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Review of the Programme of Work and Training in the Irish Prison Service

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IGEES

Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service

Executive Summary

- Work and vocational training forms a vital component of the rehabilitation of prisoners, with training activities aiming to give as much employment as possible in prison and providing opportunities to acquire skills that help secure employment on release. Work and training fulfils a dual function in also providing essential services to the prison estate.
- A distinction exists between delivery of education and delivery of work and training in the Irish Prison Service (IPS). The former is delivered through a partnership model between the IPS and the Education and Training Board Ireland (ETBI). Work and training, on the other hand, is staffed and funded by IPS.
- Policy development in recent years, including the introduction of the Criminal Justice (Spent Convictions and Certain Disclosures) Act 2016 and the recent 'Working to Change: Social Enterprise and Employment Strategy 2021-2023', have placed an increased emphasis on the fundamental role of employment in breaking the cycle of re-offending.
- Against that background, this paper offers a timely review of the effectiveness of the work and training programme in delivering on its mission to provide opportunities for prison leavers to secure employment on release.
- This paper was produced using desk based analysis of IPS policies, IPS data and IASIO GATE Service data, and also interviews with a cross-section of key stakeholders including a sample of each of the following groups: men and women in custody, Chief Officers in Work and Training, IASIO GATE Service staff, a Department of Justice 'Working to Change' Strategy representative, Prison Officer Association (POA), and relevant staff across IPS Headquarters.
- The paper outlines the model of delivery of Work and Training and examines the labour market relevance of the programme of training available. IASIO GATE Service data illustrates employment, training and education outcomes for prisoners engaged with the GATE Service from 2016 to 2020. Key stakeholder perceptions of the efficiency and effectiveness of the Work and Training Programme are also considered, followed by a review of good practice employed in other jurisdictions. Finally, the paper includes recommendations on addressing data gaps, measuring performance and best practice from other jurisdictions on aligning delivery to labour market demand.

Key Findings

- (i) In 2020, costs associated with Work and Training, including staffing costs, gratuities and consumables, accounted for **€23.85 million, or 5.8% of the IPS budget.**
- (ii) Approximately **30% of the prison population take part in Work and Training** at any given time, though this is not the only structured activity available in prisons.
- (iii) There are data gaps that hinder a comprehensive evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of Work and Training. **It is recommended that the Irish Prison Service put in place measures to ensure the systematic and centralised collation of Prisoner IDs for all persons engaged in work and training; work and training activities attended; duration of engagement; and accreditation detail, where relevant.** Furthermore, a standardised approach to data collection should be defined and communicated in order to ensure data is accurate and comparable across the prison estate. A follow-up review of the effectiveness and efficiency of Work and Training in Prisons should be commenced once the data gaps identified during this research have been addressed.
- (iv) The **integration of Work and Training data with that currently captured on the Prisoner Education Management System (PEMS)** would serve to provide a complete view of prisoner engagement in accredited and/or structured activity while in custody.
- (v) Previous analysis of prisoner outcomes, based on linked administrative data, demonstrates the potential policy insights to be achieved through the inclusion of IPS data in the National Data Infrastructure (NDI). **IPS should explore options to leverage existing administrative data through the NDI led by the CSO. Furthermore, the inclusion of a Work and Training indicator in the Prison Re-Offending Series published by the CSO would make it possible to explore the potential impact of engagement in Work and Training on recidivism.**
- (vi) In the absence of data on outcomes for all prisoners released from custody, IASIO GATE Service data was used to identify outcomes for those who engaged with the service prior to release. **Training placements were the most common point of referral for prisoners engaged with the GATE Service,** followed by employment and education placements. **The Construction Sector was the most common sector of employment for prisoners referred to the GATE Service. Most prisoner leavers referred to employment were placed on Community Employment (CE) Schemes or CE Drug Rehabilitation Schemes,** which offer part time and temporary placements for people who have been out of the labour market.
- (vii) International evidence points to the value of aligning vocational training in prisons to labour market demand. **It is recommended that IPS leverage labour market intelligence to ensure the work and training programme in prisons is flexible and responsive to labour**

market need, while also taking account of the educational and skills disadvantage and limited employment history often experienced by people in custody.

- (viii) The operating framework underpinning Work and Training would need to support a shift toward creating a programme that is flexible and responsive to the labour market. There is **scope for greater integration and alignment of the Work and Training function delivered by IPS and the Prison Education Service delivered by ETBs to provide a programme of education and skills that is flexible and responsive to labour market demand**, and maximises progression opportunities for prison leavers. Furthermore, the recent engagements with SOLAS, as a provider of a range of Further Education and Training (FET) programmes that are responsive to skills demand, marks a positive step towards improved progression pathways for prisoners.
- (ix) **There is a need for clarity and alignment on performance indicators, underpinned by a clear purpose and mission of Work and Training.** While accreditation is not the only measure of success, improved oversight of accreditation, as one tangible and key outcome of the Work and Training programme is required. Stakeholders also described incremental steps required to get people to a place where they can attain and retain employment that are not currently captured as key performance indicators. Existing tools, such as IASIO's Progression Readiness Indicator, could be leveraged to measure performance in the broader sense.
- (x) While acknowledging the security challenges to digital innovation within prisons, **there is a growing need to expand programmes around digital literacy and competence as core employability skills.** There is scope to co-ordinate delivery of IT skills between the Work and Training function and Education Centres, with a view to maximising the impact of these offerings for people in custody
- (xi) The stakeholder narrative identified the adverse impact of prison-wide resourcing issues on the delivery of Work and Training. In making the above recommendations, it is acknowledged that these core prison-wide resourcing issues need to be addressed for Work and Training to function efficiently and effectively.

