish the lengths of time individuals are spending on remand in prison as recommended by the UN Committee against Torture.

**Action 10.2:** The Department of Justice and Equality and the Irish Prison Service should commit to a clear timeframe for the separation of all remand prisoners from sentenced prisoners, in particular the female prison population, for whom there is no dedicated remand facility.

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296 UN Web TV, Consideration of Ireland (Cont’d)-1551st Meeting 61st Session Committee Against Torture http://webtv.un.org/watch/consideration-of-ireland-1551st-meeting-61st-session-committee-against-torture/5525421662001/?term=


Family contact

**Standard 11:** Every prisoner is encouraged and facilitated to maintain positive family and close, significant relationships.

**Rationale**
Children and families affected by imprisonment are often referred to as the ‘hidden’ or ‘forgotten victims of crime’. While families and children have committed no crime themselves, they are punished indirectly for the actions of their parent or family member. Children have the right to maintain regular and direct contact with their parent.  

Every member of the family maintains a right to family life. Maintaining positive family contact is also a crucial factor in the rehabilitation and desistance process.

**Current context**
In 2017, IPRT in conjunction with the School of Law, University College Cork and the Children’s Rights Alliance launched a Principles of Action document for children with a parent in prison. It identified this issue as primarily a child rights issue, which should be supported via cross-sectoral strategy led by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. In 2018, IPRT made a submission to the Department of Education and Skills highlighting that children of prisoners were a group that should be provided with additional supports.

A survey on the family contact needs of prisoners, undertaken by the Irish Prison Service in conjunction with IPRT and Datakind (now Data4Good), highlighted that the main request from prisoners to improve family contact is to increase the number of phone calls.

**Indicators for Standard 11**

**Indicator S11.1: Availability of child-friendly visiting conditions across the prison estate:** In July 2017 the Director General of the IPS committed to all prisons having roundtable visiting conditions within a year. The Minister for Justice and Equality stated in a recent PQ that all prisons across the estate now have ‘child-friendly’ visiting conditions. A number of other progressive developments have been referenced including the opening of new visitor areas in Limerick Prison and Castlerea Prison.

**Indicator S11.2: Regular family contact, specifically via phone calls, Skype programmes, contact visits and availability of weekend and evening visits:** In response to a recent PQ, the Minister for Justice and Equality stated that “temporary release for access/visits to children for family occasions is regularly approved in most prisons”. Furthermore, the Minister stated that all prisons facilitate visits on Saturday to take into account the needs of families, with Sunday visits available in the two Open Centres and Cloverhill Prison. However Skype contact is not currently the norm in most prisons.

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301 As provided for under Article 9 (3) the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child  

302 This is provided for under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights  
[https://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention_ENG.pdf](https://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention_ENG.pdf)

http://www.iprt.ie/contents/3190

304 IPRT (2018) Submission of the Irish Penal Reform Trust to the Joint Committee on Education and Skills on “Educational Inequality and Disadvantage”  
http://www.iprt.ie/files/IPRT_Submission_to_the_Committee_on_Education_and_Skills_1.02_.18_final_.pdf

305 Families of Prisoners Survey, Irish Prison Service in conjunction with Datakind and Irish Penal Reform Trust

306 UN Web TV, Consideration of Ireland (Cont’d)-1551st Meeting 61st Session Committee Against Torture  


308 ‘New “homely” family room unveiled at Limerick Prison’, Limerick Leader, 8th August 2018  


310 Ibid.

311 Ibid.
**Indicator S11.3: Supports for children affected by parental imprisonment:** There is a Family Links Coordinator and a family imprisonment group in each prison. In response to a recent PQ, the Minister for Justice and Equality highlighted that family friendly training is provided to ‘front of house’ prison staff to improve staff awareness of the effects of imprisonment on families. Training in the Children First guidance is also provided.

More must be done to increase the awareness of professionals working with children affected by parental imprisonment outside prison. One group of particular relevance is teachers. As highlighted at the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child Day of General Discussion 2011:

*Guidance should be prepared and training provided so that teachers and other adults in schools are aware of the particular needs of children of incarcerated parents and can appropriately support such children in their performance, attendance and behaviour.*

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**PROGRESSIVE PRACTICE**

**Invisible Walls, HMP Parc, Wales**

**Invisible Walls Wales** is a multi-agency project in HMP Parc. It is based on a ‘whole family’ model of supports for prisoners and their families. The project has three main aims, to:

1. Improve the quality of family life
2. Reduce the likelihood of re-offending
3. Reduce the likelihood of intergenerational offending

The key distinction of this programme is its focus on the whole family as opposed to the rehabilitation of the individual prisoner. A number of important results were associated with this programme:

- 38% of the school-age children who started the programme had attainment or attendance issues at school, but this had fallen to 10% by the end of the programme.
- Children's emotional wellbeing, behaviour and activity and peer relationships improved substantially.

**Memorandum of Understanding and Charter for Children of Imprisoned Parents, Italy**

Italy has implemented a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Justice, the National Ombudsman for Childhood and Adolescence, and the charity Bambinisenzasbarre, as well as a Charter for Children of Imprisoned Parents. Following the Memorandum agreement, Bambinisenzasbarre developed a training programme to improve relationships between staff, prisoners, and their families and children, and to develop professional standards of duties and behaviour towards family members.

**Finnish Legislation**

A 2015 law introduced in Finland makes provision for all prisons to have special visiting rooms for children who are visiting parents where they are allowed to touch and hug their parents.

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312 Information provided by the Irish Prison Service as of 30th April 2018


The CoE recently adopted a recommendation on Children of Imprisoned Parents. There are seven basic principles that member states should follow:

1. **Children with imprisoned parents shall be treated with respect for their human rights and with due regard for their particular situation and needs.** These children shall be provided with the opportunity for their views to be heard, directly or indirectly, in relation to decisions which may affect them. Measures that ensure child protection, including respect for the child’s best interests, family life and privacy shall be integral to this, as shall be the measures which support the role of the imprisoned parent from the start of detention and after release.

2. **Where a custodial sentence is being contemplated, the rights and best interests of any affected children should be taken into consideration and alternatives to detention be used as far as possible and appropriate, especially in the case of a parent who is a primary caregiver.**

3. **Whenever a parent is detained, particular consideration shall be given to allocating them to a facility close to their children.**

4. **When deciding to transfer sentenced persons to or from a State in which their children reside due regard shall be given to the best interests of the child when considering the rehabilitation purpose of the transfer.**

5. **The prison administration shall endeavour to collect and collate relevant information at entry regarding the children of those detained.**

6. **National authorities shall endeavour to provide sufficient resources to State agencies and civil society organisations to support children with imprisoned parents and their families to enable them to deal effectively with their particular situation and specific needs, including offering logistic and financial support, where necessary, in order to maintain contact.**

7. **Appropriate training on child-related policies, practices and procedures, shall be provided for all staff in contact with children and their imprisoned parents.**

The recommendation provides further details for States to look to for best practice in key areas such as (i) police detention, judicial orders and sentences (ii) conditions of imprisonment (iii) staff working with and for children of imprisoned parents (v) monitoring (vi) research and evaluation of child-friendly practices and policies, and (vii) working with the media.

**Actions required**

**Action 11.1:** IPRT urges all relevant stakeholders (including the judiciary, prisons, probation, media and government departments such as education and health) to consider their role in the implementation in Ireland of the CoE recommendation on children affected by parental imprisonment. The CoE recommendation should be promoted widely by the State, with the Department of Children and Youth Affairs taking lead responsibility.

**Action 11.2:** The Department of Children and Youth Affairs should recognise this group of children as a cohort with specific needs and supports in their own right and must lead in developing a cross-sectoral strategy to address their needs.

**Action 11.3:** The Department of Justice and Equality and the Irish Prison Service should publish a report on the work achieved and outstanding in advancing the rights and needs of children and families.

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[319] Recommendation CM/Rec (2018)5 of the Committee of the Ministers to member States concerning children with imprisoned parents, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 4th April 2018 at the 1312th meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies

https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016807b3175
Part 2: Measuring Progress against the Standards

Access to healthcare

Standard 12: The healthcare needs of individual prisoners are met. Every prisoner has access to healthcare that goes beyond the ‘equivalence of care’ principle, with a full range of preventative services and continuity of healthcare into the community.

Rationale

The World Health Organisation outlines a clear rationale for why there should be political support for good prison health:

(i.) good prison health is important to good public health
(ii.) good public health will make good use of the opportunities presented by prisons
(iii.) prisons can contribute to the health of communities by improving the health of some of the most disadvantaged people in society.

Transfer of healthcare to ministries of health from prison services is viewed as a principle of good governance. It is linked with many benefits: independence of medical judgement; building the capacity of independent professionals to advocate for public health measures; better trust between prisoner and healthcare professionals; and continuity of care for prisoners inside and outside prison.

Current context

Prisoner healthcare in Ireland is currently managed by the Irish Prison Service. In 2016 the Inspector of Prisons published a review on healthcare in Irish prisons recommending the transfer of the provision of healthcare from the Irish Prison Service to the Health Service Executive, as well as recommending that a health needs assessment be undertaken and published for the prison population in each prison. This report was welcomed by the Tánaiste at the time of its publication in which she stated that the “report made a number of timely recommendations regarding the provision of healthcare in prisons.” However these recommendations have yet to see visible progress.

>- Indicators for Standard 12

Indicator S12.1: Responsibility for prisoner healthcare moving to the Health Service Executive (HSE), with independent inspections by the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA): This has not been delivered upon. While the Terms of Reference of a review of healthcare (recommended by the late Inspector of Prisons in 2016) were agreed upon between the Department of Justice and Equality and the Department of Health, the review of healthcare will not be completed until Autumn 2018. The Irish Prison Service appointed an Executive Clinical Lead during summer 2018.

Indicator S12.2: Publication of an annual report on prison medical services as recommended by the CPT: There is no annual report on prison medical services or inclusion of data on prison medical services in any publication, including the Irish Prison Service’s Annual Report.

324 Ibid.
325 Information provided to IPRT by the Irish Prison Service on 30th April 2018
326 Information provided to IPRT by the Irish Prison Service on 18th September 2018
Progressive Practice

Prison Healthcare Governance in Other Jurisdictions

In 2011, Scotland transferred governance of healthcare in prisons from the Scottish Prison Service to the National Health Service.\textsuperscript{327} The two key priorities for Scotland were (i) to ensure the principle of equivalence of care and (ii) to tackle health inequalities. Success factors associated with the transfer in Scotland included strong leadership by the National Health Service and the creation of a National Memorandum of Understanding between the Scottish Prison Service and the National Health Service in terms of defining roles and responsibilities.\textsuperscript{328} Prison healthcare inspections are undertaken by Healthcare Improvement Scotland. Complaints are the responsibility of the National Health Service. If not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint, a prisoner can take the complaint to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.\textsuperscript{329} Healthcare in prisons is also managed by the Ministry of Health in Norway\textsuperscript{330} and in France since 1994.\textsuperscript{331}

Special Post Boxes to Require Medical Consultations, France

Following a recommendation by the French National Preventative Mechanism (NPM), the majority of prisoners have access to special post boxes where they can request medical consultations confidentially, with only medical staff having permission to open boxes on a daily basis.\textsuperscript{332}

Actions required

Action 12.1: The Irish Prison Service should undertake a health needs assessment of the prison population and a staffing analysis as recommended by the Inspector of Prisons\textsuperscript{333} and publish these findings by end of 2018.

Action 12.2: The Department of Justice and Equality and the Department of Health should complete and publish the agreed review examining the feasibility of transferring healthcare services in prisons to the Department of Health by end of 2018.


\textsuperscript{328} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{329} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{330} Council of Europe, Health Policy: Report on the Organisation of health care services in prisons in European member states https://www.coe.int/t/dg3/health/Prisonsreport_en.asp


Part 2: Measuring Progress against the Standards

Spotlight 1:

Mental Health

Standard 13:
People with serious mental health issues are diverted from the prison system and receive the appropriate treatment and supports in a timely manner.

Rationale

International research demonstrates the prevalence of mental health issues among the prison population. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), prevalence studies from many countries show that 10–15% of the prison population suffer from severe and enduring mental illnesses, including schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and autism disorders.

Poor prison conditions such as overcrowding, solitary confinement, violence and lack of meaningful activity can all have negative effects on mental health. The WHO and the International Committee of the Red Cross state that “detection, prevention and proper treatment of mental disorders, together with the promotion of good mental health, should be both a part of the public health goals within prison, and central to good prison management”.

More than a decade ago, the Health Service Executive published a national mental health policy, A Vision for Change. A number of recommendations in the national policy related to the prison population, including that:

- every person with serious mental health problems coming into contact with the forensic system should be accorded the right of mental health care in the non-forensic mental health services unless there are cogent and legal reasons why this should not be done. Where mental health services are delivered in the context of prison, they should be person-centred, recovery-oriented and based on evolved and integrated care plans.

Current context

Mental health in Irish prisons is in need of urgent action, with particular emphasis on severe mental illness. Ireland has one of the lowest per capita psychiatric forensic beds in Europe, at two per 100,000. A new National Forensic Mental Health Hospital is currently being constructed in Portrane, Co. Dublin intended to replace the only designated centre, the Central Mental Hospital, in 2020. This new facility is to provide 130 adult forensic beds. The opening of the new centre, with the aim of increasing forensic capacity, will increase provision to 3.5 per 100,000. This increase in provision is unlikely to meet demand. The Netherlands has a rate of 14 per 100,000. Other countries have between 5 and 14 per 100,000.

On a monthly basis in 2018 there were consistently 20–30 prisoners with a severe mental illness awaiting transfer to the Central Mental Hospital (CMH). According to the Director General of the

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337 Ibid, p. 2
339 Ibid, p.137
344 Ibid.
345 Information provided by the Irish Prison Service to IPRT
Irish Prison Service, in May 2018 323 out of 4,000 prisoners in custody were deemed to be suffering from severe mental illness. 346

Currently all prisoners in Ireland are assessed on admission. 347 Where clinically indicated, a prisoner is referred to a forensic psychiatrist who may make specific recommendations to the Governor. 348 A diversion system is in place: the Prison In-Reach and Court Liaison Service (PICLS) acting in liaison with clinicians from the Central Mental Hospital. This system is available to all Dublin prisons, and Portlaoise and Midlands Prisons. 349 However, no such diversion service exists in Cork, Limerick or Castlerea Prisons.

According to the Director General, “approval was granted by the HSE in 2016 to provide consultant-led mental health services to Limerick, Cork and Castlerea prisons, which was a most welcome development. However, it has not been possible for the HSE to recruit consultant forensic psychiatrists for those three prisons.” 350 In-reach psychiatry services have been discontinued in Castlerea Prison, which means prisoners with serious mental illnesses in Castlerea must travel to Dublin for assessment. 351

International human rights bodies have documented a number of concerns. For example, in 2015 the CPT observed that “Irish prisons continued to detain persons with psychiatric disorders too severe to be properly cared for in a prison setting.” 352 The CPT made a key recommendation. 353

The CPT recommends that the Irish Authorities reflect further on the steps required to enhance the availability of beds in psychiatric care facilities for acute mentally-ill prisoners. Further, it recommends that the staffing at HSUs [High Support Units] be reviewed in order to include the appropriate expertise.

