



**An  
Phríomh-Oifig  
Staidrimh**

Central  
Statistics  
Office

# **Standard SIMS Report: Prison Re-Offending**



# Single Integrated Metadata Structure (SIMS) Report

For

## Prison Re-Offending

This documentation applies to the reporting period:  
**2016-2020**

Last edited: 11/05/2023



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## 2. Introduction

Measuring prison re-offending is designed to show the extent to which a released prisoner re-offends after receiving their custodial sanction from the Irish justice system. The published statistics are used by many different parts of the justice system in policy formulation related to crime and crime prevention. More recently important methodological updates have refined the estimates to measure custodial re-offending and fine sentence re-offending separately (from 2011 onwards).

## 3. Contact

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## 4. Metadata Update

### 4.1. Metadata last certified

04/04/2023

### 4.2. Metadata last posted

16/04/2023

### 4.3. Metadata last update

04/04/2023



## 5. Statistical Presentation

### 5.1. Data Description

The principal statistics published is the rate of re-offending for the released prisoners each year

#### Statistics Under Reservation

The publication by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) of Recorded Crime statistics is wholly dependent on the provision of PULSE data by An Garda Síochána (AGS). As users are aware, there has been a number of data quality issues identified in relation to PULSE data.

The CSO recognises that the deferral of these important statistics results in an information gap and is a source of frustration to users. The CSO has taken the decision to resume publication of Recorded Crime statistics under a new category "Under Reservation". This categorisation indicates that the quality of these statistics do not meet the standards required of official statistics published by the CSO.

For further information see our statistics under reservation page:

<https://www.cso.ie/en/methods/crime/statisticsunderreservationfaqs/>

### 5.2. Classification System

- Age
- Sex
- Offense type
- Re-offense type
- County of address
- Custodial Period prior to release.

. The following outcomes have been classified for this purpose under either custodial or non-custodial sanction.

Classification	Court Outcome Description
Custodial	Detention Detention - Consecutive Detention - Part Suspended Juvenile Detention between the ages of 12 - 17 yrs Juvenile Detention Consecutive Sentence 12 -17 yrs Imprisonment Imprisonment - Consecutive Imprisonment - Consecutive & Part Suspended Imprisonment - Part Suspended Imprisonment in Absence Imprisonment in Absence - Consecutive Remand on Continuing Bail
Non-Custodial	Disqualification - FOR LIFE Detention - Suspended Conviction / Probation Act Orders Dismiss Probation Act 1(2) Disqualification Conviction / Probation Act Orders Forthwith Fine Fine



Classification	Court Outcome Description
	Imprisonment - Suspended Juvenile Fine Order Community Service Order Strike Out Community Service Order - Consecutive Unusual Result 'Withdrawn Imprisonment - Consecutive & Suspended Detention - Consecutive & Consecutive & Suspended

### Custodial/Non-custodial court outcomes

For the purposes of showing re-offending sanctions in this publication, court outcomes have been classified to provide aggregate estimates of either a custodial or non-custodial reprimand. The following outcomes have been classified for this purpose under either custodial or non-custodial sanction.

ICCSQ Offence Groups		
01	Homicide Offences	Murder Manslaughter Infanticide Manslaughter (traffic fatality) Dangerous driving causing death
02	Sexual Offences	Rape of a male or female Rape Section 4 Unlawful carnal knowledge/Criminal law (Sexual Offences Act) 2006 Buggery Sexual offence involving mentally impaired person Aggravated sexual assault Sexual Assault Incest Child pornography offences Child pornography – obstruction of warrant Gross indecency
03	Attempts or Threats to Murder, Assaults, Harassments and Related Offences	Murder – attempt Threat to kill or cause serious harm Assault causing harm Poisoning Assault or obstruction of Garda/official, resisting arrest Minor assault Coercion Harassment, stalking, threats Demanding payment of debt causing alarm Housing Act Menacing phone calls Incitement to hatred offences
04	Dangerous or Negligent Acts	Dangerous driving causing serious bodily harm Driving/In charge of a vehicle while over legal alcohol limit