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List of Acronyms

CE – Community Employment

COWT – Chief Officer Work and Training

CJS – Criminal Justice Sector

CSO – Central Statistics Office

ETB – Education and Training Board

HMPPS – Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service

IASIO – Irish Association for Social Inclusion Opportunities

IPS – Irish Prison Service

NDI – National Data Infrastructure

NIPS – Northern Ireland Prison Service

PEMS – Prisoner Education Management System

PIMS – Prisoner Information Management System

POA – Prison Officers Association

SPS – Scottish Prison Service

TEO – Training and Employment Officer

WTO – Work Training Officer

1. Introduction

The Irish Prison Service (IPS) has a mission to provide safe and secure custody, dignity of care and rehabilitation to people in their custody for safer communities.

IPS places a strong emphasis on the provision of vocational training activities for prisoners. Work and vocational training forms a vital component of the rehabilitation of prisoners, with training activities aiming to give as much employment as possible in prison and providing opportunities to acquire skills that help secure employment on release. Indeed, it is widely agreed that employment, and particularly quality of employment, contributes to desistance from crime upon release^{1 2 3}.

A distinction exists between delivery of education and delivery of work and training in the Irish Prison Service. The former is delivered through a partnership model between the IPS and the Education and Training Board Ireland (ETBI). Work and training, on the other hand, facilitates the internal delivery of essential services, vocational training and structured activity and is staffed and funded by IPS.

The prison estate is made up of 12 prisons, 10 of which are closed prisons, with both internal and perimeter security and two of which are open centres, with reduced security measures⁴. There are 126 training workshops across the prison estate with a workstation capacity of 1,330, prior to Covid-19. Workshop capacities across the estate were reduced in line with infection control measures with the onset of Covid-19.

The key objectives of this paper are as follows:

- to outline the model of work and training service delivery across the prison estate, detailing key inputs and outputs;
- to review the potential labour market relevance of the programme of training on offer to prisoners;
- to examine key stakeholder perspectives on the effectiveness and efficiency of work and training; and
- to examine the model of work training delivery in other jurisdictions.

¹ Schnepel, K. (2017). Do post-prison job opportunities reduce recidivism?. *IZA World of Labor*.

² Brunton-Smith, I., & Hopkins, K. (2014). The impact of experience in prison on the employment status of longer-sentenced prisoners after release. *London: Ministry Of Justice*.

³ Ramakers, A., Nieuwbeerta, P., Van Wilsem, J., & Dirkzwager, A. (2017). Not just any job will do: A study on employment characteristics and recidivism risks after release. *International journal of offender therapy and comparative criminology*, 61(16), 1795-1818.

⁴ Open prisons operate a regime based on the voluntarily accepted discipline of the prisoners. By providing prisoners with more independence and responsibility, as well as increased access to educational, employment and developmental opportunities, open centres are designed to prepare offenders for their reintegration into civil society upon release.

1.1 Methodology and Limitations

This paper was produced using the following information:

- Desk based analysis of IPS policies and data
- Desk based analysis of IASIO GATE Service data
- Interviews with a cross-section of key stakeholders including 15 persons in custody; six Chief Officers Work and Training; five Irish Association for Social Inclusion Opportunities (IASIO) GATE Service Staff; two Prison Officer Association Staff; a Department of Justice 'Working to Change' Strategy representative; one Northern Ireland Prison Service representative; two HMPPS England and Wales representatives and a number of IPS staff as required for contextual information.

Key stakeholder interview notes were coded and analysed to generate themes relating to the study aims.

The paper is broadly structured using the programme logic model (PLM) where possible (See table 1). The PLM creates a framework for understanding how programme resources are used to implement key strategies and activities and how their implementation contributes to short and longer-term outcomes. Due to data limitations, it is not possible to analyse each area of the PLM in this paper. However, where data gaps are identified, recommendations of how to address these gaps are made.

While it is possible to gain good insight into the perceived effectiveness and efficiency of the Work and Training Programme through discussions with a cross-section of key stakeholders, there is insufficient data available to complete a comprehensive evaluation of effectiveness or efficiency. This is largely due to the need to standardise collection relating to key activities, outputs and outcomes, currently not available across the Prison Service.

Table 1. IPS Work and Vocational Training Programme Logic Model

Components	Definition
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To contribute to the rehabilitation of prisoners through the provision of opportunities to acquire skills and experience which help secure employment on release.
Inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expenditure on consumables, staffing resources
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Oversight and co-ordination of work and training programme, including alignment to the labour market - Training and accreditation of prisoners - Creating 'through the gate' employment or training opportunities for prison leavers
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of prisoners engaged in Work & Training activities - Number of Open/Closed Workshops - Number of prisoners gaining accreditation while in custody - Number of prison leavers placed in secure employment or training opportunities on release
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Broader employment opportunities for prisoner leavers - Employment retention among prison leavers - Reduce Recidivism

2. Context

2.1 Policy Context

In Ireland, the Prison Rules 2007 provide that *“each prisoner may, while in prison, engage or participate in such structured activity as may be authorised by the Governor...including work, vocational training, education, or programmes intended to ensure that a prisoner, when released from prison, will be less likely to reoffend or better able to re-integrate into the community.”*⁵ It further states that *“in so far as is practicable, each convicted prisoner should be engaged in authorised structured activity for a period of not less than five hours on each of five days in each week.”*⁶

The *Working to Change Strategy: Social Enterprise and Employment Strategy 2021 – 2023* sets out the direction of the Department of Justice in supporting and maximising employment options for people with criminal convictions. Underpinning this strategy is a recognition of the positive impact that securing employment for people with convictions plays in supporting desistance and creating safer communities. The strategy aims to address the employment needs of people in prison, on a probation sanction in the community and those with historical criminal convictions that continue to face barriers to securing employment using a whole system, end-to-end approach.