The CPT will return to visit Ireland in 2019 and will expect the State to demonstrate improvement on these matters.

In 2017, the United Nations Committee against Torture 354 made a recommendation to the Irish State on mental health in Irish prisons:

Take urgent measures to […] hire additional medical personnel, including psychiatric personnel and psychologists, and enable the referral of inmates requiring specialized medical care to outside medical facilities without delays.

The Irish Prison Service has expanded the Prison Psychology Services in 2017/2018 with the recruitment of more psychology staff since the end of 2016. 355 Figures provided by the Irish Prison Service in its Annual Report 2017 show the Prison Psychology Service provided 759 individual interventions and 182 group-based interventions over that year. 356

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347 Irish Prison Service, Mental Health Services https://www.irishprisons.ie/prisoner-services/prison-healthcare-service/mental-health-services/
348 Ibid.
349 Ibid.
351 Ibid.
353 Ibid, at para. 64, p. 41
Indicators for Standard 13

**Indicator S13.1:** Number of prisoners awaiting transfer to the Central Mental Hospital (CMH)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CMH Waiting List 2017</th>
<th>Average number of prisoners with a severe mental illness awaiting transfer to the CMH</th>
<th>Lengths of time prisoners are waiting to be transferred to the CMH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 21</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 20</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>March 20</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>April 18</td>
<td>Not available</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 22</td>
<td>Not available</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 25</td>
<td>Not available</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 17</td>
<td>Not available</td>
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<td>August 19</td>
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<td>September 18</td>
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<td>October 21</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 21</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 23</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CMH Waiting List 2018**

| January 17            | Not available                                                                          |                                                                   |
| February 24           | Not available                                                                          |                                                                   |
| March 25              | Not available                                                                          |                                                                   |
| April 22              | Not available                                                                          |                                                                   |
| May 29                | Not available                                                                          |                                                                   |

While data is not available on lengths of time individual prisoners are waiting to be transferred to the Central Mental Hospital, at the hearing of the Oireachtas Committee on the Future of Mental Health Care, the Clinical Director of the CMH stated:

“All of the people on the waiting list are urgent. All of them are severely mentally ill and should not be in prison. They have been on the waiting list for months and this is entirely unacceptable by any clinical standards”.

**PROGRESSIVE PRACTICE**

A report by the Ministry of Justice in England states that “eligible prisoners should wait no longer than 14 days to be admitted to a secure hospital”. The report described how “only 34% of prisoners were transferred within 14 days in 2016–2017”. In Ireland, this data is not regularly published.

**Indicator S13.2:** Lengths of time individual prisoners are being held in safety observation cells

According to Irish Prison Service Census figures, in April 2018 seven individuals were being held in Safety Observation Cells. In response to a parliamentary question, the Minister for Justice and Equality said that information on the lengths of time individual prisoners were placed in safety observation cells was not collated, and that to collate this data would require a disproportinate and inordinate amount of staff time, which “could not be justified where there are other significant demands on resources”. The Irish Prison Service committed to publishing lengths of time people were held in Safety Observation Cells in 2017, however this has not yet happened. Given that the placement of a prisoner in a Safety Observation Cell means

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357 Data provided by the Irish Prison Service to IPRT in May 2018.
360 Ibid.
361 As outlined by the Inspector of Prisons, safety observation cells were designed to accommodate prisoners who required frequent observation for medical reasons or who were a danger to themselves. See Inspector of Prisons (2010) Report of an Investigation on the use of “Special Cells” in Irish Prisons, p.5 http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Report%20of%20an%20Investigation%20on%20special%20cells%20in%20Irish%20Prisons.pdf
364 Ibid.
365 UN Web TV, Consideration of Ireland (Cont’d)-1551st Meeting 61st Session Committee Against Torture at 12:29-12:38 http://webtv.un.org/watch/consideration-of-ireland-contd-1551st-meeting-61st-session-committee-against-torture/5526421662001/?term-
isolating the individual and an additional restriction on their liberty, IPRT’s position is that such data should be collated and published to monitor trends and issues.

**Indicator S13.3: Number of High Support Units across prisons nationwide:** In 2015, the CPT visited High Support Units in Castlerea, Midlands and Mountjoy Prisons and found they “were not properly resourced and did not address the needs of mentally ill prisoners; there was a complete lack of structured activities and no occupational or recreational therapy, only pharmacotherapy. Moreover, the prison officers in the units were not properly trained to work with prisoners suffering from serious mental disorders.”

Following the death of a prisoner by suicide in an Irish prison, an inquest jury recommended in 2016 that all prisons should have High Support Units and ongoing staff training on mental health.

There are two High Support Units operational throughout the prison estate: Mountjoy Medical Unit, which currently caters for nine people and the D2 wing in Cloverhill Prison, which has been expanded to cater for 28 people. The Irish Prison Service is in the process of recruiting an Activities Co-Ordinator for forensic input to provide a more supportive environment for prisoners in this unit. However, this goes nowhere near meeting the recommendation to provide a High Support Unit in every prison.

**Indicator S13.4: Ratio of one psychologist to 150 prisoners:** A 2015 review of Prison Psychology Services commissioned by the Irish Prison Service showed that the ratio of psychologists to prisoners is well below international best practice standards. In 2015, the ratio of psychologists was 1:23 in Ireland, compared to other jurisdictions such as Canada where the ratio is 1:78 and Scotland where is ratio is 1:123. In 2018, the gap has widened to a ratio of 1:268.

### Forensic Care Capacity, The Netherlands

Forensic care capacity is reserved in mental health institutions where Dutch penal law allows governors, following medical advice, to transfer prisoners with specific psychiatric problems to mental health institutions.

**Penitentiary Psychiatric Centres, The Netherlands**

Penitentiary Psychiatric Centres (PPCs) were established in the Netherlands as a result of the growing number of prisoners presenting with psychiatric issues. Distinctive aspects of PPCs compared to the regular prison environment include: higher staff/prisoner ratio; the involvement of various types of healthcare professionals; and specific training for prison officers working with persons with mental disorders.

There has been a mixed response to this initiative by the CPT, stating that “PPCs represent a more suitable environment for prisoners suffering from mental disorders than ordinary prisons.” The same report highlighted that the delegation of

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369 Information provided by the Irish Prison Service at a meeting with the Irish Penal Reform Trust on 30th April 2018

370 Ibid.


372 Ibid, p. 26

373 Information provided by the Irish Prison Service at a meeting with the Irish Penal Reform Trust on 30th April 2018


375 Ibid.

376 Council of Europe (2017) Report to the Government of the Netherlands on the visit to the Netherlands carried out by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment from 2nd to 13th May 2016, p.36 https://rm.coe.int/16806ebb7c

377 Ibid, p.6
the CPT “gained a favourable impression of the attitude of the frontline carers working daily in direct contact with the patients as well as training provided to them”. However, a number of criticisms were also made in the report, including the length of lock-up times (17 hours a day) and limited access to therapeutic activities.

The CPT recommended that the Dutch authorities consider how the role of the Ministry of Health in the management and supervision of PPCs could be increased, “with a view to ensuring the provision of optimum care to the patients and the principle of equivalence of care in prison with that in the wider community”.

Guidance for Prison Staff on Mental Health

In 2018 Penal Reform International published an informative guide for prison staff working with individuals with mental health issues. This guide can help support the training of prison officers on mental health issues.

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Actions required

**Action 13.1:** The Irish Prison Service should regularly publish data on the number of prisoners with severe mental illness waiting to be transferred to an appropriate facility and the lengths of time waiting.

**Action 13.2:** A review must be carried out to assess current gaps in provision and provide additional options, ensuring there is a sufficient number of forensic mental health spaces ring-fenced for the prison population.

**Action 13.3:** Legislators should introduce legislation that supports the diversion of mentally ill individuals away from the criminal justice system.

**Action 13.4:** The Irish Prison Service must be provided with the necessary resources to support the mental health needs of prisoners in their care and to provide a continuum of care. This may include increased psychology and psychiatry staff to meet rising prison numbers; mental health training for prison staff; and supports and resources to run High Support Units effectively in prisons.

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378 Ibid.

379 Council of Europe (2017) Report to the Government of the Netherlands on the visit to the Netherlands carried out by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment from 2nd to 13th May 2016, p.36

https://rm.coe.int/16806ebb7c

380 Penal Reform International (2018) Mental health in prison, a short guide for prison staff

https://s16889.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/PRI_Short_guide_to_mental_health_support_in_prisons_WEB.pdf
Drug and alcohol treatments

Standard 14: People with drug and alcohol addictions are diverted from the criminal justice system to receive appropriate treatment. Where imprisonment is the only appropriate response, treatment must be made available within prison, with a continuum of care upon release.

Rationale

Drug and alcohol use is increasingly being recognised primarily as a public health issue. The European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA, 2018) highlights two important health intervention principles in prison: (i) equivalence of care and (ii) continuity of care between the community and prison on admission and post release.

Current context

Addiction is a prevalent characteristic across the prison population in Ireland, with 70% of the general prison population being characterised as having addiction issues, and an even higher percentage for women, estimated to be 85%.

The National Drugs Strategy also highlights the prevalence of drug use among the prison population where lifetime prevalence of cannabis, cocaine and heroin use is far higher than the general population and where female prisoners reported higher levels of lifetime and past month use of heroin, crack and powder cocaine. Between 2009 and 2015, 5,450 cases received treatment in prison, representing more than 9 per cent of treatment cases in the country over this period.

Dual diagnosis (the condition of experiencing both addiction and mental health issues) is a significant concern. Where a person experiences dual diagnosis there is a risk that the approach to treatment can be fragmented. The National Drugs Strategy recognises the issue of dual diagnosis and commits to developing a programme on “Dual Diagnosis: mental illness and co-morbid substance” which aims to develop a standardised approach to identification, assessment and treatment of co-morbid mental illness and substance misuse.

Six community based organisations are funded to provide services in the prison system: Merchants Quay Ireland (MQI), Ana Liffey Drug Project, Coolmine Treatment Centre, Ballymun Youth Action Project, Fusion Community Prison Link and the Matt Talbot Community Trust. During 2016, 2,624 prisoners accessed MQI addiction based counselling service. MQI also contributed to the delivery of a multi-agency 8 week detox and drug treatment programme which assisted 80 prisoners detox from methadone and benzodiazepines.

Recently it was reported that reduced expenditure has led to some prisons having access to addiction counsellors only on a part-time basis, while waiting times for accessing services have increased. It is vital that there are adequate numbers of medical staff available to support these services across all prisons. There should be consistency in drug treatment options offered across the entire prison estate. The same key performance indicators which are used by the Health Service Executive should be applied to ensure ‘equivalence of care’ is provided, such as: whether treatment commenced within one calendar month following assessment and the number

386 Ibid.
387 Ibid.
388 Ibid.
390 Ibid.
of clients in receipt of opioid substitution. The EMCDDA recommends that further studies be carried out to improve the evidence base of responses which can be of most benefit individuals with addiction. So far in 2018, 1125 individuals have been referred to the Drug Treatment Court Programme, 608 of these were deemed unsuitable and an additional 370 were discharged. By May 2018, 69 participants had graduated with ‘gold status’. ‘Gold status’ indicates that the individual has clear drug screens and keeps appointments with counsellors and/or participates in education.

According to the EMCDDA, the following drug treatment response options scored highest in terms of quality of evidence:

1. Opioid substitution treatment is protective against death in prison for opioid-dependent prisoners.
2. Substitution treatment is also important in prison in reducing injecting risk behaviours.
3. To prevent overdose death in the period directly following prison release, it is important that there is a continuity of treatment in the community.

A study which examined re-offending in a two year period following treatment showed a 21% reduction in re-offending by opiate users and 49% reduction in re-offending with alcohol only clients. Therefore the need and demand for these services should be further examined including access to residential drug treatment. There is only one mother and child residential drug treatment programme in Ireland.

There is also currently no consistent tracking of outcomes for prisoners treated across the estate. The same review outlined a number of gaps in provision including; the availability of drug free environments within the prison setting for prisoners who have completed detoxification and treatment programmes, the development of non-opiate based detoxification services, alcohol treatment services and access to treatment for cohorts such as sex offenders.

Post-release is a particularly critical time for those with addiction issues. Research has shown that there is a raised risk of death from drug overdose in the first week of release. One recommendation made by the EMCDDA suggests that training on overdose prevention should occur pre-release including the consideration of the provision of Naloxone.

References:

394 ‘I understand people can relapse, but you have to be honest’: Inside Dublin’s Drug Treatment Court, thejournal.ie, http://www.thejournal.ie/drug-treatment-4158196-Aug2018/
395 Ibid.
396 Ibid.
398 Ibid.
400 Coolmine.ie, Residential Services, https://www.coolmine.ie/services-new/residential/
402 Ibid.
Indicators for Standard 14

Indicator S14.1: Waiting lists for addiction services in prison: There are currently 44 individuals on a waiting list for the Drug Treatment Programme (18th September 2018). The Irish Prison Service also acknowledged there are waiting lists for counselling services.

Indicator S14.2: Number of places on drug treatment programmes available in prison: The national Drug Treatment Programme is based in the Medical Unit of Mountjoy Prison. This programme allows for treatment for up to 18 individuals. The Programme is available to all prisoners from across the estate.

Indicator S14.3: Number of drug-free wings across the prison estate

The Irish Prison Service has acknowledged the need to provide more appropriate locations so that a prisoner can maintain his/her drug-free status.

Indicator S14.4: Harm reduction options available in the prison estate: The Irish Prison Service has stated that they endorse and apply this approach where appropriate.

Indicator S14.5: Availability of detoxification beds in the prison estate: The drug treatment programme is available to all prisoners from across the estate, and is run on the Mountjoy Campus. The programme is for people who have moved away from illicit drug use and is support through a biopsychosocial model of interventions.

Indicator S14.6: Waiting lists for post-release addiction services: The number of recent prisoners on community waiting lists is not available. The Irish Prison Service states that all persons leaving custody who have an addiction need will be engaged with a community addiction service to meet their current level of need either through a specialist GP or a community addiction clinic.

PROGRESSIVE PRACTICE

Diverting Offenders with Drug, Alcohol and Mental Health Problems

The Ministry of Justice in the UK has recently announced a pilot project where by the Departments of Justice and Health have signed a protocol in five areas. Local panels comprising officials from both departments provide information (including psychologist-provided evidence) to the court to enable judges to determine whether the individual needs treatment and is eligible for a Community Order. The Ministry of Justice has said that this has increased confidence in sentences, resulting in more Community Sentence Treatment Requirements being used.

405 Information provided by the Irish Prison Service to IPRT on 18th September 2018.
407 Information provided by the Irish Prison Service to IPRT on 18th September 2018
408 Ibid.
409 Ibid.
411 Ibid.
412 Ibid.
Part 2: Measuring Progress against the Standards

**Actions required**

**Action 14.1:** The National Drugs Strategy, Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery 2017-2025, should be fully implemented.

**Action 14.2:** As recommended by the Inspector of Prisons, those who complete detox programmes should be provided with immediate follow-up supports by the appropriate services for a specific duration as determined by professionals involved in the detox programme.