ICCSQ Offence Groups		
		Driving/In charge of a vehicle while under the influence of drugs Endangerment with potential for serious harm or death Abandoning a child, child neglect and cruelty Unseaworthy/dangerous use of a boat or ship False alarm/interference with aircraft or air transport facilities Endangering traffic offences
05	Kidnapping and Related Offences	False imprisonment Abduction of person under 16 years of age Human trafficking offences
06	Robbery, Extortion and Hijacking Offences	Robbery of an establishment or institution Robbery of cash of goods in transit Robbery from the person Blackmail or extortion Carjacking, hijacking/unlawful seizure of aircraft/vessel
07	Burglary and Related Offences	Aggravated burglary Burglary (not aggravated) Possession of an article (with intent to burgle, steal, demand)
08	Theft and Related Offences	Theft/Unauthorised taking of a vehicle Interfering with vehicle (with intent to steal item or vehicle) Theft from person Theft from shop Theft from vehicle Theft/Unauthorised taking of a pedal cycle Theft of, or interference with, mail Handling or possession of stolen property Theft of other property
09	Fraud, Deception and Related Offences	Fraud, deception, false pretence offences Forging an instrument to defraud Possession of an article for use in fraud, deception or extortion Falsification of accounts Offences under the Companies Act Offences under the Investment Intermediaries Act Offences under the Stock Exchange Act Money laundering Embezzlement Fraud against the European Union Importation/Sale/Supply of tobacco Counterfeiting notes and coins Counterfeiting of goods Bad debts criminal (Debtors Ireland) Corruption (involving public office holder)
10	Controlled Drug Offences	Importation of drugs Cultivation or manufacture of drugs Possession of drugs for sale or supply





ICCSQ Offence Groups		
		Possession of drugs for personal use Forged or altered prescription offences Obstruction under the Drugs Act
11	Weapons and Explosives Offences	Causing an explosion Making of explosives Possession of explosives Chemical weapons offences Discharging a firearm Possession of a firearm Possession of offensive weapons (not firearms) Fireworks offences (for sale, igniting etc.)
12	Damage to Property and to the Environment	Arson Criminal damage (not arson) Litter offences
13	Public Order and Other Social Code Offences	Affray/Riot/Violent disorder Public order offences Drunkenness offences Air rage-disruptive or drunken behaviour on aircraft Forcible entry and occupation (not burglary) Trespass on lands or enclosed areas Liquor licensing offences Registered clubs offences Special restaurant offences Provision of intoxicating liquor to under 18 year olds Purchase or consumption of alcohol by under 18 year olds Sale of intoxicating liquor to under 18 year olds Brothel keeping Organisation of prostitution Prostitution, including soliciting etc. Offences under the Betting Acts Collecting money without permit, unauthorised collection Offences under Gaming and Lotteries Acts Permit/License offences for casual/street trading Allowing a child (under 16 years) to beg Bigamy Bestiality Indecency Begging
14	Road and Traffic Offences (NEC)	Driving licence-failure to have, produce etc. Insurance-failure to have, produce, display etc. No tax, non-display of tax, unregistered vehicle etc. Misuse of Trade Licence Misuse of trailers, weight and other offences Obstruction under road traffic acts Other road offences Road transport – carriage of goods offences Public service vehicle offences Light rail offences (Luas)



ICCSQ Offence Groups		
15	Offences against Government, Justice Procedures and Organisation of Crime	Treason Breaches of Offences Against the State Acts Breaches of Official Secrets Act Impersonating member of An Garda Síochána Electoral offences including personation Public mischief-annoying phone calls, wasting police time Criminal Assets Bureau offences (organised crime) Conspiracy to commit a crime Perjury Interfering with a jury (embracery) Assisting offenders Public mischief, pervert course of justice, conceal offence Escape or help to escape from custody Prison offences Breach of Domestic Violence Order (protection, safety, barring) Breach of order under Family Law Act Breach of bail Failure to comply under Sex Offenders Act Other failure to comply with court order, jury summons, warrant etc.

#### Regional Breakdown of Results

- County
- NUTS 2

### 5.3. Sector Coverage

Those placed on Probation Orders, and Community Service Orders.

### 5.4. Statistical Concepts and definitions

#### Re-offending

For this report there are two conditions which must be met in order for an individual to be classified as a re-offender:

1. The individual must commit a recorded incident within a defined period of the date of their Probation Order. The length of the period considered varies for different cohorts. The period is *1 year for the 2017 cohort*.
2. There must be a conviction for this incident within *two* years of the date on which the incident was recorded.

