





Community Return: A Unique Opportunity

July 2015

Gerry McNally The Probation Service, Ireland





- Population 4.6 million people
- Member of European Union 1973
- GDP \$48,000 equiv.
- Imprisonment rate 88/100,000 (Incl. remand) (Aug 2014)
- Cost of imprisonment per prisoner €65,542 in 2013
- 89.5% of sentenced committals in 2013 for 12 months or less.





- The Probation Service
- An agency within the Department of Justice and Equality
- The lead agency in the assessment and supervision of offenders in the community
- Member of CEP (Confederation of European Probation)
- Probation Service in Courts and Prison
- Community Sanctions
- Post-custody supervision





- The Irish Prison Service
- An agency within the Department of Justice and Equality
- 14 Prisons
- 30th November 2011 3697 prisoners in custody under sentence
- Probation Officers in every prison
- Probation Service Post-custody supervision





- •2008 economic downturn
- Reduced income and expenditure
- Expansion plans change
- Opportunity for change and innovation
- 'Never waste a (good?) crisis'





Community Return

Programme for Government

"to review the proposal to build a new prison at Thornton Hall and to consider alternatives, if any, to avoid the costs yet to be incurred by the State"

Thornton Hall Review Group Recommendations

 Early Release Scheme for carefully selected prisoners with requirement to perform community service





Community Return Background

- Community Service/Community Return —'front door' and 'back door' reparation
- Community Return unique and innovative
- Pilot Scheme 2011-12
- Project Oversight Group and Co-located Team
- Joint Service Strategic Action Plan
- Expansion of Community Return





Eligibility

- 1 to 8 years
- Half sentence served
- Positive Engagement
- Series of Assessments





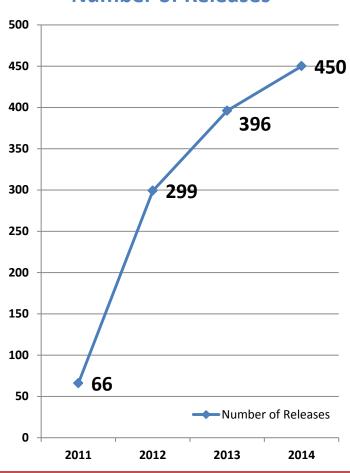
Conditions

- 2/3 work days each week
- Weeks required calculated and clear
- Two absences
- Conditional Release

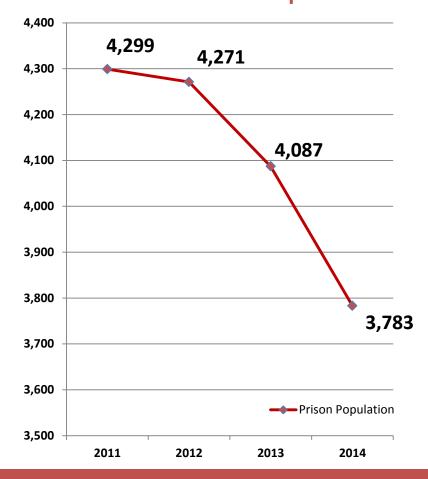




Number of Releases



Prison Population





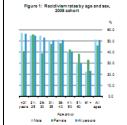


Recidivism

- Central Statistics Office/Irish Prison Service study
- Recidivism rate of 51% within 3 years
- 33% re-offended within 6 months
- 40.4% offended within 12 months



17 December 2013



Published by the Central Statistics Office, Ireland.

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Crine Statistics

General queries

Prison Recidivism

Table 1.1 Offender numbers classified by whether there
was a re-offence within three years, 2008 cohort

	Re-offence within three years			Recidivism ¹ rate
	Yes	No	Total	%
Total offenders	2,802	2,687	5,489	51.0
Sex				
Male	2.588	2.415	4.983	51.5
Female	234	272	508	46.2
All persons age group				
<21 years	379	288	667	56.8
21-25	848	692	1,540	55.1
28-30	599	525	1,124	53.3
31-35	383	373	756	50.7
38-40	289	257	528	51.1
41-50	253	371	624	40.5
51-60	56	131	187	29.9
61 +	15	50	65	23.1

See Background Not

Just over 50% re-offended within 3 years

In 2008, 5,489 individuals (cases) were released from the custody of the Irish Prison Service. Of these, 2,802 (51.0%) re-offended within a three-year period. The re-offending rates (reciditivity) differed significantly when considering age, sex and the initial offence for which the offence was imprisoned (imprisonment offence). See tables I and I.1.

Rate comparison 2007 and 2008

The recorded recidivism rate in 2008 was 51.0%, a decrease of 4.3% from the 55.3% recorded in 2007. This fall is also visible, when considering the demographics of offenders. Male re-offending fell from 55.5% to 51.5% between 2007 and 2008 while female re-offending rates fell from 49.7% to 46.2%. See puble 1.