**Action 14.3:** The Irish Prison Service and the Department of Health should have an inter-agency protocol to ensure a continuum of care both upon admission to prison and post-release to the community. There should be publication of information on lengths of time waiting to access various forms of treatment including methadone programmes, residential drug treatment and other therapeutic supports.

**Action 14.4:** A new strategy should be developed by the Irish Prison Service in response to the emerging and changing drug trends and patterns among the prison population, working in conjunction with the Health Research Board (HRB) and the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA).

**Action 14.5** The Department of Health should increase provision of access to drug treatment residential drug treatment places available in the community including facilities that accept those who have been in prison irrespective of their category of offending behaviour.

**Action 14.6** Services should be integrated to ensure better outcomes for people with dual diagnosis.

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**Privacy**

**Standard 15:** A prisoner’s right to privacy, and that of his/her family members, is respected and protected.

**Rationale**

An individual’s right to privacy is guaranteed by the Constitution of Ireland, Bunreacht na hÉireann, and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). Sensationalistic media reporting can negatively impact both the privacy of the prisoner and his/her family, impeding future rehabilitation prospects.

**Current context**

In May 2018, the General Data Protection Regulation was introduced which builds on and expands ‘the right to be forgotten’. It remains to be seen how this will be interpreted in light of the Criminal Justice (Spent Convictions and Certain Disclosures) Act 2016.

Professionals have responsibility to protect prisoner privacy. Guidance on securing confidential information has been recently published by Penal Reform International and recommends that: “a secure audit trail involves carefully kept records, which include the identity of the staff member who enters or modifies information in the system, as well as the date and time of any revisions. Audits should be carried out periodically by an identified oversight body.”

The Guidance also states that “Only staff that have been trained and authorized to use prisoner file systems should be allowed to access and use the files. In many facilities there will be staff members who are specifically responsible for creating and maintaining files and registers.”

The Press Ombudsman identifies a number of principles that journalists are required to respect in their reporting, and which, if breached give rise to a right of complaint to the Press Ombudsman. These principles include: truth and accuracy, distinguishing fact and comment, fair procedures and honesty, respect for rights, privacy, protection of sources, court reporting, prejudice, children and

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417 Ibid, Point 42, p. 16
publication of the decision of Press Ombudsman/Press Council. 419

The Broadcasting Authority of Ireland will also consider complaints made by prisoners, examining “the degree of harm or offence likely to be caused”420 by the content of the programme aired. The complaint should be made directly to the broadcaster within 21 days of broadcast421 and the broadcaster has 10 days to reply.422 Neither body currently makes accommodation for potential delays in mail/post in relation to the receipt of complaints from prisoners.

### Indicators for Standard 15

**Indicator: S15.1:** The number of complaints about breaches of privacy made by prisoners and/or their families to the Irish Prison Service, the Press Ombudsman and the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland.

- The number of enquiries made to the Press Ombudsman by prisoners is 40 since its establishment in 2008. 423
- The number of fully processed complaints made by prisoners to the Press Ombudsman’s Office is four.424
- In total, the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland is aware of adjudicating on one complaint by a prisoner.425

The low uptake in making complaints may be attributed to lack of awareness of the complaints procedure; absence of data collection or aggregated data; prisoner disenfranchisement; fear of reprisal; or a perception that there is no effective sanction which follows where a complaint is upheld.

### Actions required

**Action 15.1:** IPRT recommends that the Press Ombudsman and the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland review and extend timelines for prisoners to submit a complaint.

**Action 15.2:** The Press Ombudsman and the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland should consider developing guidance on the impact of post-release reporting on prisoners’ rights to privacy and family life.

**Action 15.3:** Professionals working with prisoners should be made aware of their responsibilities to ensure that prisoner privacy is respected.

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422 Ibid, p. 7
423 Information provided by the Office of the Press Ombudsman, 13th August 2018
424 Ibid
425 Information provided by the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland, 13th August 2018
Part 2: Measuring Progress against the Standards

C: Regimes

Out-of-cell time

Standard 16:
Every prisoner spends a minimum of five hours a day engaged in structured meaningful activity for five days a week, in addition to a further minimum seven hours of out-of-cell time.

Rationale

Time out of cell is crucial to support the principle of normalisation, highlighted by the Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice:

The principle of “normalisation” has been spoken about for decades, including within Prison Service documentation. To make prison life more like that of life in the community. The current daily routine could not, in any way, be considered normal.  

Time out of cell is also of particular importance to facilitate and encourage prisoners to partake in meaningful activity during their sentence and has been identified as one indicator used to measure prison performance.  

HM Inspectorate of Prisons has identified a number of standards associated with time out of cell.

Current context

In 2018, the Joint Committee on Justice and Equality recommended a minimum 12 hours’ out-of-cell time with meaningful activity. Current out-of-cell time for ‘ordinary’ prisoners is up to eight hours in the Irish prison system. A typical regime was recently described as follows:

In general prison cells are unlocked at approximately 8.15am each morning for breakfast. Prisoners collect breakfast and return to cells, which are then locked from 8.45am to 9.15am. Cells are again unlocked for prisoners to attend work, school, visits and exercise. Prisoners return for lunch at 12:00pm and cells are locked at 12.30pm. Afternoon unlock commences at 2.15pm and prisoners return to structured activities in schools, workshops and visits. Evening tea is served from 4pm and cells are locked from 4.30pm to 5.20pm when evening recreation commences until all cells are locked at 7.30pm. This allows for total out cell time of up to 8 hours.

The description above provides an account of the daily regime for the ‘ordinary’ prisoner. However, Indicator 16.1 outlined below shows a significant proportion of prisoners are on a restricted regime, which means severely restricted time out of cell, and which falls far short of this standard.

Indicator S16.1: Hours out-of-cell for all prisoners, including prisoners on a restricted regime:
The latest Irish Prison Service Census report shows that there are currently 536 prisoners on a ‘restricted regime’. This amounts to approximately 13% of the prison population. The vast majority of these prisoners (477 out of 536) were placed on protection voluntarily.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours Locked-Up</th>
<th>Number of Prisoners (July Census figures 2018)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


427 Prison Reform Trust, Inside Time Articles, Time Out of Cell, 1st April 2016
http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/PressPolicy/Comment/InsideTime/ItemId/323/vw/1

428 HM Inspectorate of Prisons, Time Out of Cell


430 Houses of the Oireachtas (2018) Prison Service Data, Parliamentary Question 551, 17th April 2018

431 Irish Prison Service, Census of Restricted Regimes July 2018

432 A restricted regime means that prisoners spend 19 or more hours a day locked in their cell.

433 Irish Prison Service, Census of Restricted Regime Prisoners July 2018

434 Ibid.

435 Ibid.
The above data shows a significant percentage of the prison population are on 21-hour lock up. 225 of these 368 prisoners were in Mountjoy Prison.\textsuperscript{436} While data on the lengths of time individual prisoners spend on a restricted regime is not regularly published, recent information provided in response to a parliamentary question highlights the excessive periods prisoners can be held on this type of regime, with more than 50 individual prisoners held on a restricted regime for more than a year.\textsuperscript{437}

The current approach to separating factions within the estate has a significant impact on prison resources.\textsuperscript{438} The impact of this on the daily regime of the prison environment creates logistical issues including staff redeployment but also impacts prisoners’ access to education and activities.\textsuperscript{439} This issue has also been reported in both the most recent Mountjoy\textsuperscript{440} and Cloverhill\textsuperscript{441} Visiting Committee reports.

**Indicator S16.2: Number of prisoners who have daily access to a minimum of five hours structured educational, vocational and work programmes, and publication of this information:** While publication of data on this specific indicator is limited, data shows that:

- 42.8% of the prisoner population participated in education activities in the week ending 2 February 2018.\textsuperscript{442}
- 23% of the prison population was engaged in vocational training in the month of January 2018.\textsuperscript{443}

### PROGRESSIVE PRACTICE

**Using Sport to Address Conflict**

A new report\textsuperscript{444} just published in August 2018 identifies how sport can play a role in addressing conflict. The report recommends: “Bringing prisoners together for sport can resolve conflict. Governors should revise keep apart list policies and establishments should include gym staff in keep apart decision making.”\textsuperscript{445} This is one possible approach that may create a ‘space’ for prisoners in addressing conflict with the support of professional mediators.

### Actions required

**Action 16.1:** The Irish Prison Service must ensure that all prisoners including those on a restricted regime have access to a minimum of five hours meaningful activity, in addition to further out-of-cell time by the end of 2018.

**Action 16.2:** The Inspector of Prisons should undertake a review of the current restricted regimes practice (including separation policies) to examine reasons and lengths of time, and propose solutions to reduce the number of prisoners held on restricted regimes, promoting and encouraging greater access to time out of cell for all prisoners.

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\textsuperscript{436} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{438} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{443} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{445} Ibid.
Part 2: Measuring Progress against the Standards

Sentence management

Standard 17: Every prisoner and his/her family members, where desired, are facilitated and actively involved in his/her sentence planning from the beginning of sentence through to the point of release.

Rationale

Sentence planning is intended to support the rehabilitation of the prisoner through addressing the causes of offending behaviour. Sentence plans can comprise educational and training programmes, drug/alcohol programmes and/or a focus on issues such as personal relationships or family reconciliation. The Council of Europe highlights the importance of having comprehensive, individual sentence plans and the need to include the active participation of individual prisoners in this process. Sentence planning is of particular importance for those serving long or life sentences and should aim at “securing progressive movement through the prison system”, ideally from the first day of sentence.

Current context

The Irish Prison Service has acknowledged that further resourcing of integrated sentence management is required if prisoners are to receive individualised sentence planning. The Irish Prison Service and the Probation Service make a commitment in their Joint Strategic Plan 2018–2020 to work together with the prison based multi-disciplinary teams as part of Integrated Sentence Management to identify needs and set goals for individual prisoners, within agreed parameters, to improve prisoner engagement and outcomes.

Indicators for Standard 17

Indicator S17.1: The number of dedicated ISM officers across the estate and their caseloads:

There are currently 23 ISM coordinators for 2,533 eligible prisoners (those serving sentences of 1 year+). In July 2018, the Irish Prison Service appointed an ISM co-ordinator dedicated to the sentence management of prisoners selected for J-ARC, Community Support and Community Return.

Actions required

Action 17.1: The Department of Justice and Equality must adequately resource the role of ISM officers in order to support effective sentence planning.

Action 17.2: The Irish Prison Service should publish data on caseloads, including the lengths of time prisoners are engaging with ISM and the number of prisoners with ISM plans, on a quarterly basis.

447 Ibid.
448 Council of Europe, Committee of Ministers, Recommendation Rec (2003) 23 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on the management by Prisons Administrations of life-sentence and other long-term prisoners, Point 9
449 Ibid, Point 8
451 Information received by IPRT at a meeting on information related to PIPS as of 30th of April 2018
453 Information provided by the Irish Prison Service to IPRT on 18th September 2018.
Life skills

Standard 18: Prisoners are encouraged and facilitated to develop and maintain life skills and assume personal responsibility while in prison.

Rationale
Developing life skills in prison is an important aspect of prisoner rehabilitation. Research has found that the development of life skills such as recognition, interpretation, reflection, response and planning help prisoners in everyday life and is essential to rehabilitation.454

Current context
The Irish Prison Service has recommended expanding Independent Living Skills Units (ILSU) across the prison estate.455 The purpose of ILSUs is to replicate community living in so far as possible within a closed prison regime.456 ILSUs allow prisoners to develop skills such as preparing and cooking their own meals.

Indicators for Standard 18

Indicator S18.1: The number of Independent Living Skills Units in the closed prison estate: There is an Independent Living Skills Unit in Wheatfield Prison and one in Midlands Prison. An ILSU is currently being developed in Mountjoy Prison, which is due to open later this year.457

Indicator S18.2: The number of prisoners across the closed prison estate who have access to communal dining: A total of 509 prisoners currently have access to communal dining: Loughan House (140); The Grove, Castlerea (55); Shelton Abbey (115); Independent Living Skills Unit, Midlands (38); Wheatfield (31) and Dóchas Centre (130).458

PROGRESSIVE PRACTICE

Units of Therapy and Education, Villabona, Spain

Units of Therapy and Education (UTE) have been successful in reducing re-offending in Spain. Prison officers and prisoners work together with therapeutic professionals to construct a goal-oriented environment.459 The Committee on Justice and Equality (2018) recommended this approach stating: "The Villabona project in Spain may be instructive in this regard, using an alternative model that immerses prisoners in an educational environment that teaches skills and, importantly, values such as empathy and kindness."460

Action required

Action 18.1: The Irish Prison Service should increase the number of Independent Living Skills Units across the estate, increase the number of prisoners having access to communal dining, and advance technological developments that support learning, access to services and reintegration.

455 Gallagher, C (2018) ‘Life-sentence prisoners should get in-cell telephones’, Irish Times, 7th June 2018
456 Kildarestreet.com, Prison Accommodation Provision, Parliamentary Question 304, 11th July 2017
https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2017-07-11a.753
457 Information provided by the Irish Prison Service on an IPRT visit to the Progression Unit, Mountjoy Prison, 18th May 2018.
458 Information provided by the Irish Prison Service to IPRT on 18th September 2018.
Education

**Standard 19:**
Every prison provides each prisoner with access to a range of educational activities that meet the individual’s needs and take into account their aspirations.

**Rationale**
Education is a vital component of rehabilitation. As highlighted by the Joint Committee on Justice and Equality: “Education and training facilities should be available to prisoners to equip them with the necessary skills for re-entry to society after release.”

Access to education is important for its own sake but there is also evidence that prisoners who participated in education programmes in prison were 43% less likely to re-offend than those who did not participate.

**Current context**
There are currently 220 full-time teachers in the Irish prison system. A current issue is the redeployment of prison staff, which is impacting on the closure of schools and workshops.

Key issues raised in the 2015 and 2016 Annual Reports of the Office of Inspector of Prisons included prisoners’ access to schools, workshops, supports and/or intervention services. The Office highlights its growing concern about the regular redeployment of staff and the negative impact of this on a constructive regime for prisoners.