For example, if a person was placed on a Probation or Community Service Order on December 31st, 2017 and committed an offence on the December 31st, 2018, they would be considered as having reoffended if court proceedings leading to a conviction were concluded on or before December 31st, 2019.

#### Exclusions

When considering re-offending, certain offence types are excluded. These offences include mainly traffic offences and some animal welfare offences. A complete list is available on request.



### **Probation type**

This report considers three types of probation: Probation Orders, Community Service Orders and Post Release Supervision Orders.

### **Crime recording**

Incidents reported, or which become known to members of An Garda Síochána, are recorded when, on the balance of probability, a Garda determines that a criminal offence defined by law has taken place, and there is no credible evidence to the contrary. If it is subsequently determined that a criminal incident did not take place, the record is invalidated and is not counted in the statistics. If a person makes a report and subsequently withdraws it, then this too is invalidated unless there is evidence to suggest that, by reasonable probability, the offence has taken place.

For criminal incidents where victim confirmation is required (e.g. assault, fraud), a criminal incident is recorded only where the victim confirms the incident or where there is evidence to suggest that by reasonable probability it occurred.

### **Crime Classification**

A criminal incident is classified as a particular offence type at the initial recording of that incident. However, upon investigation, it may later become apparent that an alternative offence type should be used. In this event, the record is amended to reflect this. Re-classification based on court proceedings only occurs in relation to homicide offences. The classification is used in this publication is the ICCSq.

### **Custodial/Non-custodial court outcomes**

For the purposes of showing re-offending sanctions in this publication, court outcomes have been classified to provide aggregate estimates of either a custodial or non-custodial reprimand. The following outcomes have been classified for this purpose under either custodial or no-custodial sanction.

### **Methodological updates**

CSO's publication of prison related re-offending from 2020 onwards has been adjusted to include some methodological updates.

Further details of these are available at: [Prison Re-offending Estimates 2011-2017 Technical Note](#) and [Prison Re-offending Estimates 2011 - 2018 Methodological Updates](#).

There are four key changes that have taken place:

1. The release date of individuals now incorporates early release dates to measure the time periods to re-offending incidents. Early release takes place when an individual receives a reduction in their custodial period and is released earlier than the court sentence they received. Historically, only the courts custodial release date was used to calculate periods to re-offending incidents. Incorporating the early release data has resulted in:
  - A more accurate calculation of the period between physical release and re-offence.
  - A more accurate determination of the individual's year of release in cases where early release takes place in a different reference year to the court allocated release date. Table 8.1 below shows the changes between using the court reference date and the adjusted release date that uses the updated information from the prison service.
2. A re-committal to prison by a released individual during the re-offending periods (three and one year) has now been included as a re-offending indicator in addition to the existing Garda PULSE identifiers of incidents and convictions. It has resulted in:
  - A more consistent re-offending indicator to measure re-offending.
  - More accurate measure of the time to the 1<sup>st</sup> re-offending incident (For example in 2017 an additional 214 custodial re-offenders (8%) were identified as re-offenders by being re-committed to custody in the reference period).
3. Prison related re-offending is now separated into custodial and fine sentence re-offending indicators. The update aims to provide a clearer indicator of re-offending related to two different forms of sanction. "Custodial / Prison re-offending" indicators are focused on individuals who have served



custodial sentences while fine sentence related re-offending is mainly related to non-custodial reprimands.

4. Offences linked to Road and Traffic related incidents that are dealt with through the courts (and outside of the penalty points system) that were traditionally excluded from the measurement of re-offending have now been included as a qualifying re-offending offence.

CSO's publication of prison related re-offending from 2021 onwards has been adjusted to include some further methodological updates. More details are available at : [Prison Re-offending Statistics 2011-2018 Methodological Updates](#)

## 5.5. Statistical Unit

- Persons released each year
- Number of releases each year

The units differ when a person can receive more than one release in a year

## 5.6. Statistical Population

The population of interest is all prisoners / fined individuals who are released by the IPS each year

## 5.7. Reference Area

Republic of Ireland

## 5.8. Time Coverage

2008-2020

## 5.9. Base period

Not applicable.