The strategy has key strategic focus areas:

1. *Social Enterprise*⁷ *employment options*: as a progression model to achieving mainstream employment, often with a greater earning potential;
2. *General employment options*: increasing access to employment for people with convictions while supporting employers in the process; and
3. *Entrepreneurship*: in recognising that for some people with criminal records, becoming self-employed may be their only way of securing employment, it aims to address barriers to entrepreneurship.

⁵ Irish Statute Book, Rule 27(1) *Prison Rules*, 2007,

⁶ Irish Statute Book, Rule 27(2) *Prison Rules*, 2007,

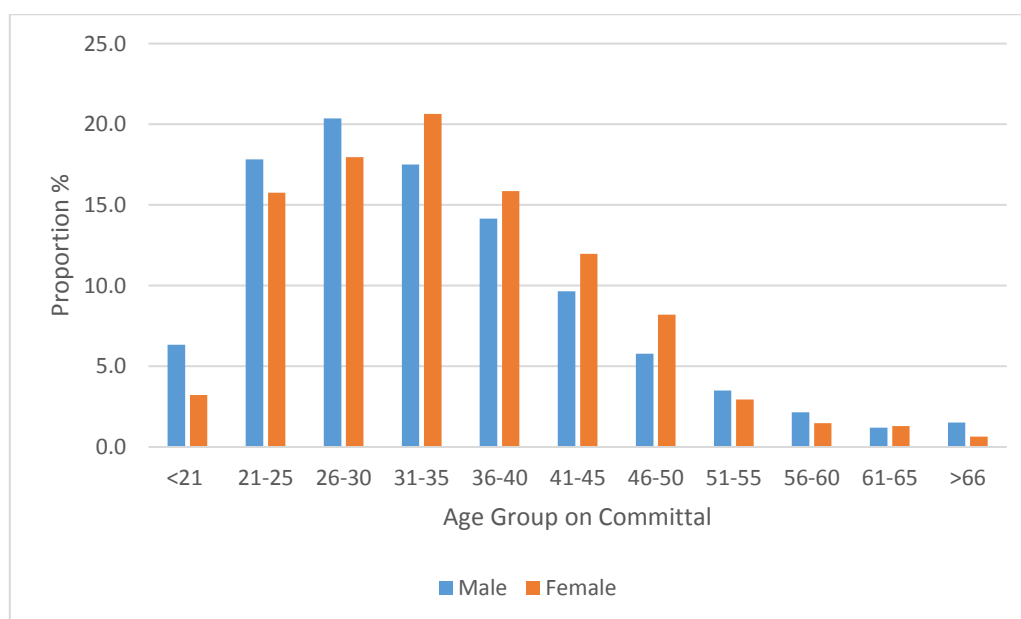
⁷ Social enterprises are businesses whose core objective is to achieve a social, societal, or environmental impact. They frequently work to support disadvantaged groups such as the long-term unemployed, people with disabilities, travellers, prison leavers etc.

2.2 Prison population

From 1st January 2016 to 31st December 2020, 12,525 unique individuals received a custodial sentence in Ireland, excluding those who received fine sentences⁸. Of these sentenced individuals, 91.3% were male and 8.7% were female.

The vast majority (98%) of persons sentenced to prison from 2016 to 2020 were of working age (<65 years). However, while there is no universally accepted definition of old age in prisons, there is a body of literature on accelerated aging of people in prison, attributed to lifestyle and/or lack of medical care prior to imprisonment, and the experience of imprisonment itself. This may mean that a person is functionally older leaving prison than their chronological age, affecting their ability to attain and retain employment⁹. The median age of sentenced males on committal was 32 years, while the median age for sentenced females on committal was 33 years.

Figure 1. Persons sentenced to prison from 2016 – 2020 by age group on committal



⁸ Fine Sentences are usually short in duration (days/weeks), therefore people in custody for non-payment of fines would typically not be part of the demographic engaged in work and training

⁹ Codd, H. (2018). Ageing in prison. In S Westwood (Ed.), *Ageing, Diversity and Equality: Social Justice Perspectives*. Routledge.

Previous employment, particularly in the four weeks before entering custody, and educational qualifications are correlated with the likelihood of post-release employment^{10 11}. Table 2. illustrates the self-reported principal economic status of the sample¹². Just under one fifth (19.4%) of sentenced males reported being ‘employed’ before entering custody, compared with 7.8% of sentenced females.

Table 2. Self-reported economic status of sentenced persons (excl. fines), 2016 - 2020

Economic Status¹³	Male	Female
Employed	19.4%	7.8%
Unemployed	78.2%	91.6%
Pensioner/Retired	1.0%	0.4%
Student	1.4%	0.2%
Total	100	100

‘Age left school’ is also captured by IPS. Of the population sentenced to prison from 2016 to 2020, the averages age males reported leaving school was 14.2 years, while the average age females reported leaving school was 14.6 years.

The majority of sentenced males (82.1%) and females (75%) attained a Junior Certificate (or equivalent) level of education, or below (Figure 2).

¹⁰ Brunton-Smith, I., & Hopkins, K. (2014). The impact of experience in prison on the employment status of longer-sentenced prisoners after release. *London: Ministry Of Justice*.