The response to a recent PQ documents the hours that workshops were closed as a percentage of potential open hours:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>% Closed Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 2017</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2017</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2017</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2017</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2018</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2018</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The same PQ highlights the number of days Education Centres were closed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>No. of days per month closed due to unavailability of Prison Service staff (other than teaching staff) across 13 Education Centres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 2017</td>
<td>19 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2017</td>
<td>6.5 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2017</td>
<td>8.5 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2017</td>
<td>16.5 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2018</td>
<td>5 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2018</td>
<td>4 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2018</td>
<td>18 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2018</td>
<td>1 day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Indicators for Standard 19**

**Indicator S19.1: Participation rates of prisoners in education:** From 1st January 2018 to the end of April 2018, 31.85% of the prison population attended the prison Education Centres. Figures outlined in the table below show that the vast majority of prisons (with the exception of Midlands Prison) have seen a decrease in participation rates over the first half of 2018.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>% Closed Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 2017</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2017</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2017</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2017</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2018</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2018</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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461 Ibid.
466 Kildarestreet.com, Prison Education Service, Written Answers, 12th June 2018 https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2018-06-12a1341
467 Ibid.
Education – Participation Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>January 2018</th>
<th>February 2018</th>
<th>March 2018</th>
<th>April 2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arbour Hill</td>
<td>70.9%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>52.6%</td>
<td>46.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castlerea</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
<td>33.1%</td>
<td>33.6%</td>
<td>33.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloverhill</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cork</td>
<td>46.0%</td>
<td>38.6%</td>
<td>34.7%</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limerick</td>
<td>43.7%</td>
<td>36.5%</td>
<td>33.9%</td>
<td>46.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loughan House</td>
<td>81.7%</td>
<td>59.7%</td>
<td>61.2%</td>
<td>33.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midlands</td>
<td>37.8%</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>58.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountjoy Female</td>
<td>54.0%</td>
<td>39.5%</td>
<td>36.9%</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountjoy Male</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountjoy West</td>
<td>58.1%</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
<td>47.0%</td>
<td>35.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portlaoise</td>
<td>50.2%</td>
<td>44.2%</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
<td>45.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelton Abbey</td>
<td>55.7%</td>
<td>42.3%</td>
<td>42.6%</td>
<td>49.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheatfield</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average All Prisons</td>
<td>38.8%</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Indicator S19.2:** Access to education for prisoners on restricted regimes and regular publication of information of same: Recent figures above provided by the Department of Justice and Equality show the limited access prisoners have to education. Reasons given for this include the Easter break and suspension of some classes due to unavailability of discipline staff as well as the increasing number of prisoners on protection.\(^{468}\) The number of prisoners on protection is linked to a decrease in education participation rates: ordinary prisoners have access to education in the morning while protection prisoners may have access to education in the afternoon.\(^{469}\) Furthermore, reduced participation rates are also attributed to many protection prisoners being unwilling to mix freely with other protection prisoners.\(^{470}\) This is an issue of particular concern for Mountjoy Prison; in Wheatfield, protection prisoners have a separate school.\(^{471}\)

**Indicator S19.3:** The number of people in prison completing further or higher education (including Open University courses and QQI courses) and regular publication of information on same: There are currently 57 prisoners completing Open University Courses.\(^{472}\) This compares with 108 in 2008.\(^{473}\)

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469 Ibid.

470 Ibid.

469 Ibid.


Education Initiatives

**PROGRESSIVE PRACTICE**

**Learning Together Initiative: Cambridge, United Kingdom**

The Learning Together Initiative has been in operation since 2014. The programme brings people under criminal justice supervision and people in university settings together to learn and study criminology. There is continued contact with the university for all students. Prisoners are released on temporary licence to attend and participate in conferences. This initiative currently takes place in Grendon and Springhill prisons. Prisoners reported the experience of being treated differently than when they are ‘on the landing’. In evaluations of the programme, students reported an increase in self-efficacy and self-esteem.

**Prison Cloud, Belgium**

Introduced in a new Belgian prison, PrisonCloud provides secure IT connections to facilitate prisoners in maintaining contact with the outside world, as well as providing further learning opportunities through the internet and e-learning. A number of services are available through PrisonCloud, including prisoners having access to information on the prison rules and their rights. It also allows prisoners to access their own judicial files.

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**Actions required**

| Action 19.1: | The Education and Training Boards should record the frequency and proportion of school closures and identify and address the reasons for this in conjunction with the Irish Prison Service. |
| Action 19.2: | Teachers from education centres must encourage prisoner participation and innovative methods of education for increasing levels of engagement. |
| Action 19.3: | The Educational Training Boards and the Irish Prison Service should publish data on participation and completion rates for accredited learning courses and modules. |
| Action 19.4: | The Irish Prison Service must review staff rosters and leave management practices to facilitate greater access to education and other activities for the prison population. |
| Action 19.5: | The Irish Prison Service must also ensure better access to education for prisoners on a restricted regime. |
| Action 19.6: | The Irish Prison Service must continue to examine secure access to technology in prisons as part of educational development and progression, essential to rehabilitation prospects for life on the outside. |

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474 This information was provided at a seminar, ‘Learning Together: Education across Walls’, held in the Progression Unit, Mountjoy on 5th April 2018. More information about the programme is available here [https://www.prc.crim.cam.ac.uk/directory/research-themes/learning-together](https://www.prc.crim.cam.ac.uk/directory/research-themes/learning-together).

475 Ibid.

476 Ibid.


Part 2: Measuring Progress against the Standards

Community engagement & involvement

Standard 20: Civil society access to prisons is encouraged and there are opportunities for prisoners to participate and engage in the community through structured forms of temporary release.

Rationale
Reconnecting and positively identifying with community and civil society is an important aspect of reintegration.

Current context
The Director General of the Irish Prison Service highlighted the important role civil society plays in prisons:

Benefits from taking this approach also come to prisons, prison staff, and the wider community. For example, prisoners benefit because people who see them as fellow citizens are visiting the prison voluntarily, not because it is a professional and paid duty; prison staff benefit because their environment is normalised by the presence of outside groups and they too can see that they are not cut off from the community outside; and the community benefits because knowledge about the reality of prison life and what prison are and are not will be disseminated.479

Indicators for Standard 20

Indicator S20.1: The number and scale of NGO-run programmes in prisons: While the overall number of NGO-run programmes in prison is not known, the Irish Red Cross Programme has had significant success in Irish prisons. Prisoners who become Irish Red Cross volunteers complete an intensive course on basic first aid, disease prevention and health promotion.480 360 prisoners across the estate have trained as healthcare and first aid volunteers, which represents 10% of the prison population.481

Indicator S20.2: The number of prisoners on home leave or temporary release and rates of compliance: The Minister for Justice and Equality highlighted the success of the Community Return Programme as a structured form of release with a compliance rate of 90% since 2011. However, there have been concerns raised recently about reduced access to the programme. The number of successful completions of Community Return was 352 in 2015 compared to 206 in 2017.482

PROGRESSIVE PRACTICE

Book Club, England
A joint initiative between Oxfordshire County Council Library, the National Library Trust and Soha Housing Association at Huntercombe Prison in Nuffield has helped break barriers between prison and community through shared reading in prisons.463 Twenty prisoners and ten staff from Soha are members of the Breaking Barriers Book Club.

The National Literary Trust as part of their Books Unlocked programme supports those in prison by providing free copies of Man Booker-shortlisted titles and the authors of these books often come to visit the prison as part of the programme.464 As part of the Books Unlocked Programme, there is a National Prison Radio where a free radio service is broadcast to 80,000 cells in prisons in England and Wales.465

Action required

Action 20.1: The Irish Prison Service and the community sector should work together to increase opportunities for prisoners and civil society to participate in exchanges between communities and prisons.

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479 Europris, Interview with Michael Donnellan, the Director General of the Irish Prison Service, p. 4 http://www.irishprisons.ie/images/pdf/dg_europris_interview.pdf
481 Ibid.
485 Ibid.
Progress in the Penal System (PIPS) – A framework for penal reform

Political and civic participation

Standard 21: Prisoners are encouraged to engage with their political and civic rights.

Rationale
Promoting civic and political engagement supports active citizenship and reintegration. Therefore, it is important that due consideration is given to how prisoners can connect and engage with the civic and political process.

Current context
Prisoners are a particularly disenfranchised group and the low uptake of voting in Irish prisons supports this finding. Approximately 1.45% of the prison population voted in Ireland’s 2018 Referendum on the Eighth Amendment. There appears to be a gradual decline in prisoner participation over the last number of years: in 2012, 8% of prisoners voted in the Children’s Referendum.

Indicators for Standard 21

Indicator S21.1: The number of prisoner representative groups in each prison: There are currently seven groups or councils across the prison estate.

Indicator S21.2: The number of prisoners voting (%) in elections: In total 58 prisoners out of a total of 3,897 prisoners voted in Ireland’s 2018 Referendum. Of these, 55 were males and three were females. It is understood that no campaign groups visited prisons in the run up to the referendum.

Indicator S21.3: The number of prisoners involved in other forms of social and community engagement: The Cloverhill Visiting Committee report highlights the activities carried out with the Red Cross. This included celebrating the Chinese New Year, with Chinese nationals preparing Chinese food for the occasion. Furthermore, there were a number of volunteers doing a six-month Community-Based Health First Aid course. The annual report of the Visiting Committee in Cork Prison highlights a hurley/joinery workshop, which enables prisoners to give back to the community by doing work for various local charities. The workshop employs/trains up to 20 prisoners daily.

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489 Information provided by the Irish Prison Service to IPRT on 18th September 2018.
491 Kildarestreet.com, Data Protection, Parliamentary Question 513, 12th June 2018 https://www.kildarestreet.com/wraps/?id=2018-06-12a1333
493 Information release to the Irish Times /Conor Gallagher posted on Twitter 18th June 2018 https://twitter.com/ConorGallaghe_r/status/1008786851329708032
495 Ibid, p. 15
497 Ibid, p. 2
In Limerick, a number of prisoners participated in the Gaisce awards. In order to obtain an award, prisoners are required to partake in physical recreational activity for 26 weeks, undertake a community involvement activity, learn a personal skill for 13 weeks and engage in a team activity. Open prisons such as Loughan House engaged with Bóthar, where local farmers donate their calves to Loughan House, and the calves are reared there and sent on to Africa. Loughan House was also involved with Bikes for Africa, whereby bikes are refurbished and sent to Africa. These are just some examples of positive forms of social and community engagement happening in our prison system.

### Actions required

**Action 21.1:** Prison Education Centres should organise mock and real ‘hustings’ to encourage civic participation of prisoners.

**Action 21.2:** The Education and Training Boards could give consideration to increasing civic education, particularly at times of national votes (to encourage prisoner registration).

**Action 21.3:** Candidates should visit prisons during general elections and referendums, and encourage prisoners to use their vote.

**Action 21.4:** The Irish Prison Service should work towards increasing the number of prisoner representative groups across the estate.

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**UserVoice, England**

UserVoice is a charity led by former prisoners. It aims to promote dialogue between service users and service providers. It recruits and trains representatives for prisoner councils.

**Prisoner Policy Network, England**

The Prisoner Policy Network was established in 2018. It is a network of prisoners, ex-prisoners and supporting organisations hosted by the Prison Reform Trust. The network aims to ensure that the collective experiences of prisoners are part of prison policy development nationally. The network presents the opportunity to create great change for the prison system.

**Irish Red Cross Programme**

The work of the Irish Red Cross Programme in Irish prisons has been commended globally; Ireland being the first country in the world to introduce a Community-Based Health and First Aid Programme in a prison setting. 800 prisoners have been recruited and half have completed the programme and graduated. The Irish Red Cross Volunteers have developed a number of projects helpful to the prison environment including a ‘Safe Zone’ in Castlerea Prison where the school is viewed as safe area and prisoners sign a form agreeing not to bully or assault another prisoner. There are a number of other good examples of programmes developed by the Irish Red Cross.

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498 Limerick Prison Visiting Committee, Annual Report 2016, p. 2
499 ibid.
501 ibid.
505 ibid.
506 ibid.
509 ibid.
510 ibid.
511 ibid, pp. 3–4.
D: Complaints, accountability, inspections and oversight mechanisms

Complaints system

**Standard 22:**
Prisoners have access to a robust and effective complaints mechanism. All complaints are dealt with in a timely manner with the outcome of decisions clearly communicated to the prisoner with a satisfactory resolution if the complaint is upheld.

**Rationale**
Having access to a robust and effective complaints mechanism is of particular importance for individuals detained in closed institutions. A number of barriers to prisoners making complaints have been identified including: the absence of an effective complaints system, the slow nature of complaints procedures and response mechanisms, feelings that the problems faced in prison are inevitable, distrust in the complaints system, feelings of shame, fear of reprisal and absence of legal safeguards. 512

**Current context**
The Irish Prison Service is currently working on a new internal complaints process for prisoners, including a complaints recording system. 513

The new complaints policy is informed by the recommended complaints procedure 514 made by the Inspector of Prisons in 2016. 515 It was originally expected that this would be completed by end of 2017. 516

**Indicators for Standard 22**
Indicator S22.1: Data on the number of internal complaints, in particular Category A complaints (upheld, resolved and dismissed), including the length of time it takes to complete and communicate outcomes of a decision to a prisoner:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prison</th>
<th>No. of ‘Category A’ Complaints made in 2017</th>
<th>Minimum No. Days</th>
<th>Maximum No. Days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arbour Hill</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castlerea</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloverhill</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cork</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limerick</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midlands</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountjoy</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portlaoise</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheatfield</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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513 Information provided by the Irish Prison Service at a meeting on 27th March 2018
514 Information provided by the Irish Prison Service on 30th April 2018
516 Committee against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, Committee against Torture, Sixtieth session, Summary record of the 1548th meeting, p. 2 available at https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2fC%2fS%2fR.1548&Lang=en
517 KildareStreet.com, Complaints Procedures, Parliamentary Question 516, 12th June 2018 https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2018-06-12a1344
518 This minimum and maximum number of days is based on information provided in KildareStreet.com, Complaints Procedures, Parliamentary Question 516, 12th June 2018 https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2018-06-12a1344
519 Ibid.
Since the publication of the above, recent data has been released to the *Irish Times*\(^{523}\) showing that in total there have been 47 ‘Category A’ complaints made in 2018. Twenty-one were allegations of assault, three related to alleged racist incidents, six were claims of mistreatment and five were complaints of intimidation. Of these 47 complaints, only one has been upheld. Sixteen complaints were ‘not upheld’, two were ‘not proved’, three were ‘terminated’ and five were ‘withdrawn’. The investigations relating to 20 allegations are described as ‘incomplete’. Overall analysis shows that very few complaints are upheld. This may be attributed to a number of reasons including insufficient evidence and unwilling witnesses. It could also indicate either complaints being unfounded or poor investigations. This may result in prisoners having a lack of confidence in the complaints system.

In 2017, the Office of the Ombudsman\(^{524}\) was involved in the redevelopment of the complaint-handling system, including facilitating a visit by an official from the Irish Prison Service to the Prisoner Ombudsman of Northern Ireland to provide an overview of how local complaints systems work between the Northern Ireland Prison Service and the Office of the Prisoner Ombudsman.\(^{525}\)

There is an urgent need for reform of the complaints system, in particular of external oversight, which is discussed in the next standard.

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**Actions required**

**Action 22.1:** The Irish Prison Service must ensure that prisoners receive the outcome of their complaints within a three-month period. The outcome should address the complaint and the reasons for the outcome, and provide a solution if the complaint was upheld.

**Action 22.2:** The Department of Justice and Equality and the Irish Prison Service should introduce a new internal complaints policy with a view to bringing Ireland’s complaints system in line with best practice.