A similar pattern of decrease in recidivism rates was observed across all aggroups, with the smallest decrease (-0.7%) in the 36-40 year age group.

Recidivism fell in most offence groups between 2007 and 2008. However, rises were observed for groups including *Group 10 Controlled Drug Offences* where rates rose from 43.8% to 49.0%.

This release is a study of individuals who were released from the custody of the Irish Prison Service in the year 2008 (the 2008 cohort), and their subsequent levels of re-offending (which is termed recidivism, and is based on first subsequent conviction).

Please see the Background Notes for detailed information on how recidivism is defined (certain road traffic offences are not included in the definition); the scope and extent of this study; and how these figures were produced.

For more information, contact Tim Linehan at 021 453 5264 or Tricia Brew on 021 453 5490.





Evaluation of Community Return

- To assess operation and effectiveness of Programme
- Sample population of 761 persons

Community Return: A Descriptive Evaluation of the first 20 months 2011-13 (November 2014). Report available at www.probation.ie

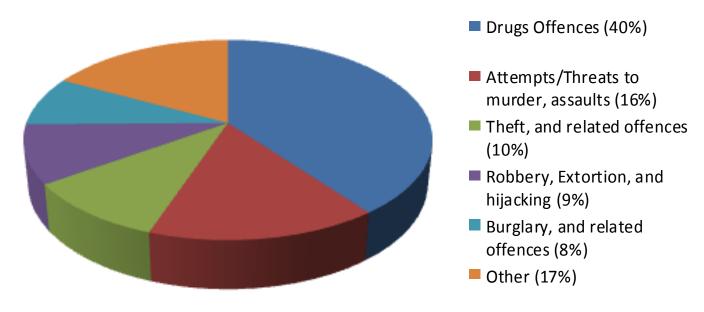




Statistics



Offence Types



Offence types of Community Return participants



Statistics



Table 3: Community Return Population

Table 4: Sentenced Prison Population

Location	Number	Percent	Location	Number	Percent
Dublin	329	43%	Dublin	1252	40%
Munster	245	32%	Munster	839	27%
Rest of Leinster	144	19%	Rest of Leinster	669	21%
Connacht/Ulster	43	6%	Connacht/Ulster	363	12%
Total	761	100%	Total	3123	100%





Compliance

- 89% compliance rate
- Main reason for breach is for 2nd absence
- Participant compliance attributed to a desire to avoid returning to prison and
- secondary motivational factors such as participant enjoyment of the work experience, appreciation of early release or, a sense of commitment to the Community Return contract.
- Improved resettlement process and outcomes. (Probation Supervisors)





Compliance

- Structure and routine aided re-integration, work ethic and self-esteem developed, their positive profile in working in the community and the learning of work skills transferable to employment.
- keeping occupied, providing positive supports and a starting point to build on, particularly in the early stages after release when particularly vulnerable to relapse to anti-social behaviour, companions and offending. (Participants)





Outputs and Outcomes

- 9,580 weeks of Community Return completed
- €1.8 million (euro) worth of unpaid work for the community
- Enhanced pre-release education and rehabilitation participation
- Reduction in prison population:
- 30th November 2011 3697 prisoners in custody under sentence
- 28th November 2014 3204 prisoners in custody under sentence





Re-imprisonment Rates Community Return Participants

- 232 completions released in first year of scheme tracked to end of 2013 in the evaluation study (2014)
- 20 persons returned to prison on new offence and sentence
- 6 of these were as a result of nonpayment of court ordered fine
- 91% had not returned to custody







Recommendations

- Further Develop of Assessment Process
- Engage with Department of Social Protection required to ensure participants can access payments
- Improve work site numbers and proximity
- Better State, Community and Voluntary agencies partnership and co-ordination for improved results
- More pre-release preparation
- Increase participant numbers





July 2015

- 1409 Participants since inception
- 163 breach/return to custody (11.5%)
- Almost 89% compliance





SUPERVISORS FEEDBACK

Very co-operative, generally better workers than those referred from the Courts, they take direction, turn up on time, good example to others.









Views of Probation Officers

- Compliance strongly linked to desire not to go back to prison
- Other motivational factors include enjoyment of work experience, appreciation of early release and sense of commitment to the scheme





Views of Prison Service

- Scheme encourages prisoners to engage in therapeutic programmes while in prison
- Offers a significant incentive to behave and make positive steps while in custody













Participant Feedback

Benefits include

- Structure and Routine
- Work ethic and self esteem
- Work skills
- Helps them stay out of trouble

Challenges include

- Strictness of signing on conditions
- Access to social welfare payments
- Time and Cost





Words from a participant and a supervisor





Thornton Hall











Thornton Hall













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