## 6. Unit of Measure

- Number of Persons released each year
- Number of releases each year

## 7. Reference Period

2020

## 8. Institutional Mandate

Not applicable.

### 8.1. Legal Acts and other agreements

Not applicable.

### 8.2. Data Sharing

Prison release data is provided to the CSO for each reference year. This data is used with PULSE data from the Garda to establish re-offences



## 9. Confidentiality

### 9.1. Confidentiality – policy

All information supplied to the CSO is treated as strictly confidential. The Statistics Act, 1993 sets stringent confidentiality standards: Information collected may be used only for statistical purposes, and no details that might be related to an identifiable person or business undertaking may be divulged to any other government department or body.

These national statistical confidentiality provisions are reinforced by the following EU legislation: Council Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 on European statistics for data collected for EU statistical purposes. Further details are outlined in the CSO's Code of Practice on Statistical Confidentiality.

For more information on the CSO confidentiality policy please visit:

<https://www.cso.ie/en/aboutus/lgdp/csodatapolicies/statisticalconfidentiality/>

### 9.2. Confidentiality – data treatment

Data provided for prison re-offending is stored in line with CSO procedures on data protection

## 10. Release Policy

### 10.1. Release Calendar

The date of dissemination of all statistics released by CSO can be found in the Release Calendar published in CSO.ie. This calendar is regularly updated.

### 10.2. Release calendar access

The release calendar can be accessed via the CSO website, [www.cso.ie](http://www.cso.ie), or directly from this link:

<https://www.cso.ie/en/csolatestnews/releasecalendar>

### 10.3. User access

In accordance with Principle 6 of the European Statistics Code of Practice all users of CSO statistics have equal access via the CSO website at the same time of 11 am. Any privileged pre-release access to any outside user is limited, controlled and publicised. In the event that leaks occur, pre-release arrangements are revised so as to ensure impartiality.

The CSO recognises that in very limited circumstances a business need for pre-release access may be substantiated. Any form of pre-release access is a privilege and a strict CSO pre-release access policy is adhered to for these special requests. The full pre-release access policy can be accessed at

<https://www.cso.ie/en/aboutus/lgdp/csodatapolicies/csopolicyonpre-releaseaccess/>

The various results are published nationally in statistical release format as well as on the CSO website ([www.cso.ie](http://www.cso.ie)). Selected extracts from the results are posted on the CSO's data dissemination database, PxStat.

## 11. Frequency of Dissemination

Annual



## 12. Accessibility and clarity

### 12.1. News release

The most recent press release relating to Prison Re-Offending can be found at: <https://www.cso.ie/en/csolatestnews/pressreleases/2022pressreleases/presstatementprisonre-offending2020/>

### 12.2. Publications

The most recent Prison Re-Offending release is available from the CSO website at [https://www.cso.ie/en/statistics/crimeandjustice/prison\\_recidivism/](https://www.cso.ie/en/statistics/crimeandjustice/prison_recidivism/)

### 12.3. Online database

Prison Re-Offending tables are available on the CSO dissemination database PxStat. They can be accessed directly from the following link: <https://data.cso.ie/product/pros>

#### 12.3.1. AC 1. Data tables - consultations

The total number of consultations to the release for the period 01/01/2021 to 02/11/2021 was 8,054 hits, out of which 2,161 were unique hits.

### 12.4. Micro-data Access

Not applicable.

### 12.5. Other

Ad-hoc reports provided when requested to IPS and Department of Justice

#### 12.5.1. AC2. Metadata consultations

Not calculated.

### 12.6. Documentation on Methodology

Further information on the Methodology used to compile the Prison Re-Offending release can be found in the CSO's methods page for the release, directly from these links:

<https://www.cso.ie/en/methods/crime/prisonre-offendingstatistics/>  
<https://www.cso.ie/en/methods/crime/methodologydocuments/>

#### 12.6.1. AC3 – Metadata completeness – rate

Not calculated.