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No of Category A Complaints Received</th>
<th>Investigation Completed</th>
<th>Ongoing</th>
<th>Unfounded</th>
<th>Withdrawn</th>
<th>Re-categorised</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018 (1.1.18–26.6.18)</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Investigation Completed</th>
<th>Upheld</th>
<th>Not Upheld</th>
<th>Not Proved</th>
<th>Part Upheld</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\(520\) KildareStreet.com, Irish Prison Service, Parliamentary Question 161, 28th June 2018
[https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2018-06-28a.439]\(\text{s}\)

\(521\) ‘Category A’ refers to the most serious type of complaint made by prisoners

\(522\) KildareStreet.com, Irish Prison Service, Parliamentary Question 161, 28th June 2018
[https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2018-06-28a.439]\(\text{s}\)

\(523\) ‘Twelve sexual allegations made by prisoners against authorities’, *Irish Times*, 13th August 2018


\(525\) Ibid.
Independent complaints or appeal mechanism

**Standard 23:**
Prisoners have access to an external independent complaints and appeal mechanism, including access to a prisoner ombudsman or equivalent.

**Rationale**
As prisoners are detained in a closed environment, they are at increased risk of having their human rights violated. Prisoners’ confidence in the complaints system is promoted by the existence of an external independent complaints and appeals mechanism.

**Current context**
The Office of the Ombudsman's *Annual Report 2017* identifies an expectation that the remit of the office would be extended to include prisoner complaints. This was a recommendation made by the Inspector of Prisons and accepted by the Tánaiste in 2016. As highlighted in Standard 22, the Office of the Ombudsman has been involved in the liaison between the Northern Ireland Prison Service and the Prisoner Ombudsman’s Office to see how the process could work in Ireland.

**Indicators for Standard 23**

**Indicator S23.1:** Prisoners’ access to an independent external complaints mechanism: IPRT has been informed that this is unlikely to happen until 2019, despite UNCAT (2017) records stating that the timeline for establishing the Ombudsman’s oversight role in the complaints system is by the end of 2017.

**Northern Ireland: Prisoner Ombudsman**
In 2005, the Office of the Prisoner Ombudsman for Northern Ireland was established to investigate complaints where prisoners were unhappy with the decision of the Northern Ireland Prison Service. The system is completely independent of the Northern Ireland Prison Service. Since 2010 visitors can also make a complaint to the Prisoner Ombudsman.

**Action required**
Action 23.1: The State must ensure, as a matter of urgency, that the Office of the Ombudsman is adequately resourced to accept prisoner complaints.

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526 Ibid.
527 Department of Justice and Equality, ‘Tánaiste accepts recommendation to give Ombudsman a role in prisoner complaints’, http://justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/PRn6000125
528 IPRT was informed about this at a meeting with the Department of Justice and Equality and the Irish Prison Service on the 27th of March 2018
529 Committee against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, *Summary record of the 1548th meeting*, p. 2 available at https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%3fC%3fSR.1548&Lang=en
531 Ibid.
Part 2: Measuring Progress against the Standards

**Inspections and monitoring**

**Standard 24:** Structures are in place for the regular inspection and monitoring of prisons. Inspection reports are made publicly available within a clear timeframe.

**Rationale**

Monitoring and inspection of places of detention are central to the protection of human rights of prisoners. The creation of independent monitoring bodies is an important factor in reducing torture.532

**Current context**

Establishing a National Preventative Mechanism (NPM) as part of the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (OPCAT) is crucial to preventing ill-treatment. The importance of an effective NPM has also been highlighted by Penal Reform International (PRI) (2018):

*Through preventive monitoring, National Preventative Mechanisms in particular can assess individual cases to identify systemic issues leading to serious incidents in a given prison or a wider prison system.533*

This point again underscores the importance of frequent domestic inspections and published reports.

**Indicators for Standard 24**

**Indicator S24.1:** The State’s ratification of OPCAT and establishment of a National Preventive Mechanism: Not ratified: Ireland is one of only two EU countries which have not yet ratified the OPCAT. Afghanistan acceded to the OPCAT in April 2018.534

At the UNCAT hearing, the Government committed that “the bill [Inspection of Places of Detention] concerning the ratification for the Optional Protocol would be submitted to parliament in 2018”.535

**Indicator S24.2:** Frequency of publication of Inspector of Prisons reports: In 2017, the Inspector of Prisons published an Annual Report for 2015 and 2016. There has been no published prison inspection report in the last 12 months. Below is a breakdown of the most recent prison inspection reports of the Inspector of Prisons published by the Department of Justice and Equality:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Detention Centre:</th>
<th>Most recent published IoP Inspection Report:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arbour Hill</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castlerea Prison</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloverhill Prison</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cork Prison</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dóchas Centre</td>
<td>2013 (Interim537)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limerick Prison</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loughan House</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midlands Prison</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountjoy Prison</td>
<td>2011, 2014538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portlaoise Prison</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelton Abbey</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Patrick’s Institution (now part of Mountjoy)</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Unit (now closed)</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheatfield Place of Detention</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

535 Committee against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, Committee against Torture, Sixty-first session Summary record of the 151st meeting (paragraph 22) http://docstore.ohchr.org/SelfServices/FilesHandler.ashx?enc=6QkG1d%2fPPRiCAqkhKb7yhsmqojLr9s4hZROmdqS5bsOGWfW%2fMPTdvoNQ0b%2fVR2P31T0tZM9kKfUimd-2KxTa7wXfmsAKMZ%2bNefjuoaeewUmEbFTorZvRMielWwIml
537 A follow up report was due on the Dóchas by the Inspector of Prisons six months on from the date of this report which has never been published. See Interim Report on the Dóchas Centre By the Inspector of Prisons Judge Michael Reilly October 2013, paragraph 113, p. 5 http://www.inspectorofprisons.gov.ie/en/ICO/Dochas%20Centre%20Report%20%202013.pdf/Files/Dochas%20Centre%20Report%20%2013.pdf
538 The 2014 report focused on the Separation Unit of Mountjoy Campus. See, An Overview of Mountjoy Campus with particular emphasis on the Separation Unit by the Inspector of Prisons Judge Michael Reilly 23rd July 2014
**Indicator S24.3: Reform of Prison Visiting Committees**: There has been no progress published on possible reform (e.g. standardisation of reports, appointment of committee members) of Prison Visiting Committees since 2017.

**Actions required**

Action 24.1: The Minister for Justice and Equality should expedite the introduction of legislation so that Ireland can ratify the OPCAT by the end of 2018.

Action 24.2: Legislators should progress the Inspection of Places of Detention Bill and ensure thorough pre-legislative scrutiny.

Action 24.3: The Office of the Inspector of Prisons should have an annual programme of independent prison inspections followed by published reports, and be adequately resourced to do so.

Action 24.4: The Department of Justice and Equality should reform the Prison Visiting Committees, including the appointment of members with multi-disciplinary expertise through the Public Appointments Service.

### Investigations into deaths in custody

**Standard 25: The death of, or serious incident involving, a prisoner is investigated by an independent body immediately and the investigation report published promptly.**

**Rationale**

The State has a duty of care to all persons in its care. As highlighted by Penal Reform International (2018), state authorities are obliged to carry out an independent, impartial, prompt and effective investigation into the circumstances and causes of any serious incident and to provide reparation or redress to victims and/or their families.

**Current context**

A number of prisoner deaths occur in prison and on temporary release every year. An international study from 2017 highlighted the increased risk of suicide for the prison population; male prisoners were found to be three times more likely to be at risk than the general male population and women in prison nine times more likely to be at risk than the general female population.

A recent analysis shows that of 87 death-in-custody reports published since 2012, 12 reports raised the issue of the lack of record keeping and failure to comply with Standard Operating Procedures relating to prisoner checks.

Penal Reform International outlines a number of questions that monitoring bodies could be asking relating to deaths in custody:

- Is an internal procedure in place to identify lessons learned after every death?
- Have lessons learned been translated into reforms to address shortcomings identified?
- Are measures in place to prevent avoidable deaths, such as a comprehensive suicide prevention programme?
- Is statistical data on deaths in custody used to identify possible structural deficiencies?

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539 Council of Europe, European Convention on Human Rights, Article 2, p. 6
https://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention_ENG.pdf


542 Leogue, J (2018) ‘Concern over prison death records’, Irish Examiner, 7th August 2018
https://www.irishtimes.com/breakingnews/ireland/concernoverprison-death-records-880463.html

leading to a higher risk of death in custody? Is such data disaggregated to allow for analysis of discrimination for specific categories of prisoners?

**Death in Custody Reports 2017: Date of Death vs. Date of Publication of the Inspector of Prisons’ Report by the Minister for Justice and Equality**

Outlined below is information related to the date of death and the length of time before publication of the investigation report for deaths in custody reports published to date in 2018.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2016, Prisoner</th>
<th>Date of Death</th>
<th>IoP Completion of Report</th>
<th>DJE Publication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prisoner J (2016)</td>
<td>4th December 2016</td>
<td>22nd December 2017</td>
<td>26th April 2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2017, Prisoner</th>
<th>Date of Death</th>
<th>IoP Completion of Report</th>
<th>DJE Publication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>3rd January 2017</td>
<td>30th November 2017</td>
<td>27th March 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3rd January 2017</td>
<td>30th November 2017</td>
<td>23rd February 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>6th March 2017</td>
<td>20th December 2017</td>
<td>20th August 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>19th March 2017</td>
<td>20th December 2017</td>
<td>23rd February 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>25th March 2017</td>
<td>15th March 2018</td>
<td>18th July 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>13th April 2017</td>
<td>15th March 2018</td>
<td>25th July 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Not known/ unpublished</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>15th May 2017</td>
<td>20th December 2017</td>
<td>23rd February 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>13th August 2017</td>
<td>15th September 2017</td>
<td>12th October 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>Not known/ unpublished</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>2nd October 2017</td>
<td>30th November 2017</td>
<td>17th January 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>6th October 2017</td>
<td>7th December 2017</td>
<td>17th January 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>11th October 2017</td>
<td>10th April 2018</td>
<td>30th July 2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 2018</th>
<th>Date of Death</th>
<th>IoP Completion of Report</th>
<th>DJE Publication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>27th January 2018</td>
<td>26th March 2018</td>
<td>7th August 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>19th February 2018</td>
<td>26th April 2018</td>
<td>15th June 2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Indicators for Standard 25**

**Indicator S25.1: Implementation of recommendations of investigations made by the Inspector of Prisons:** While the number of recommendations fully implemented by the Irish Prison Service is not known, the Irish Prison Service has developed a matrix of recommendations and specific actions have been assigned to various stakeholders.

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544 Ibid
545 See Department of Justice and Equality website, Publications [http://justice.ie/](http://justice.ie/)
547 Ibid
548 Ibid
549 See Department of Justice and Equality website, Publications [http://justice.ie/](http://justice.ie/)
549 Information provided by the Irish Prison Service as of 1st April 2018
**Actions required**

**Action 25.1:** Standard Operating Procedures should be followed by prison staff at all times.

**Action 25.2:** The Inspector of Prisons should be given the authority to publish reports directly. In the absence of this, the Department of Justice and Equality must commit to publishing investigation reports in a prompt manner.

**Action 25.2:** The Irish Prison Service should publish its plans/progress for the implementation of recommendations arising from the Inspector of Prisons’ death in custody reports.
Part 2: Measuring Progress against the Standards

E: Safety and protection in Irish prisons

Solitary confinement

Standard 26: Solitary confinement is used as a last resort and only in exceptional circumstances. It is used for the shortest period possible, and for a maximum of 15 days. Reasons for and lengths of time a prisoner is held in solitary confinement must be recorded.

Rationale

Solitary confinement has damaging physical and psychological effects on an individual. Medical research demonstrates that the denial of meaningful human contact can lead to ‘isolation syndrome’ with a range of symptoms including anxiety, depression, anger, self-harm and suicide. As highlighted in IPRT’s (2018) report on solitary confinement, “the exceptional and devastating harm to prisoners’ mental health that can be caused by extended periods of isolation means the practice of holding any category of prisoner on 22- or 23-hour lock up must be abolished”.

Current context

There were a number of positive developments in 2017 towards addressing the issue of solitary confinement, including: the introduction of the Prison (Amendment) Rules, the development of a policy on the elimination of solitary confinement by the Irish Prison Service, and the debating of the Prisons (Solitary Confinement) (Amendment) Bill 2016 (Private Members’ Bill) (PMB). However, this Bill has not progressed any further in 2018.

Indicator S26.1: The number of prisoners on 22–24-hour lock up: Censuses provided by the Irish Prison Service show that 12 prisoners were being held in solitary confinement in April 2018. This compares to 44 in April 2017. However, the most recently published censuses figures show an increase, with 35 individuals currently held in solitary confinement. Of these individuals held on 23-hour lock up, two were between the ages of 18 and 20, one was aged between 21 and 24, and two were over 25.

Indicator S26.2: The duration spent by prisoners on 22–24-hour lock up: In a recent PQ it was stated that information on the duration of time prisoners spend on 22-24-hour lock up was not available.

PROGRESSIVE PRACTICE

IPRT: ‘Behind the Door’: Solitary Confinement in the Irish Penal System

Following a review of initiatives to reduce the use of solitary confinement internationally, some key conclusions can be drawn and should be reflected upon by the relevant changemakers:

• The importance of prison activism, advocacy and media campaigns in inspiring public and political interest;
• The benefit of legal strategies in challenging

552 Ibid.
559 Ibid, p. 6
560 KildareStreet.com, Prison Service Data, Parliamentary Question 512, 12th June 2018 https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2018-06-12a.1330
non-rights-compliant policies and practices which impact on individuals and groups;

- The need to put in place specific restrictions on isolation and requirements for time out of cell and association;
- The importance of resourcing support for prisoners in transitioning to the general population, for example, adequate assessment and staffing;
- The necessity of monitoring compliance with legislation and rights;
- The role played by strong leadership (political and prison/criminal justice management) in driving change and dealing with internal opposition;
- The need to consider ways of reducing the prison population and to encourage different responses to social harms.

## Violence in Irish prisons

### Standard 27: Prisoners and everyone in the prison system feels safe and protected from violence in the prison environment.

#### Rationale

Research\(^{562}\) has highlighted how methods of reducing violence traditionally focused on: treating violence as rule-breaking, punishing those who engage in fights, targeting prevention at those who staff identify as aggressive and separating perpetrators from victims. However, there has been a more recent shift in the traditional focus towards the use of conflict-centred strategies,\(^{563}\) whereby:

- conflicts are analysed and causes identified
- staff use dynamic security
- opportunities are provided to resolve differences
- managing conflict is viewed as a shared responsibility
- prisoners’ perspectives are welcomed.

Findings from the same research\(^{564}\) highlighted a lack of knowledge about causes of violence and a tendency to label individuals as opposed to managing behaviour constructively. The report highlights:

> Thus, to prevent violence, the strategy must focus on recognising conflicts, understanding how they escalate, changing the structural contributors and knowing how to intervene.\(^{565}\)

### Current context

The number of violent incidents across the prison estate (2012-2017) is outlined under Indicator 27.1. A new therapy unit, National Violence Reduction Unit (VRU)\(^{566}\), is currently being set up by the Irish Prison Service to address the needs of those exhibiting violent behaviour. The objectives\(^{567}\) of the VRU are:

1. Reduce repeat violent offending
2. Improve psychological health, well being, pro-

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http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/Portals/0/Documents/Ensuring_a_safe_prison.pdf

563 Ibid.

http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/Portals/0/Documents/Ensuring_a_safe_prison.pdf


566 This information has been provided by the Irish Prison Service, 4th September 2018.

567 Ibid.
social behaviour and relational outcomes

3. Improve competence, confidence and attitudes of staff working with complex prisoners

4. Increase efficiency, cost effectiveness and quality of services

This unit will be the first co-led unit with the Prison Psychology Service. The importance of staff as agents of change is the focus of the Unit. The criteria for admission is outlined in the Violent and Disruptive Prisoner Policy. A National Committee has been established to provide oversight and feedback in terms of referrals to the unit. The unit is based on the idea of Close Supervision Centres in the UK. The criteria for admission is outlined in the Violent and Disruptive Prisoner Policy.