¹¹ Rakes, S., Prost, S. G., & Tripodi, S. J. (2018). Recidivism among older adults: Correlates of prison re-entry. *Justice Policy Journal*, 15(1), 1-15.

¹² Employment rate for sample in custody was calculated both including and removing 2020 committals. When 2020 committals were removed to mitigate the potential influence of Covid-19 on economic status, the employment rate for men was +0.1% (19.5%) and the employment rate for women was +0.4% (8.2%)

¹³ Categories recorded by IPS

Figure 2. Educational attainment of sentenced persons (excl. fines), 2016 - 2020

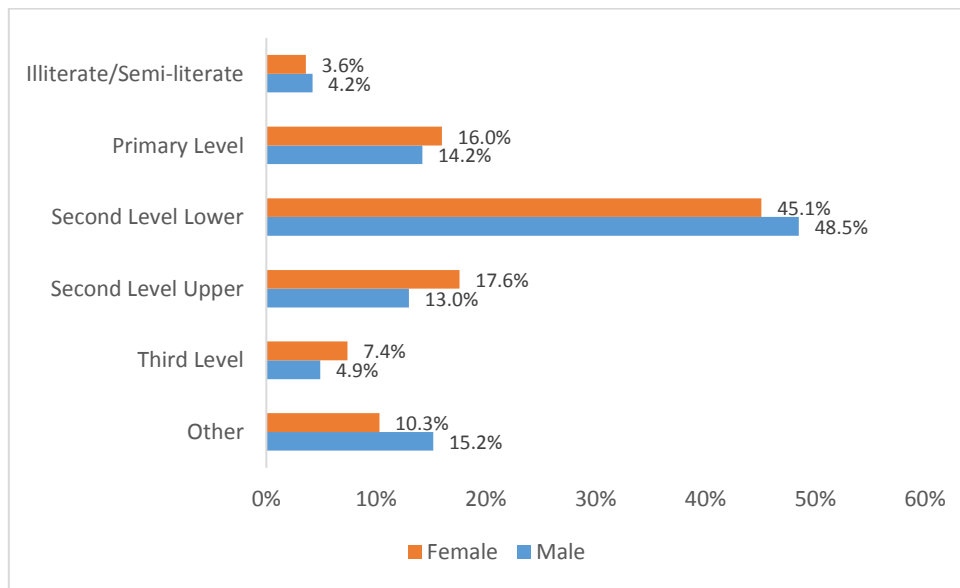


Table 3. illustrates the cycle of re-offending for many of the persons sentenced to custody from 2016 to 2020. Approximately three quarters of sentenced males and females had been in custody multiple times, with over one third having been in custody five times or more. Indeed, the most recent estimates from the Central Statistics Office (CSO) indicate that 61.7% of people reoffend within three years of being released from custody¹⁴.

Table 3. Number of times in custody, 2016-2020

No. times in custody	Male	Female
1	26.7%	25.4%
2-4	32.2%	32.6%
5-7	16.6%	18.2%
8-10	11.3%	8.9%
>10	13.2%	14.8%

The CSO published a report on employment, education and other outcomes based on people enumerated in Irish prisons on Census Night 2016¹⁵. The primary 'economic status' of the sample was

¹⁴ See <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-pros/prisonre-offendingstatistics2011-2018/detailsof3-yearcustodialre-offending/>

¹⁵ <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/fp/poffo/offenders2016employmenteducationandotheroutcomes2016-2019/introduction/>

found to be 'neither employment nor education', both in the last instance or occurrence up to April 2016 (60.4%) and up to May 2019 (59.7%). 'Substantial employment including education' accounted for the last activity of 5.3% of offenders up to April 2016 and rose to 11.8% for the same cohort by May 2019, indicating a take-up of employment and education either while in custody on day-to-day temporary release, or on their release from prison. The corresponding figure for those in 'substantial employment only' was 4.5% up to April 2016 and rose to 9.5% by May 2019.

2.4 Section Summary

Work and Training in Prisons is provided for under the Prison Rules 2007. The recent publication of the 'Working to Change Strategy' by the Department of Justice has placed a renewed focus on the importance of employment in breaking the cycle of re-offending, and in particular the role of employment quality and retention. IPS data shows the majority of people committed to prison in the past five years have been in custody multiple times, have lower than average educational attainment and a higher than average rate of unemployment. Previous outcomes analysis by the CSO points to some take-up of employment and education for the cohort of persons in custody on Census Night 2016. Against that background, this paper offers a timely review of the effectiveness of the work and training programme in delivering on its mission to provide opportunities for prison leavers to secure employment on release.

3. Work and Training in Prisons: Model of Delivery

This section outlines the model of delivery of Work and Training across the Irish Prison Service. While education is not captured under this review, it is worth noting here that a distinction exists between delivery of education and delivery of work and training in the Irish Prison Service. The former is delivered through a partnership model between the IPS and the Education and Training Board Ireland (ETBI). Over 200 ETBs teachers, funded by the Department of Education and Skills, deliver the education curriculum in prison schools, with IPS budget covers the remaining costs related to in-prison education, such as educational materials, equipment, software and premises. The adult education programme ranges from basic to accredited adult education. Work and training, on the other hand, facilitates the internal delivery of essential services, vocational training and structured activity and is staffed and funded by IPS.

3.1 Referral to Work and Training

Both sentenced¹⁶ and remand¹⁷ prisoners can engage in work training activities. There are various routes of referral to Work and Training in prison:

- Based on information derived from the committal interview, the Governor may refer a new prisoner to Work Training;
- For prisoners on sentences of one year or more, the Integrated Sentence Management Officer may make a referral to work training;
- Other prison based staff, such as a chaplain, psychologist or teacher may refer a prisoner to work training where they feel it appropriate; or
- Self-referral, where a prisoner may express an interest in work or vocational training to prison based staff.