### 12.7. Quality Documentation

For more information and documentation on the quality associated with this release please refer to the CSO's methods page: <https://www.cso.ie/en/methods/crime/prisonre-offendingstatistics/>



## 13. Quality Management

### 13.1. Quality Assurance

#### Quality Management Framework

The CSO avails of an office wide Quality Management Framework (QMF). This framework allows all CSO processes and outputs to meet the required standard as set out in the European Statistics Code of Practice (ESCOP). The QMF foundations are based on establishing the UNECE's Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM) as the operating statistical production model to achieve a standardised approach to Quality Management. All and any changes implemented to CSO processes and outputs require adherence to the QMF.

### 13.2. Quality Assessment

The CSO conducts self-assessment reviews on all their published processes on an annual basis. The last iteration of this review carried out in 2022 identified the need for a more contemporary indicator of re-offending which would be able to complement the existing publications on re-offending that are being published. The development of these indicators has started in 2023.

## 14. Relevance

### 14.1. User Needs

Measuring prison re-offending helps policy makers measure and understand how to reduce crime. The CSO carries out regular consultations with the following groups:

- Interdepartmental group on a fairer and safer Ireland.
- Crime and Migration Statistics User Information Group (CMUIG)

#### 14.1.1. Main National Users

Department of Justice, Irish Prison Service (IPS). The Irish probation service, Public

#### 14.1.2. Principal External Users

Not applicable.

### 14.2. User Satisfaction

No user satisfaction survey has been conducted.

### 14.3. Data Completeness

Not applicable.

#### 14.3.1. Data Completeness rate

Not applicable.

## 15. Accuracy and reliability

### 15.1. Overall accuracy

Recorded crime statistics are considered statistics under reservation. Please refer to <https://www.cso.ie/en/methods/crime/statisticsunderreservationfaqs/> for more information.



## **15.2. Sampling Error**

Sampling error is not used for prison re-offending statistics. Bias is present as not all re-offending is captured by the legal process

### **15.2.1. A1. Sampling error indicator**

Not applicable

## **15.3. Non-sampling Error**

Not applicable.

### **15.3.1. Coverage error**

Not applicable.

#### **15.3.1.1. A2. Over coverage rate**

Not applicable.

#### **15.3.1.2. A3. Common units – proportion**

Not applicable.

### **15.3.2. Measurement error**

Measurement error was identified when fine sentence re-offending was separated from **prison** re-offending estimates. Data on Fine sentences provided by the IPS in the release datasets was included with prison release and re-offending estimates. Most individuals who received fine sentences during the legal process spent no time in custody and are not now considered to be suitable to include in custodial related re-offending estimates.

### **15.3.3. Non-Response Error**

Not applicable.

#### **15.3.3.1. Unit non-response rate**

Not applicable.

#### **15.3.3.2. Item non-response rate**

Not applicable.

### **15.3.4. Processing error**

Cross validation of variables used for reducing and identifying coding errors

### **15.3.5. Model assumption error**

Not applicable.





## 16. Timeliness and punctuality

### 16.1. Timeliness

The current timeliness for publication is 2 years after the end of the reference period due to the late availability of data for analysis. Improved communications with data providers will enable more recent years to be published shortly.

#### 16.1.1. TP1. Time lag – First results

No provisional results are published

#### 16.1.2. TP2. Time lag – Final results

Currently +2 years

3- year prison re-offending published for reference year 2016

1-year prison re-offending published for reference year 2020

### 16.2. Punctuality

The Prison Re-Offending release is published in accordance with the date specified in the CSO's advance release calendar.

#### 16.2.1. TP3. Punctuality – Punctuality - delivery and publication

0 days.

## 17. Comparability

### 17.1. Comparability – Geographical

Re-offending estimates are broadly in line with international comparison

Non- standard methodology internationally limits comparability. These are:

- Different reference periods for time to re-offend
- Different custodial and sanction concepts

#### 17.1.1. CCI. Asymmetry for mirror flow statistics

Not applicable.

### 17.2. Comparability over time

There are no known breaks in time series.

#### 17.2.1. Length of Comparable Time series

9 Years

### 17.3. Coherence – cross domain

Not applicable.



### **17.3.1. Coherence – Sub annual and annual statistics**

Not applicable

### **17.3.2. Coherence with National Accounts**

Not applicable

### **17.4. Coherence – internal**

Not applicable.