5. Improve competence, confidence and attitudes of staff working with complex prisoners

6. Increase efficiency, cost effectiveness and quality of services

This unit will be the first co-led unit with the Prison Psychology Service. The importance of staff as agents of change is the focus of the Unit. The criteria for admission is outlined in the Violent and Disruptive Prisoner Policy. A National Committee has been established to provide oversight and feedback in terms of referrals to the unit. The unit is based on the idea of Close Supervision Centres in the UK. The criteria for admission is outlined in the Violent and Disruptive Prisoner Policy.

- **Indicators for Standard 27**

  **Indicator S27.1: The number of violent incidents across the prison estate:** The number of assaults by prisoners on other prisoners decreased by 27% to 417 in 2017. Acts of violence by prisoners on staff was up by 1% to 104 incidents. The numbers of recorded assaults on prison officers by prisoners and prisoner-on-prisoner assaults, from 2014 to 2017, by prison, are outlined in the tables below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prison/Place of Detention</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arbour Hill</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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568 ibid.

569 This policy is currently not available on the Irish Prison Service website

570 Information supplied by Senior Management of Irish Prison Service, 3rd July 2018

571 This information has been provided by the Irish Prison Service as of the 30th of April 2018

572 Ibid.


575 This does not include statistics for when a prison officer is injured during an intervention between prisoners
Indicator S27.2: The prevalence of sexual violence across the prison estate: It was reported\(^76\) that 12 allegations of sexual violence were made by prisoners against prison authorities up to August 2018.

Indicator S27.3: The number of prisoners kept in Close Supervision Cells and duration of time spent in these cells: Latest census\(^77\) figures show that nine prisoners are accommodated in Close Supervision Cells. Data is not published on the lengths of time prisoners spend in these cells. The Irish Prison Service committed at the UNCAT oral hearing to publishing overall lengths spent in Close Supervision Cells in quarterly statistics.\(^78\) This has not happened.

Indicator S27.4: The establishment of a therapy-focused unit for prisoners who are violent and disruptive: The unit was due to open in the first quarter of 2018,\(^79\) but delays have meant that the new timeline for the opening of the unit is now estimated to be November 2018.

Indicator S27.5: Supports available to staff (see Staff Training section, Standard 29)

### PROGRESSIVE PRACTICE

**Dynamic Security**

Dynamic security is a practice that involves both proactive and regular interaction between prison staff and prisoners.\(^80\) It provides an opportunity for staff to anticipate warning signs about possible incidents before they occur.\(^81\) This approach has proved to improve security in prisons.\(^82\)

**Principles for resolving conflicts in prison settings\(^83\)**

1. Analyse the prison as a conflict-generating environment.
2. The role of prison officer as ‘peacekeeper’ is critical, including placing emphasis on ‘dynamic security’\(^84\) and enabling officers to identify conflicts before they escalate.
3. Prisoners’ interests in a safe prison can be encouraged.
4. Rebuild trust – there are two approaches that should be followed in this respect: first, the primary aim of discipline is to ensure that all prisoners are safe, which leads to greater confidence by prisoners. The second is hearing the voice of both staff and prisoners.
5. Conflict resolution should be embedded in prison governance: “Most prisons lack options for prisoners who seek non-violent ways of resolving differences.”\(^85\) Approaches could include: wing forums, trained impartial mediators, violence reduction representatives or formal opportunities to negotiate conflict resolution.

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\(^78\) UN Web TV, Consideration of Ireland (Cont’d)-1551st Meeting 61st Session Committee Against Torture at 12.29-12.38 http://webtv.un.org/watch/consideration-of-ireland-contd-1551st-meeting-61st-session-committee-against-torture/5256421662001/?term=


\(^81\) Ibid.

\(^82\) Ibid, p. 79


\(^84\) Dynamic security is based on consistent personal contact between prison officer and prisoner

As highlighted by Edgar:\footnote{586}

Embedding conflict resolution means establishing structures that enable management and staff to bring conflicts to light and working with prisoners to try to find solutions. Governors need to be resourceful in trying to learn from prisoners what their main concerns are about. For example, they might use a prisoner council to raise and resolve some of the basic, structural conflicts in the prison [...] Conflict resolution can refine violence reduction strategies and empower governors, officers and prisoners in their efforts to make prisons safer.

Council of Europe Draft Recommendation on Restorative Justice

In 2018, the Council of Penological Cooperation published a draft Recommendation concerning restorative justice in criminal matters. The Draft Recommendation states:

Recognising that restorative justice may increase awareness of the important role of individuals and communities in preventing and responding to crime and its associated conflicts, thus encouraging more constructive criminal justice responses.\footnote{588}

Democratic Therapeutic Communities

Democratic Therapeutic Communities (DTC) have been adopted in England to address and reduce violence in prisons. DTCs provide for group-based therapy, which places emphasis on personal responsibility and encourages social and democratic participation.

Case Study: Grendon Prison, England

Grendon Prison is an example of a DTC that has yielded positive results. The prison accepts high-risk offenders who have a history of serious violent offending behaviour. Individuals must be willing and motivated to change. There is a contract (e.g. a prisoner must have had no positive drug tests for two months on admission and must accept responsibility for the offence).\footnote{589}

The prison’s capacity is 238.\footnote{590} It has five wings with 40 prisoners per wing. These wings are referred to as ‘communities’ and each community develops its own Constitution. Each wing is staffed by psycho-dynamically trained therapists, psychologists and prison officers, who all participate in and facilitate therapy groups.\footnote{591} Prisoners are referred to as ‘residents’ and are entitled to vote on all aspects of daily life, while staff maintain a veto on some issues.\footnote{592} The community can impose sanctions if rules laid out in the Constitution are broken; this allows prisoners to understand their responsibilities to the community. However, sanctions are typically used as a last resort with resolution primarily through constructive dialogue.\footnote{593}

The therapeutic process is a central tenet of Grendon Prison. HM Chief Inspector of Prisons found it allowed prisoners and staff to reflect on and challenge each other’s behaviour to create an atmosphere of mutual respect.\footnote{594} HM Chief Inspector of Prisons (2017) identified that conflict and poor behaviour were managed very well through the therapeutic process, with most behavioural issues successfully resolved within therapeutic groups. The Chief Inspector also noted that staff completed violence reduction documents very well. Grendon Prison also has a Prison Safety Custody Representative on each wing, who provided additional peer support to those on the wing.

The regime in Grendon allows prisoners have 10.5 hours out-of-cell time Monday to Thursday and seven hours out-of-cell time on the remaining days. The Inspectorate noted that time out of cell was “excellent” with a broad range of extra-curricular activities being offered. Family days are held every six months where prisoners can meet their families from 10am to 4pm. There are no segregation
units to separate inmates from the wing.  

HM Chief Inspector of Prisons (2017) found prisoners reported feeling safe and although many prisoners in Grendon had a history of violence, the levels of violence were low. The report highlighted that what was outstanding at Grendon Prison was the positive relationships between staff and prisoners, and among prisoners and their peers. A reduction in reoffending occurred for prisoners who spent 18 months in the prison. Research has found that recidivism rates in Grendon Prison are approximately 20%, lower than those found in other prison regimes.

The European Prison Observatory makes two key recommendations to EU member states:

1. Recommendation 3: The EU collates evidence on positive mediation as a restorative practice and communicates this research to the penal systems of other member states.

2. Recommendation 4: The EU should encourage the development of a trial and evaluation model of the Grendon model in each member state.

Prisoner escorts

Standard 28: The health and welfare of prisoners is prioritised while they are under escort.

Rationale

In response to the issues observed by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (ECPT) in many European jurisdictions, including overreliance on restraint, substandard basic safety requirements, and unnecessarily long periods of confinement during transport, the ECPT published a factsheet to ensure that transportation of detainees is undertaken in a humane, safe and secure manner.

Current context

In 2017, the Department of Justice and Equality completed a Value for Money and Policy Review of Prisoner Escort Services. However this review is yet to be published.

Indicators for Standard 28

Indicator S28.1: Independent inspections of prisoner escort services: No independent inspection of prison escort services has been published in Ireland. The ratification of OPCAT would provide for inspections of all forms of places of detention, including prisoner escorts.

Indicator S28.2: Publication of data on escorts including: numbers, distance, frequency and reason for escort, analysis of any impact on local prison staffing and regimes, recording of delays or cancellations of court or hospital appointments, lengths of time prisoners are held in cellular vehicles, adequate provision of rest breaks, complaints received while under escort and conditions of vehicles: No such data has been published.

Indicator S28.3: Introduction of a handcuffing-by-exception policy: No handcuffing-by-exception policy has been introduced in Ireland. UNCAT (2017) made a Concluding Observation to the State on this issue: “Ensure that prisoners who are transferred between facilities are not injured during transportation and ensure that handcuffing is used only as an exceptional measure, after appropriate...”


599 European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (2018) Transport of Detainees, p. 1 https://rm.coe.int/16808b631d

600 Ibid.
risk assessment.” The CPT recommends that the application of handcuffs should only be resorted to when the risk assessment of an individual case clearly warrants it.

### Actions required

**Action 28.1:** The Department of Justice and Equality should publish its Value for Money and Policy Review of Escort Services in the Criminal Justice Sector in 2018, and act on the recommendations made by UNCAT and the CPT.

**Action 28.2:** The Department of Justice and Equality must ensure that the timeline of the end of 2018 for the introduction of legislation to ratify OPCAT is met, and expedite the Inspection of Places of Detention Bill, to ensure inspection of all settings where people are detained, including prisoner escort services.

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**Spotlight 2:**

**Staff, Training and Professional Relationships**

**Standard 29:**

All staff receive relevant ongoing training and supports in order to effectively carry out their duties to a high standard.

**Standard 30:**

Good relationships between management, staff and prisoners are facilitated and encouraged. Management ensure that a positive working culture is created in the prison.

**Rationale**

Prisons are institutions where the most important aspect is relationships between people:

> the most important elements are human beings [...] Real change in any prison system cannot take place without the involvement of both staff and prisoners [...] The key feature for the success or failure of any prison system that is to be run in a decent and humane manner is the relationship between prisoners and the prison staff with whom they come into contact on a daily basis.

It is important that prison management carefully recruit and select staff who work to professional standards, as management will be held to account by the Government and public.

The Howard League for Penal Reform identified a number of issues related to the role of the prison officer, some of which may also have relevance in this jurisdiction:

- dangerously low staffing levels as a result of high rates of retirement
- a poorly defined job description
- insufficient training

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601 United Nations Committee against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, Concluding Observations on the Second Periodic Report of Ireland, p. 6

602 European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (2018) Transport of Detainees, p. 3
https://rm.coe.int/16808b63td

https://rm.coe.int/prison-management-booklet-eng/16807185bd


605 Howard League of Penal Reform (2017) The Role of the Prison Officer
• a perceived lack of decision-making power, leaving officers feeling ignored, ineffective and unable to achieve their aims.

The role of the prison officer cannot be underestimated:

Those who work in prisons perform an important public service, and they often work in difficult, stressful and sometimes dangerous conditions. They are required to work with individuals who have multiple needs, including mental health conditions, suicidal or self-harm tendencies and histories of abuse, deprivation and addiction. Therefore, it is likely that they will encounter violent and abusive prisoners, some of whom have posed major threats to public security in the past. In poorly managed facilities, staff might also be subjected to discrimination by colleagues or managers.606

The diverse skillset of the prison officer must also be acknowledged:

The role and functions of prison staff are often misunderstood or subject to negative stereotyping. The media and public might perceive their role as simply to lock people up. In fact, prison staff also play a key role in the rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners and their job is complex and multifaceted, requiring a specific and diverse skill set, including good interpersonal skills and the ability to deal with many different and often challenging situations and individuals.607

There is a need for the role of the Prison Officer to receive greater acknowledgement by the State and general public:

Prison authorities should have accountability to an elected legislature and the public should be regularly informed about the State and aspirations of the prisons.

Government ministers and senior administrators should make clear that they hold prison staff in high regard for the work they do and the public should frequently be reminded that prison work is an important public service.608

Leadership within the prison system is given as the primary success factor for Grendon Prison (discussed earlier) in England. As HM Chief Inspector of Prisons609 highlighted:

This was in no small part down to the strong, principled and focused leadership of the prison, which provided more junior staff and prisoners with role models, exemplifying the positive behaviour and thinking expected of them. Not every prison can or needs to be a therapeutic community, but the values, principles and practice seen at Grendon could provide positive lessons and inspiration for other prisons.

Current context

The Irish Prison Service has developed a Higher Certificate in Custodial Care, a two-year programme for recruit prison officers that includes a number of modules including equality, diversity, social and cultural awareness, human rights and criminal justice, criminology and penology.610

In 2018, the Irish Prison Service continued its recruitment campaign611 for new prison officers, the first recruitment that took place since 2008.612 This recruitment campaign placed emphasis on specific characteristics of tolerance and humanity, and particularly welcomed applications from females and ethnic minorities.613

Despite concerns raised about prison staffing levels over the last year (following 148 retirements in 2017, 99 in 2016 and 100 resignations since 2016614), the ratio of prison officer to prisoner in Ireland is relatively high at 0.76:1.615 In some prisons this ratio is lower, such as the Midlands Prison where it is

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607 Ibid.
612 Ibid.
615 Information related to prison officer:prisoner ratio provided by the Irish Prison Service on the 18th September 2018
At the end of 2017, the Irish Prison Service had 3,186.06 whole-time equivalent staff (including civilian grades and headquarters staff). The Irish Prison Service is fewer than 82 prison officers short of its authorised complement of 3,153 staff.

Despite this, the impact of staffing levels in 2017/2018 has been identified as an issue, with retired officers hired back on six-month contracts. This issue has also resulted in the closure of workshops and schools, impacting on prisoner regimes (see Standard 18). Another reason that may be given for this issue is the high levels of sick leave, with civil service statistics showing the highest average working days lost by sickness at 15.7 for the Irish Prison Service.

**Indicators for Standard 29**

**Indicator S29.1: Training in human rights and equality including UNCAT for existing and new staff:** The Higher Certificate in Custodial Care includes a module on Human Rights. While the Irish Human Rights Commission previously provided training, it has not conducted training with the Irish Prison Service since it became the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission.

**Indicator S29.2: Adoption of CoE Code of Ethics for Prison Staff with annual assessments:** In conjunction with University College Dublin, a Strategy and Policy Group has been set up for ethics training. The Irish Prison Service has developed a new *Code of Ethical Behaviour* for prison staff. As part of the training, there are two one-day workshops on ‘Ethical Dilemmas in Prison Based Contexts’.