Upon referral, the prisoner will meet the Chief Officer for Work and Training (COWT), who will refer them to a particular work training activity based on their interests or experience. Where the activity is at full capacity, the prisoner will be placed on a waiting list for a space on the training or activity. COWTs report that almost all workshops have waiting lists currently due to reduced capacity related to Covid-19 restrictions.

¹⁶ Persons found guilty of a criminal offence and sentenced to a term in prison.

¹⁷ Persons charged with an offence and detained in custody until a particular date when they will be brought back before the court.

3.2 Recruitment and training of Work Training Staff

The Human Resources Directorate in the Irish Prison Service run competitions for the recruitment of Work Training Officers (WTOs) to form a panel. Applicants must have at least three years operational experience in the Irish Prison Service, including prisoner contact and discipline. Applicants are not required to have prior experience or qualifications in the types of work training activities delivered by the Irish Prison Service, with some specific exceptions in specialised training roles. The Irish Prison Service Training College delivers training to Work Training Officers on their specific work training activity. The Work Training Staff delivering the programme of activities are overseen by a COWT, formerly titled 'Industrial Managers'.

3.3 Delivery of Work Training

WTOs deliver or oversee work opportunities and training to persons in custody on the following:

- Essential Services – including catering, laundry, waste management and industrial cleaning.
- Structured Activities and Training – gym, metalwork, woodwork/joinery, construction/building skills, horticulture/farming, print/computer, light maintenance, picture framing, engraving, furniture restoration, fabric and hairdressing.
- Social Enterprise (Open Centres): Coffee Shop, Car Wash, Garden Centre.
- Other one-off training such as barbering, barista skills, manual handling, Driver CPC, as arranged locally by prison staff or IASIO staff.

WTOs also act as supervisory discipline staff in the workshops or work training activity area.

3.4 Accreditation

The model of delivery provides for courses being accredited both in-house and through external accreditors including City and Guilds, ICS Skills, NCEF Foundation, Guild of Launderers.

3.5 IASIO GATE Service

The Irish Association for Social Inclusion Opportunities (IASIO) delivers the GATE service, a 'through-the-gate' Guidance and Counselling Service to prisoners in order to help them plan for release, across seven prisons. The long-term aim of GATE is employability for prisoners upon release. IASIO TEOs work with prisoners within the last 12 months of their sentence to develop a plan for release. The focus of

the plan is on training, education or employment and helps prisoners to identify and overcome barriers to progression. Their remit is broad and covers working to change attitudes towards work and education, providing guidance on CV and interview preparation and acting as an advocate on prisoners behalf with prospective employers, trainers or education providers. There are currently four full time and four part-time Training and Employment Officers across seven prisons, with a typical annual caseload of 100 clients.

3.6 Incentives for Prisoners to engage in Work Training Activities

Engagement in work training activities is voluntary for persons in custody. However, given that work training is central to the rehabilitative effort with prisoners, there are incentives in place to encourage more prisoners to engage with work training.

The Incentivised Regimes Programme in prisons provides for a differentiation of privileges between prisoners according to their level of engagement with services and quality of behaviour. The objective is to provide tangible incentives to prisoners to participate in structured activities and to reinforce good behaviour, leading to a safer and more secure environment. There are three levels of regime – basic, standard and enhanced, with different privileges associated with each regime level. The main privileges offered include additional visits, additional phone calls and an increased daily gratuity depending on the regime level achieved. All prisoners enter the system at standard regime level and have the opportunity to become eligible for the enhanced regime status once they have met the required criteria for the preceding two months. Engagement in work training is a factor considered in incentivised regimes, whereby at the enhanced level, prisoners must participate actively in structured activities in education, work/training and/or offender programmes for at least five defined periods a week (unless circumstances outside their control prevent this level of engagement).

Furthermore, prisoners carrying out essential services, that would otherwise need to be outsourced by the Prison Service, receive an ‘approved work gratuity’ in addition to their daily gratuity. This additional gratuity is valued at €1 per day or €0.50 per half day. Work training activities eligible for an approved work gratuity include laundry, industrial cleaning, grounds maintenance, industrial waste management, painting, stores and other activities that may be designated by the Director of Care and Rehabilitation as the need arises.

3.7 Oversight by Care and Rehabilitation Directorate

The Work and Training function is overseen by the IPS Care and Rehabilitation Directorate (CRD).