## **18. Cost and Burden**

Estimates of Cost and Burden can be obtained from the Response Burden Barometer <https://www.cso.ie/en/statistics/enterprisestatistics/responseburdenbarometer/>

Survey specific information is available via CSO's dissemination database PxStat. <https://data.cso.ie/product/RBB>

## **19. Data Revision**

### **19.1. Data Revision Policy**

Published statistics are subject to correction and revision for a variety of reasons. The most common reasons include the receipt of additional information (for example, late survey responses) and updated seasonal factors. Occasional revisions also occur as a result of changes to definitions, methodology, classifications and general updating of statistical series.

It is recognised internationally that the existence of a sound revisions policy maintains credibility in official statistics. The CSO General Revisions Policy, which details how revisions should be managed and communicated to users, outlines the three main types of revisions:

- Planned Routine Revisions
- Planned Major Revisions
- Unplanned Revisions.

One reason for unplanned revisions occurring can be when errors are detected after publication. The 'CSO Error Correction Policy – How to deal with Publication Errors' outlines the steps taken when these errors are detected. As required under Principle 6.3 of the European Statistics Code of Practice, errors detected in published statistics are corrected at the earliest possible date and users are informed. An important step in the process is the documentation and analysis of errors that have occurred and their causes. This allows the CSO to take measures preventing similar errors from occurring in the future and uniformity in dealing with them when they do.

The data revision policy that CSO statistics adheres to can be found via the following link: <https://www.cso.ie/en/methods/quality/treatmentofrevisions/>

### **19.2. Data Revision Practice**

Overlaps of years are included when significant revisions take place. A separate technical note is also published to explain the changes

There were no revisions for 2016 / 2020 reference periods.



### 19.2.1. Data Revision – Average size

Not applicable.

## 20. Statistical processing

### 20.1. Source Data

There are three main administrative data sources used for the creation of the Prison Re-Offending release:

- Irish prison service (IPS) release data
- Garda PULSE data
- Courts Service data

#### 20.1.1. Population and sampling frame

The number of released prisoners each year

#### 20.1.2. Sampling design

Not applicable.

#### 20.1.3. Survey size

Not applicable.

#### 20.1.4. Survey technique

Secure datasets containing information on prison releases and offences is transferred to the CSO each year using secure data transfer.

### 20.2. Frequency of data collection

Annual.

### 20.3. Data Collection

Considerable challenges arise in documenting the quality of prison release data and PULSE data. At present it is not possible to systematically store quality measurement of variables provided regularly by the IPS and PULSE.

#### 20.3.1. Type of Survey/Process

Administrative data process.

#### 20.3.2. Questionnaire (including explanations)

No questionnaire is currently used to compile prison re-offending statistics by the CSO.

#### 20.3.3. Survey Participation

No participation is currently required to compile the statistics on reoffending



#### **20.3.4. Data Capture**

Data is collected in Excel and manipulated using the SAS statistical software. Metadata is then identified and managed through the Colectica suite of products.

- Excel
- Colectica Designer / Repository
- SAS

#### **20.4. Data Validation**

Extensive consistency checks between variables provided by the IPS and PULSE were used to validate the consistency of variables provided. In addition, the variables of fundamental value were validated with the IPS for quality

#### **20.5. Data Compilation**

Statistical outputs were compiled from the population of prison releases using SAS.

Extensive data mining techniques are used to establish a valid dataset of prison re-offending. This includes:

- Deriving variables related to release date / prison term / 3 year and 1 year re-offending indicators
- SAS / Exorbyte / Excel

Prison release data is matched to Garda PULSE data for each released prisoner. The prisoner is then identified as a re-offender if a valid incident from Garda data is present. The characteristics of the prisoner (Age / gender / offence type) are then used to describe the reoffending population. Data matching software is used to merge the two data sources and identify links to enable re-offending indicators

##### **20.5.1. Imputation (for Non-Response or Incomplete Data Sets)**

Missing data is included in published outputs as missing when significant.

###### **20.5.1.1. A7. Imputation rate**

Not calculated.

##### **20.5.2. Grossing and Weighting**

Grossing is not currently used in prison re-offending statistics.

#### **20.6. Adjustment**

Not applicable

##### **20.6.1. Seasonal Adjustment**

Not applicable

## **21. Comment**