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616 Information also provided by the Irish Prison Service on the 1st April 2018
618 Information provided by the Irish Prison Service on 18th September 2018
619 RTÉ (2018) ‘Nearly 300 jobs available in prison service recruitment drive’
620 Civil Service Sick Leave Statistics, Average Working Days Lost per FTE
621 Information provided by IHREC to IPRT in September 2018.
622 Information provided by the Irish Prison Service on 30th April 2018
**Indicator S29.3: Supports for staff:** INSPIRE is a self-referral counselling service available to staff for personal issues. The Irish Prison service has a Well Being at Work Policy to enhance physical and mental health supports for staff. The Irish Prison Service also states that the roll out of Critical Incident Stress Management is in progress, with peer support training provided to all Staff Support Officers.

**Norway**

Norwegian prison officer training is underpinned by the belief that a prisoner can change—“they need to believe that a prisoner can change...a good prison officer is someone who sees the inmates where they are.”

**Indicators for Standard 30**

**Indicator S30.1:** Measuring the Quality of Prison Life (MQPL) survey or equivalent is conducted on an annual basis, with per-prison results published: The Irish Prison Service has conducted an MQPL survey in seven prisons, however, this has not been published. The Prison Service states that it will carry out surveys on the attitudes of prisoners and staff in prisons every three to four years.

**Actions required**

**Action 29.1:** The Irish Prison Service should provide relevant and refresher training and supports to staff, including on UNCAT and Section 42 of the Public Sector Duty.

**Action 29.2:** An examination of staffing levels should be conducted to address their impact on the current prison regime.

**Action required**

**Action 30.1:** The Irish Prison Service should facilitate and publish independent research to assess relationships between prisoners, staff and management in the prison environment.

**PROGRESSIVE PRACTICE**

**Finland**

Under the Prison Act 2006, prisoners are treated as individuals and their prison term aims at certain goals. The competency-based curriculum for prison officers is divided into three main areas: (1.) security and safety, (2.) rehabilitation and social integration, and (3.) law and ethics. The programme is broken down into five key areas:

1. **Prison as the institution** (e.g. knowledge about the organisation of prison services)
2. **Prison security** (e.g. communication, crisis-conflict management)
3. **Imprisonment, convicted and remand prisoners** (e.g. knowledge about mental health, addiction and social problems)
4. **Criminality** (theories behind criminality)
5. **Prevention of criminal behaviour** (e.g. sentence planning).

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625. Ibid.

626. UN Web TV, Consideration of Ireland (Cont’d)-1551st Meeting 61st Session Committee Against Torture http://webtv.un.org/watch/consideration-of-ireland-contd-1551st-meeting-61st-session-committee-against-torture/5526421662001/?term=

627. Ibid.


629. Ibid, p. 25

630. Ibid, pp. 26–27

Part 2: Measuring Progress against the Standards

Use of force

Standard 31: Prison protocols emphasise de-escalation and conflict resolution approaches. Use of force and restraint are a measure of last resort.

Rationale

The use of force should always be a measure of last resort. This is of particular significance to many populations, such as children and women, who have often experienced trauma in childhood. Use of force may lead to re-traumatisation.

Current context

The Irish Prison Service has developed a protocol, Conflict Management Operations and Training, which aims to minimise the use of force. In line with best practice, laws, policies and procedures should be made publicly available and accessible to all staff, internal and external monitors and prisoners. A new IT system has been introduced by the Irish Prison Service to record incidents of control and restraint. This may help identify the frequency of use of such measures.

Indicators for Standard 31

Indicator S31.1: The number of incidents per prison per year de-escalated through conflict resolution approaches. While this data was not provided, the Irish Prison Service has stated that all prison staff learn de-escalation techniques as part of their training. 119 recruit prison officer received training on conflict resolution in 2018, and 380 staff completed training as part of their continuous professional development in 2018.

Indicator S31.2: The number of incidents per prison per year in the Irish prison estate involving control and restraints. This information was not provided at the time of publication.

PROGRESSIVE PRACTICE

Training

Guidance on the Mandela Rules highlights that all staff should receive training on restraints before they begin duty and this should include experiencing instruments of restraint themselves. They should have, as a minimum, training on how to use different instruments of restraint safely, legitimately and proportionately, and how to use force to the minimum extent necessary, including how to determine when the use of restraints is no longer necessary. The Mandela Rules now specify minimum requirements for training including the concept of dynamic security and techniques for defusing violent situations.

Restorative Practice in Prison-Based Settings, HMP Buckley, England

Restorative practice is used in HMP Buckley, a young offenders’ institution, to resolve conflict among prisoners and staff. Trained prisoners and staff host restorative meetings to resolve low-level conflicts. Formal restorative conferences are used for more serious matters. Joint staff and prisoner meetings take place to share knowledge about restorative practice. Since 2017, restorative approaches have been used in 56 cases of conflict. The project has helped improve relationships and values between prisoners and staff.

Restorative Justice and Staffing: Belgium

Research has highlighted that while there is no set formula for employing restorative practice in prisons, one common requirement is additional training and education for prison staff. One...
example of this has been the employment of restorative and therapeutic justice consultants in Belgium to commence, implement and oversee restorative practice, with the justice consultants reporting directly to the Governor of the prison.  

### Actions required

**Action 31.1:** The Irish Prison Service should collate and publish data on the use of restorative mediation and conflict resolution, as well as on control and restraint interventions and their outcomes.

**Action 31.2:** All prison staff should be trained in restorative justice-based approaches.

### Cohorts of prisoners at risk of discrimination

#### Standard 32: Management in the prison system takes a proactive approach towards protecting anyone who is at risk of discrimination due to their age, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, disability or other.

#### Rationale

Some prisoners and staff are at increased risk of discrimination due to their status. With this in mind, the Irish Prison Service should proactively act against any form of discrimination against prisoners or prison staff.

#### Current context

The Public Sector Duty places a legal obligation on public bodies to promote equality, prevent discrimination and protect the human rights of both employees and service users. The Irish Prison Service has been involved in a pilot project with the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) to assess and address specific equality and human rights issues for women in prison and to inform the Irish Prison Service approach to implementing the Public Sector Duty. The project builds on the work undertaken by the Commission in 2016 in the context of the examination of Ireland’s record under the UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Working groups have been established in Limerick female prison and Dóchas Centre with female prisoners and prison staff to undertake an initial assessment of equality and human rights issues for women prisoners with a view to developing an action plan for the Irish Prison Service in order to meet the requirements of Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014. Both working groups report on a periodic basis to a national steering committee chaired by the Director General of the Irish Prison Service.

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642 Ibid.

643 For more on the Public Sector Duty, see the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission website https://www.ihrec.ie/our-work/public-sector-duty/

Indicators for Standard 32

Indicator S32.1: Progress towards implementation of the Public Sector Duty under s42 of the Human Rights and Equality Act across the prison system: The two women’s prisons, the Dóchas Centre and Limerick Female Prison, are currently being used as pilots for the implementation of the Public Sector Duty. These pilot projects are due to be completed by October 2018.

Indicator S32.2: Progress on implementation of strategies for vulnerable cohorts of people in prison:

Older people
- There have been some developments for older people, including plans to reopen the Training Unit to cater for the needs of older prisoners (aged 55+) in 2019.645 The Irish Prison Service and the Probation Service, in conjunction with other services, has committed to finalising the Older Adults in Prison Policy.646

Young people
- The Irish Prison Service and Probation Service Joint Strategic Action Plan 2018–2020647 commits to “develop[ing] innovative responses for specific groups of offenders” including proactive assessments of young adults (18–24) in custody and tailored sentence planning, including reintegration into the community.648

People with disabilities
- There is no strategy specifically targeting people with disabilities. However, the Irish Prison Service has acknowledged a need to cater for physically disabled prisoners.649

LGBT people
- The Irish Prison Service LGBT policy has not yet been published.

Travellers
- The Irish Prison Service Census has piloted an ethnic identifier question in the Dóchas Centre and Castlerea Prison. Training on how to ask this question is being carried out in conjunction with Traveller Rights Organisation, Pavee Point.650 An action to work to identify and improve engagement with Travellers in custody in offence-related interventions is also included by the Irish Prison Service and the Probation Service in their Strategic Plan 2018–2020.651

Actions required

Action 32.1: State bodies including the Prison Service and the Probation Service should ensure the ongoing implementation of the Public Sector Duty.

Action 32.2 A coordinated policy approach to dealing with discrimination (including intersectional discrimination) should be developed by the Irish Prison Service.

646 Irish Prison Service and Probation Service, Strategic Plan 2018–2020, p. 11
647 Ibid, p. 5
648 Ibid, p. 11
649 Information provided by the Irish Prison Service as of the 30th of April 2018
650 http://www.paveepoint.ie/
651 Irish Prison Service and Probation Service, Strategic Plan 2018–2020, p. 11
Spotlight 3:

Women Who Offend

Standard 32.1: A gender-sensitive approach should be adopted across the criminal justice system to respond to the distinct needs of women who offend.

Rationale

This new standard added to PIPS 2018 is guided by the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners (the ‘Bangkok Rules’). Women have a unique set of needs that require a distinct set of responses. As highlighted by the UN Bangkok Rules, “account shall be taken of the distinctive needs of women prisoners” and “providing for such needs in order to accomplish substantial gender equality shall not be regarded as discriminatory”. The same point was reiterated by the late Inspector of Prisons, who stated: “Treating women the same as men is not tantamount to achieving equality of gender.”

The continued growth of the female prison population in Ireland reflects a global trend: the world’s female prison population has increased by 53% since 2000. This compares to 20% for the global male prison population. Some reasons given for this increase include: women being imprisoned as a result of poverty or discrimination; the impact of gender-based violence (a new report by the Prison Reform Trust highlights how domestic abuse is a driver for women’s offending); harsher drug laws; alongside the treatment of female ethnic minorities in criminal justice systems.

There is a key opportunity to change and challenge a culture of sending women to prison for non-violent offences, and address core underlying social issues such as poverty, homelessness, domestic violence and abuse.

Current context

In its preliminary remarks to the Irish State on adult female prison establishments, the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT, 2015) identified that, as women comprise a small proportion of the prison system, “there is a risk that the gender-specific needs of female prisoners will be disregarded”. The Committee outlined some of the factors that should be considered in the treatment of female offenders:

However, it is important that a number of factors is taken into account when dealing with women offenders, including sexual/physical abuse or domestic violence they have suffered before the imprisonment, a high level of mental health-care needs, a high level of drug or alcohol dependency, specific health-care needs of women, their caring responsibilities for their children and/or their families, and the high likelihood of post-release victimisation and abandonment by their families.

The two women’s prisons in Ireland (the Dóchas Centre in Dublin and Limerick Female Prison) are consistently the most overcrowded in the State. Published figures (5th July 2018) show both prisons to be operating above the Inspector of Prisons’ recommended capacity: 133% at the Dóchas Centre and 142% at Limerick Female Prison. On that day, there were 174 females in prison in Ireland. This

652 United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-Custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the ’Bangkok Rules’), Resolution adopted by the General Assembly
https://www.penalreform.org/priorities/women-in-the-criminal-justice-system/international-standards/


656 Ibid

657 Prison Reform Trust (2017) “There’s a reason we’re in trouble” Domestic abuse as a driver for women’s offending


659 Council of Europe (2015) Report to the Government of Ireland on the Visit to Ireland Carried Out by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, CPT/Inf 38, p. 53
https://rm.coe.int/pdf/1680727e23

660 Ibid

661 Irish Prison Service, 2018 Prison Populations, 5th July 2018
The European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT, 2018) outlined the need for gender-sensitive prison management, staffing and accommodation unit holding women has female custodial staff in sufficient numbers at all times”.

Females accounted for 14.5% of all persons committed to prison in 2017, and women made up 24.9% of committals to prison as a result of the non-payment of a court-ordered fine.

At the annual Irish Prison Officers Association (POA) Conference in 2018, the increasing number of women prisoners over the previous six months was identified as an emerging trend.

The European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT, 2018) outlined the need for gender-sensitive monitoring in prisons. In relation to gender-sensitive prison management, staffing and training, the CPT states: “it is crucial that any prison accommodation unit holding women has female custodial staff in sufficient numbers at all times.”

In addition, “the development of more specialised training for staff working with women in prison can be instrumental in addressing their specific needs”.

The Strategic Review of Penal Policy (2014) also recommended that “a new female centred approach” be adopted in the management of female offenders. The Strategic Review of Penal Policy (2014) identified issues such as the lack of appropriate gender-specific community sanctions and the impact that sentencing has on dependents (children or elderly relatives) of female offenders. In this respect, the judiciary has a significant role to play at sentencing stage. This is particularly relevant in the context of the State having ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC) in 1992 and in the context of the ‘best interests’ principle being enshrined in the Constitution following the passing of the children’s referendum in 2012.

In April 2018, the Council of Europe (CoE) adopted a Recommendation on children with imprisoned parents, which states in its basic principles:

Where a custodial sentence is being contemplated, the rights and best interests of any affected children should be taken into consideration and alternatives to detention be used as far as possible and appropriate, especially in the case of a parent who is a primary caregiver.

The importance of pre-sentence reports by the Probation Service prior to the sentence being delivered in court is also relevant here in ensuring that the sentencing judge is made fully aware of the individual’s family circumstances.


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662 See Irish Prison Service, 2017 Prison Populations, 5th July 2017  

https://www.irishprisons.ie/information-centre/publications/annual-reports/

664 Kane, K (2018) ‘Prison capacity now at 92% following “spike” in admissions, POA conference hears’, Irish Examiner, 19th April 2018  

665 European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (2018) Factsheet: Women in Prison, p. 1  
https://rm.coe.int/168077ff14

666 Ibid, p. 6

667 Ibid, p. 7

http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/PB14000244

669 Ibid, p. 11

670 Department of Children and Youth Affairs, The Referendum Relating to Children  

671 Council of Europe Committee of Ministers, Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)5 of the Committee of Ministers to member States concerning children with imprisoned parents  

672 Ibid, Recommendation 2, p. 4  
https://rm.coe.int/draft-recommendation-children-with-imprisoned-parents-12-10-17/168075f421

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L1nFBXzHII
which recognises the need for a distinct approach. However, many of these recommendations have yet to be implemented and the timeline of the Strategy has now passed. The Irish Prison Service and Probation Service's Strategic Plan 2018–2020 identifies an action to ‘develop a range of responses for female offenders to afford them more opportunity and help realise their potential’.

Indicators for Standard 32.1

Indicator S32.1.1: Female prison committal rates and daily imprisonment rates: There were 1,344 female committals during 2017. This compares to 2,937 female committals in 2016. This is a welcome reduction. However, the average number of females in custody was 144, an increase of 2.9% on 2016. Overall, while the number of female committals has decreased (which likely can be attributed to the impact of the Fines (Payment & Recovery) Act 2014), there has been an increase in daily female prison population numbers.