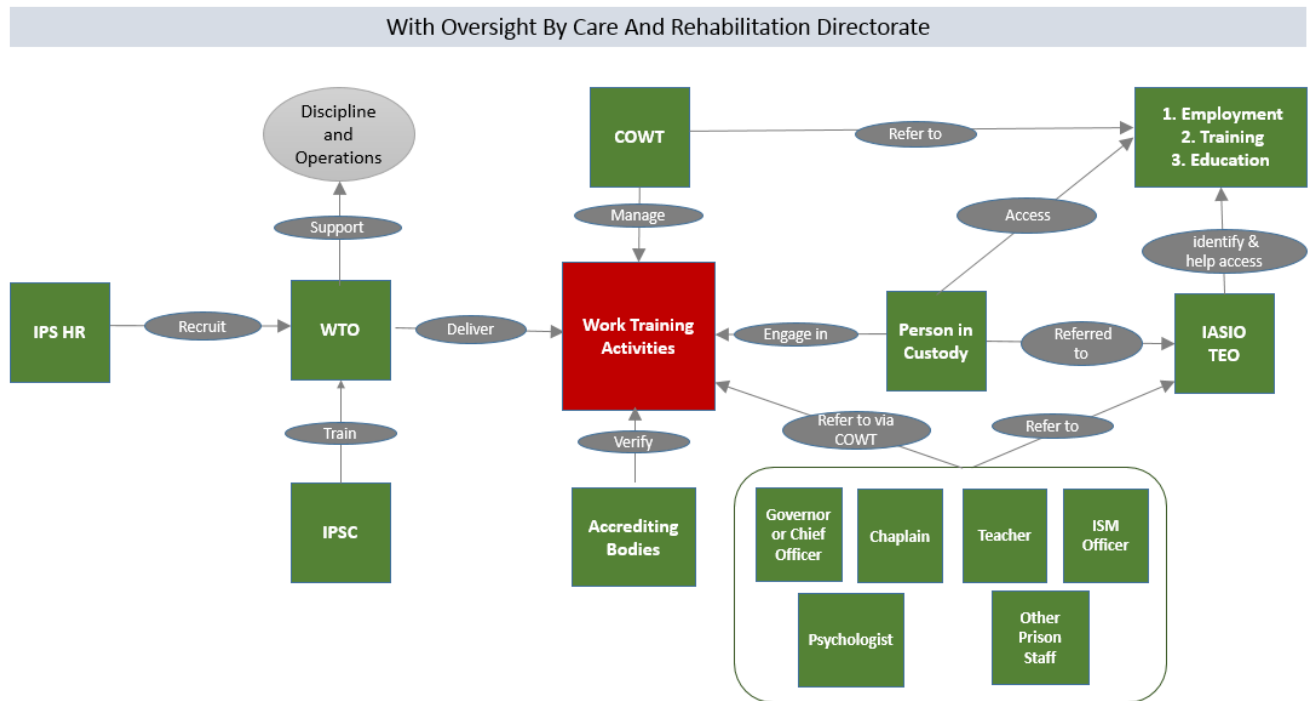
CRD have responsibility for the following:

- Budgetary provision of work training requisites and supplies
- Procurement for all consumables used in all workshops
- Development of Standards and Guidelines for specific services e.g. catering, laundry,
- Liaison with the Building Services Division on equipment maintenance and replacement
- Liaison with IPS college on WTO training needs and competence assessments and delivery of training to WTO cohorts
- Liaison with HR on work training staffing
- Liaison with accrediting bodies
- Development of specifications for Work Training Management System
- Collation of data on workshop opening times and participation levels
- Co-ordination of Chief Officer Work and Training group

3.7 Section Summary

The oversight and delivery of Work and Training, and how that subsequently leads to placements in the community, is summarised in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Summary of Work and Training Delivery across Irish Prison Service



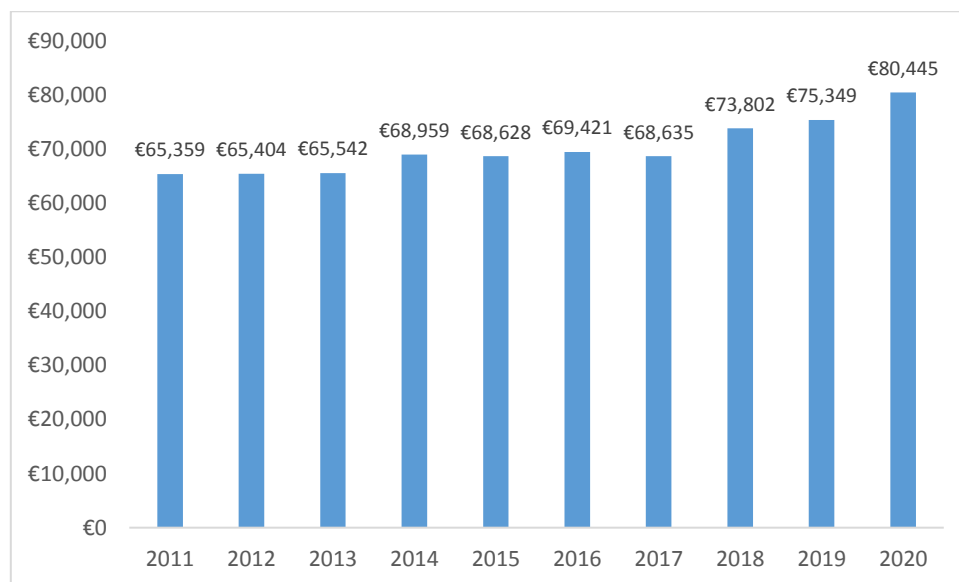
4. Inputs and Outputs

This section provides an overview of Work and Training inputs and outputs, where data is available. The final section (Section 8) of this paper includes recommendations on how to address data gaps where outputs could not be measured.

4.1. Cost per available staffed prison space

The daily average number of persons in custody in 2020 was 3,824. In 2020, the average cost per available, staffed prison space was €80,445¹⁸. This represents an increase of over €15,000 per prisoner over a ten-year period since 2011 (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Annual cost per available, staffed prison space, 2011-2020



4.2 Work and Training Costs

Costs associated with Work and Training, including staffing costs and consumables, accounted for between 5.8% and 7.3% of the Irish Prison Service Budget from 2016 to 2020. It is important to note that the wage bill for staff in Work and Training, and the associated staffing figures in Table 4 does not

¹⁸ There were a number of extraordinary, once of expenditure items pertaining to COVID-19 related costs, a once of approved stimulus package and an additional pay period for prison officers due to the timing of payroll payment runs. If these were to be removed from the calculations, the cost per available, staffed prison space for 2020 would reduce from €80,445, to €76,632.

accurately reflect resourcing of Work and Training across the estate on a day-to-day basis. Firstly, it does not account for Prison Officer Grades assigned to a Work Training area on a given day to bring a workshop to its agreed resourcing requirements. Nor does it capture how many Work and Training staff were redeployed to other priority duties. Finally, it does not capture vacant posts, with Work and Training having an authorised staffing allocation of approximately 378 prison officers.

Table 4 Work and Training Costs 2016-2020

	Prisons Budget (€ Million)	W&T consumables (€ Million)	W&T Wage Bill (€ Million)	W&T Gratuity Bill (€ Million)
2016	332.06	1.51	22.63	0.22
2017	327.37	1.23	22.06	0.23
2018	352.69	1.49	23.04	0.22
2019	359.01	1.13	22.52	0.25
2020	408.09	1.22	22.37	0.26

4.3 Staffing and workshop participation

According to Work Training returns issued to the Care and Rehabilitation directorate monthly, around 30% of the prison population were engaged in work and training at any given time from 2016 to 2020 (Table 5)¹⁹. The proportion of people engaged in work and training has remained fairly steady despite the shortfall in Work and Training staff over recent years. However, as outlined above, prison officer grades can be assigned to workshops, particularly essential services, to ensure minimum agreed resourcing requirements. Furthermore, when Covid-19 infection control measures led to reduced capacity, workshops began operating on a split timetable basis, with a morning and afternoon session, to maximise participation.

¹⁹ Work and Training is not the only structured activity available to people in Custody. Other structured activities including Prison Education Centre Courses and offender programmes.

Table 5. WT Staffing and Workshop Participation, 2016 -2020

	Total number of W&T staff	Total number in custody engaged in W&T*	Workshop participation rate (%)**
2016	361.5	2,521	31.2%
2017	338	2,533	31.9%
2018	334.5	2,679	31.0%
2019	304.5	3,080	30.4%
2020	315.5	2,990	29.4%

* Source: Prisoner Account Management System, no of people receiving a WT gratuity

**Source: Manual Work & Training Returns

4.4 Sale of Work Training Produce

Table 6 outlines the revenue generated through the sale of Work Training produce, 75% of which is returned to the exchequer, in accordance with the IPS Sale of Prison Produce Policy. The remaining 25% is contributed to the Prisoner Assist Programme Fund (PAPF), which provides for 'Hardship Payments' to prisoners or their families where needed. Over a five-year period, 2016-2020, just under €485,000 was generated through the sale of Work Training produce.

Table 6. Revenue from sale of Work Training produce

	Amount (€)
2016	62,798.81
2017	88,027.99
2018	119,585.45
2019	114,459.89
2020	99,749.58

4.5 Prisoner Outcomes – GATE Service

As outlined in Section 3, prisoners are referred to the IASIO GATE Service Training and Employment Officer (TEO) through a referral mechanism on PIMS. The GATE TEO aims to work with a prisoner for 12 months prior to their release. In the absence of data on outcomes for all

prisoners released from custody, IASIO GATE Service data is used to identify outcomes for those who engaged with the service prior to release.

The number of individuals referred to the IASIO GATE service increased by 150% from 2016 to 2019. Over the same period, the GATE placement rate increased by almost one quarter, from 31.6% in 2016 to 39.1% in 2019 (see Table 7). There are a number of factors thought to have contributed to the rise in referrals to GATE and subsequent placements, including the recruitment of a new part-time position in Shelton Abbey in 2017 creating scope for more referrals. Furthermore, the introduction of a new case management system in 2018 and a referral mechanism on PIMS in 2019 is thought to have created efficiencies around the referral process.

The impact of Covid-19 is illustrated by a drop in both referrals and the placement rate in 2020. GATE TEOs reported that the number of placements available was affected by Covid-19 measures, such as closure of the construction industry and hospitality industry. Other post-release placements moved online, creating a barrier for some people upon release due to poor digital literacy and/or a lack of access to a device to get online.

Table 7. IASIO GATE Service referrals and placements, 2016-2020

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
No. of Individuals Referred	367	827	958	917	611
No. of Placements	116	239	331	359	214
Placements as a % of referrals	31.6	28.9	34.6	39.1	35.0

Table 8 shows the type of placement secured for prisoners. Prisoners were most frequently referred to 'Training' (45.4%), followed by employment (38.5%) and education (15.4%). Less than one percent of prisoners were referred to a Social Enterprise. It is important to note that the IASIO GATE Service is not the only referral route to training, employment or education for prison leavers. Placements may also be brokered by other prison-based staff, such as COWTs or Prison Education Centre Staff, or prison leavers may have their own contacts in the community to create employment opportunities

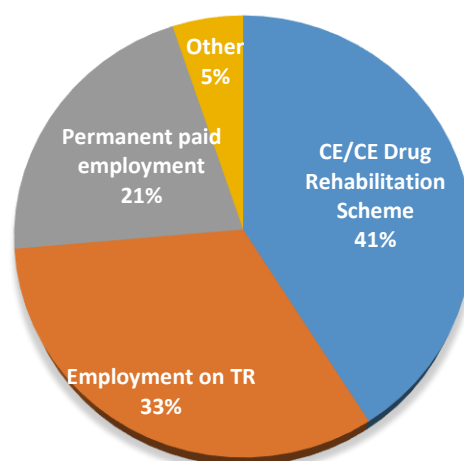
Table 8. IASIO GATE Service Placements by type, 2016-2020