Indicator S32.1.2: Access to and availability of gender-specific community sanctions: In 2017, 16% of all new court referrals to the Probation Service were female. The Probation Service highlights in its Annual Report 2017 the BRIO (Building Recovery Inwards and Outwards) programme, a two-year education and training programme for women who experience dual issues of addiction and criminality, which is based on initial recovery and recidivism interventions. It facilitates 12 women to develop awareness-building skills and become peer workers and trainers. The BRIO programme is due to be evaluated in 2018. In the Joint Probation Service – Irish Prison Service Strategy 2014–2016: An Effective Response to Women Who Offend, a number of commitments were made including: developing women-specific recidivism data; providing a one-stop shop delivering supported accommodation; and developing women-specific community return and community service options. IPRT would welcome further progress reports on these issues.

Indicator S32.1.3: Publication of data and research on women in the criminal justice system: Little progress appears to have been made in the publication of research on women, although the Penal Policy Review Implementation Oversight Group has given an overall grade C for the implementation status of most recommendations related to women.

Indicator S32.1.4: Establishment of a step-down facility/supported accommodation for women upon release: The National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017–2020 committed to the establishment of a step-down facility for women offenders by Quarter 1 of 2018. This has yet to happen despite the announcement by the Minister for Justice and Equality that additional funding would be made available for the step-down unit in Budget 2018. Given the commitment to improving the health and wellbeing of female offenders in the National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017–2020, consideration should be given to applying the gender-specific standards recently published by Public Health England.

675 Irish Prison Service and Probation Service, Strategic Plan 2018–2020, see Actions 3, 3.1–3.7, p. 9
681 Ibid.
682 Ibid.
Part 2: Measuring Progress against the Standards

PROGRESSIVE PRACTICE

Overarching Gender-Specific Principles, 688
Public Health England

1. The whole prison environment should be focused on promoting the mental and physical health and wellbeing of all women in prison.
2. The prison environment for women must be trauma-informed.
3. User involvement should be integrated into the development and delivery of health and wellbeing programmes within the prison.
4. All women in prison should have access to purposeful activity and time out of cell.
5. A structured programme of peer support should be available to all women.
6. Continuity of care for women on release to the community should be prepared for and ensured.

Centres for Women: England and Wales

There is a network of 50 women’s centres in England and Wales where the needs of individuals can be addressed holistically, including access to the following services: counselling and mental health, drug treatment, employment skills, support for women experiencing domestic violence, literacy, CV support, child care and housing assistance. Some of these centres are residential, for example, Willowdene Farm, which has been in existence since 1988. In 2018, the Ministry of Justice announced plans to pilot at least five residential centres for women. 691

Actions required

Action 32.1.1: The judiciary should take into account the ‘best interests’ and ‘voice’ of the child (in accordance with domestic law and international obligations) when sentencing a primary caregiver.

Action 32.1.2: The Probation Service should increase the availability of gender-specific community sanctions on a nationwide basis, and work with the judiciary to promote confidence in these sanctions as a direct alternative to imprisonment.

Action 32.1.3: The Department of Justice and Equality must ensure that all actions outlined in the Joint Probation–Prison Service Strategy 2014–2016: An Effective Response to Women who Offend are fully implemented.

Action 32.1.4: The Department of Justice and Equality must ensure the delivery of a step-down facility or supported accommodation for women leaving prison by the end of 2018. This must be met with a reduction in female prison spaces.

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690 Ibid.

F: Reintegration

Parole system

Standard 33: The parole system is fair, transparent and fully independent of Ministerial control.

Rationale

Individuals who are eligible for parole should be supported to adjust to life on the outside, since imprisonment can lead to institutionalisation. Supporting the individual during sentence and upon release decreases the likelihood of their re-offending and increases public protection. Decisions on parole should be fair and removed from political control.

Current context

At the Parole Board Conference 2018, the Minister for Justice and Equality stated that the Parole Bill 2016 would proceed through report stage over the succeeding weeks. IPRT has raised concerns in relation to the Parole Bill 2016, in particular that the first parole review would take place after 12 years as opposed to the current 7-year mark.

Indicators for Standard 33

Indicator S33.1: The placement of the Parole Board on a statutory footing: This has not happened. While IPRT has long advocated for the Parole Board to be removed from ministerial control and placed on an independent statutory footing, IPRT has deep concerns about some of the content of the current Parole Bill 2016.

Indicator S33.2: Parole Board hearings occur in a timely manner, and outcomes are communicated promptly to parole candidates: It is difficult to ascertain whether parole hearings are occurring in a timely manner, with outcomes communicated promptly to the candidate. While no reference is made to delays in Parole Board hearings in the Parole Board’s Annual Report 2016, in total the caseload for 2016 was 344 with 280 cases carried over.

Actions required

Action 33.1: Legislators should address IPRT’s concerns about the Parole Bill 2016, including reconsideration of the number of years an individual must wait to have his/her first review with the Parole Board.

Action 33.2: Legislators should establish the Parole Board on a statutory footing, removing the Board from ministerial control.

PROGRESSIVE PRACTICE

Parole Decisions, Belgium

The Sentence Implementation Courts in Belgium take a multi-disciplinary approach to parole. The court comprises one judge and two non-judicial assessors who hold a relevant degree (e.g. criminology/law/psychology) and have five years’ experience in social integration in prisons.


**Effective reintegration of prisoners**

**Standard 34:**
All prisoners have comprehensive preparation and structured plans for release. National policy and legislation provides for a structured release system.

**Standard 35:**
Protocols are in place for inter-agency co-ordination in order to ensure the successful reintegration of prisoners on release.

**Rationale**

Reintegration is more than rehabilitation. Successful reintegration means that the individual is reintegrated into all aspects of society including employment, education and community involvement. A recent domestic study highlights the need to implement four types of rehabilitation previously identified; psychological (individual-level change), legal (criminal records and stigma), moral (reparation of harms caused), and social (restoration of full citizenship). The authors concluded:

*In other words, society must meet ex-offenders halfway by providing appropriate structural and criminal justice supports that help desisters to fulfil their potential and experience an authentic sense of social inclusion.*

One particular aspect IPRT would like to focus on is having a criminal convictions history. Having a criminal conviction can act as a significant barrier to reintegration. There are a number of good reasons to wipe the slate clean:

- Maintaining barriers to full civic engagement provides the conditions to create a ‘criminal underclass’, which is contrary to the public safety objective.
- By marginalising this group, society deprives itself of skills while paying substantial costs associated with lack of productivity.
- If there is no opportunity for a fresh start in circumstances where the individual presents no risk, it can diminish life chances and result in ‘disproportionate punishment’.

**Current context**

The importance of reintegration is outlined in the Irish Prison Service's *Strategic Plan 2016–2018*, which states that it will ensure "a rehabilitative organisation which supports positive change, improved resettlement and reintegration opportunities for prisoners through targeted action and inter-agency collaboration and support".

IPRT has highlighted that reintegration should be prioritised in the work of the Probation Service, and that, working in conjunction with the Prison Service, performance indicators could be developed to assess reintegration. Key areas could include securing housing, employment and educational attainment, health, and addressing of substance abuse. In the *Joint Strategic Plan 2018–2020*, the Irish Prison Service and the Probation Service state their commitment to maximising joint working.

The Joint Committee on Justice and Equality (2018) also recommended “an inter-agency approach to release is needed to ensure that housing, employment, and addiction services are available to prisoners upon release”.

Furthermore in response to recommendations made by the *Strategic Review of Penal Policy*, an inter-departmental inter-agency group has been established. At the time of publication, this group published its First Report of the Interagency Group on Penal Policy Recommendations, *Fifth Report of the Implementation Oversight Group to the Minister for Justice and Equality* (see Recommendation 3: Timeline and Milestones).

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702 Irish Prison Service, Strategic Plan 2016–2018, p. 2

703 IPRT (2018) Submission to Inform the Role and Priorities of the Probation Service’s Strategic Plan 2018–2020, pp. 8–9
http://www.iprt.ie/files/Final_IPRT_Submission_to_inform_the_role_and_priorities_of_the_Probation_Service1.pdf

704 Irish Prison Service and Probation Service, Strategic Plan 2018–2020, p. 4


for a Fairer and Safer Ireland. 707 We welcome the issues outlined in the report including the need to track the employment experiences of prisoners on release as well as examining whether rehabilitative interventions by the State are working. Other issues identified in the report are the lack of accommodation upon release, provision of medical cards and income supports that can only be achieved through inter-agency working. The report highlights some examples of existing protocols in place between State agencies.

In relation to spent convictions legislation, the Joint Committee on Justice and Equality708 (2018) called for an urgent review. The Committee highlighted how the current Act was “extremely limited in its application and fails to support rehabilitation of more serious offenders”.709 The current limitations of spent convictions legislation in Ireland continues to act as a barrier to employment for individuals upon release.710

The potential impact of convictions on individuals’ life chances has increased as mandatory vetting has become more widespread. Even where vetting is not required, internet search engines render criminal histories easily accessible to curious third parties. In the other direction, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) and the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) have developed privacy and data protection principles which require states to limit the availability of information about old convictions.711

The authors also highlight how the legislation does not contain any anti-discrimination provision, so that employers can currently discriminate on the basis of a spent conviction.712

As highlighted earlier [Standard 15: Privacy], a new European Union Regulation, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), provides for a right to be forgotten. Further review is needed in order to assess how GDPR and Spent Convictions legislation will work together.

709 Ibid, pp. 58–59
710 See IPRT (2016) Passing of Spent Convictions Legislation a Historic Step for Ireland, but Could Go Much Further http://www.iprt.ie/contents/2856
712 Ibid, p. 8
Part 2: Measuring Progress against the Standards

**PROGRESSIVE PRACTICE**

**Inter-Agency Working: Joint-Agency Response to Crime (J-ARC)**

J-ARC is a joint initiative between An Garda Síochána, the Irish Prison Service and the Probation Service.\(^{714}\) J-ARC has been rolled out in new areas including Waterford, Limerick and Dundalk.\(^{715}\) There is also a new Youth J-ARC for young offenders aged 18–21 in Cork and Dublin. The Department of Education and Tusla are also involved in this programme.\(^{716}\)

The Irish Prison Service is also linked in with INTREO,\(^{717}\) which sees IASIO\(^{718}\) resettlement co-ordinators agree a programme plan with the individual. In terms of housing needs assessment, there is one point of contact in every area. However, while local authorities are engaging in identifying accommodation for those with high risk or need, deficits remain in the provision of access to wraparound services.\(^{719}\)

**Freedom Bakery, Scotland**

Freedom Bakery is a bakery employing individuals currently in prison or recently released.\(^{720}\) Prisoners are provided with training and receive qualifications in baking, making them employable not only in Freedom but in other bakeries. Around 80 businesses buy the Freedom range of breads and pastries.

**Spent Convictions**

In neighbouring jurisdictions, the maximum custodial sentence eligible to become spent is 30 months in Northern Ireland and 48 months in England and Wales, compared to just 12 months in Ireland.\(^{721}\)

**Kickstart**

‘Kickstart’ is a new jobs initiative set up in 2018 by the Probation Service, which matches grants of up to €30,000 to organisations providing employment for people with criminal convictions.\(^{722}\)

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**Actions required**

**Action 34.1:** Legislation and policy must be developed that provides clarity on release and enables greater access to supports upon release.

**Action 34.2:** Legislators should review the spent convictions legislation introduced in 2016 with a view to expanding its application, including provision on anti-discrimination.

**Action required**

**Action 35.1:** Inter-agency co-operation by stakeholders including the Irish Prison Service, the Probation Service and community-based organisations is vital and should be a priority and mandated to ensure successful reintegration.

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\(^{716}\) Information provided by the Irish Prison Service on 30th April 2018

\(^{717}\) Intreo is a single contact point for employment and income supports [https://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Intreo_home.aspx](https://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Intreo_home.aspx)

\(^{718}\) More information here [http://www.iasio.ie/](http://www.iasio.ie/)

\(^{719}\) Information provided by the Irish Prison Service on 30th April 2018


**PIPS 2018 Conclusions: Are we making progress in our penal system?**

The IPRT *Progress in the Penal System* project seeks to drive positive change in Ireland’s penal system through setting standards of best practice and benchmarking progress towards these standards on an annual basis.

Since the publication of PIPS in October 2017, there has been some limited progress towards improvement in our penal system. IPRT’s overall assessment of progress over the last 12 months across each of the 35 standards has found:

- 3 standards: ‘progress’
- 4 standards: ‘regress’
- 10 standards: ‘mixed’
- 13 standards: ‘no change’
- 5 standards: ‘insufficient data’ (to make a full assessment)

The increase in prisoner numbers since the latter half of 2017 is of particular concern, and risks reversing the significant progress achieved by the State since 2011. If prisoner numbers are allowed return to previous levels, Ireland will not pave the way as a leading model of international best penal practice as we believe it can.

To address rising prisoner numbers, the stakeholders we have identified as ‘changemakers’ – the judiciary, probation, State bodies (including education, health, housing), media, and politicians – all have a significant role to play. PIPS aims to inspire these changemakers to work together towards a more effective and humane penal system, one that supports safer and more equal communities.

A continual challenge is the lack of robust data published by State bodies that could better inform research, policy and practice, and expedite improved processes, practices and policies. We welcome the Department of Justice and Equality’s recently published *Data and Research Strategy 2018–2020*, which has the aim of addressing this gap. Without settled consensus across the criminal justice system and beyond on fundamental issues like penal policy creation and sentencing principles it will be difficult to ensure that any positive progress which has been achieved is not lost.

This year’s PIPS report highlights three key issues: (1) the number of people with severe mental illness presenting in our prison system, (2) the increasing numbers of women being detained in prison, with the two women’s prisons being the most overcrowded prisons in the State, and (3) staffing issues that have resulted in closure of schools and workshops, impacting on the daily regimes of prisoners. These issues need to be urgently addressed.

There are many innovative approaches that can be taken to address the range of issues, as identified throughout this report.

Positive developments within the penal system must also be acknowledged. These include: better cross-agency approaches through the initiatives such as the Joint-Agency Response to Crime (J-ARC) and the Interagency Group on Cooperation for a Fairer and Safer Ireland, as well as more structured release of prisoners through the Community Return Programme and Community Support Scheme. These positive programmes should be extended in 2019.

IPRT welcomes the commitment by the Minister for Justice and Equality to introduce legislation to ratify OPCAT by the end of 2018. We would strongly welcome this step forward, and hope that next year it will be one of many positive actions taken that will be reported in *PIPS 2019*.

What is clear is that no individual body can achieve substantial change on its own. The mutual and inter-dependent relationships between criminal justice agencies and government departments mean that the involvement of the identified changemakers is crucial. Change in the penal system is linked to addressing wider social issues such as housing, educational disadvantage and social exclusion, which presents in many forms. It is hoped that this report will inspire many to see their role in advocating for change.

Although the prison system cannot solve these wider social issues, progressive reform can certainly ensure that issues of social exclusion and inequality are not further compounded. Implementation of the short-term actions laid out in this report will support a more humane, just and equal penal system, one that helps build a safer society for all.

This time next year, IPRT will again be assessing progress on achieving the 35 standards set out in *PIPS*. We look forward to working constructively with all stakeholders over the next 12 months towards achieving positive change in the penal system in Ireland.

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Progress in the Penal System (PIPS)
A framework for penal reform (2018)