	Number	%
Education	194	15.4
Training	571	45.4
Employment	485	38.5
Social Enterprise	9	0.7
Total	1,259	100

4.5.1 Referrals to Employment

From 2016 to 2020, IASIO GATE Service referred 485 people in custody on to employment. Community Employment (CE) Schemes were the primary source of employment placements, with 41% of prison leavers taking up employment on CE Scheme, including CE Drug Rehabilitation Scheme²⁰. Just under one third (31.6%) were employed on Temporary Release, of which 89% were on day-to-day release, while 21.2% went on to full time permanent employment upon release. The remaining 5.2% took up placements including internships, apprenticeships, social enterprise employment, self-employment, temporary/seasonal employment, and volunteering or work experience placement (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Referrals to employment broken down by type, 2016-2020



²⁰ CE Schemes help people who are long-term unemployed (or otherwise disadvantaged) to get back to work by offering part-time and temporary placements in jobs based within local communities. CE Drug Rehabilitation Schemes provide a training and development opportunity for those recovering from substance misuse.

Table 9 below illustrates referrals to employment broken down by sector, while Table 10 provides further detail on the type of employment by sector. Taken together they give a sense of the quality of employment.

Construction was the most frequently referred sector of employment, with 37.7% of prisoners referred to employment in construction by GATE (Table 8). Of those, more than half (56.3%) were recorded as placed in employment on Temporary Release, 31.7% were referred on to permanent paid employment and 7.1% were referred to a CE scheme (Table 10).

Construction was followed by Human Health and Social Work Activities (12.5%), Education (10.1%) and Other Service Activities (8%) as the most frequently referred to sectors of employment (Table 8). For all three, the majority of referrals were placements on CE Schemes or CE Drug Rehabilitation Schemes (Table 10).

Table 9 GATE Employment Placements by Sector

Sector of Employment	%
Construction	37.7
Human Health and Social work activities	12.8
Education	10.1
Other Service activities	8.0
Industry	5.6
Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles and Motor Cycles	5.6
Transportation and Storage	5.4
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	5.2
Accommodation food service activities	4.9
Other*	4.7

*Including Administrative and support service activities; Animals & Veterinary Science; Financial, insurance and real estate activities; Professional, Scientific and technical activities; Information and communication

Table 10. GATE Employment Placements by Employment Type

	CE/CE Drug Rehabilitatio n Scheme	Employment on Temporary Release	Permanent paid employment	Temporary/Cas ual/Seasonal	Other*
Construction	7.1	56.3	31.7	3.3	1.6
Human health and social work activities	90.3	3.2	3.2	0.0	3.2
Education	98.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0
Other NACE activities	84.6	5.1	2.6	5.1	2.6
Industry	37.0	25.9	33.3	3.7	0.0
Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles and Motor Cycles	7.4	44.4	40.7	3.7	3.7
Transportation and Storage	42.3	19.2	26.9	7.7	3.8
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	36.0	40.0	24.0	0.0	0.0
Accommodation food service activities	20.8	41.7	25.0	8.3	4.2
Other	70.6	5.9	17.6	5.9	0.0

*Including Social Enterprise, Self-Employment, Apprenticeship, Internship/Jobpath, Voluntary/Work Experience

4.5.2 Training

As referred to in section 2.2.2, people in custody typically have a low level of educational attainment and limited employment history, relative to the general population. While the long-term goal of the IASIO Gate Service is to assist people in securing employment, often there are education or skills deficits that need to be addressed in advance of securing employment. This is reflected in the volume of prisoners that are referred to training placements and, to a lesser extent, education placements.

Table 11 provides a breakdown of GATE training referrals broken down by training type. Prisoners were most frequently referred to Community/Resource Centre based training (22.4%), followed by training with a private agency (18.6%) and prison based training (13%).

Table 11. Referrals to training placements by type, 2016-2020

Training Type	Number	%
Community/Resource centre based training	128	22.4
Training with private agency	106	18.6
Prison Based	74	13
Addiction Programme	71	12.4
ETB vocational training course	68	11.9
Probation Project	49	8.6
Brief (less than 12 weeks)	26	4.6
Jobs Club	26	4.6
Training on TR	17	3
Traveller Initiative	6	1.1
Total	571	100

4.5.3 Education

Table 12 provides a breakdown of GATE education referrals broken down by education type. Adult Education was the most frequent referral (28%), followed by Education on Temporary Release (TR) (18.7%) and referrals to the education unit based within the prisons (17.1%).

Table 12. Referrals to education placements by type, 2016-2020

Education Type	Number	%
Adult Education	54	28.0
Education on TR	36	18.7
Education Unit (prison based)	33	17.1
Literacy Course	22	11.4
Further education	18	9.3
Distance Learning	10	5.2
PLC	9	4.7
Third Level	7	3.6
Youthreach	4	2.1
Total	193	100

4.6 Section Summary

The Prison Service have allocated between 5.7% and 6.3% of their budget to the delivery of Work and Training since 2016. Approximately 30% of the prison population engage in Work and Training. Training placements were the most common point of referral for prisoners engaged with the GATE Service, followed by employment and education placements. The Construction Sector was the most common sector of employment for prisoners referred to the GATE Service. Most prisoner leavers referred to employment were placed on CE Schemes or CE Drug Rehabilitation Schemes, which offer part time and temporary placements for people who have been out of the labour market. One third were placed in employment on Temporary Release (TR), largely day-to-day TR, while 21% were placed in permanent-paid employment.

5. Alignment to the labour market

This section aims to assess how the workshop facilities and opportunities to work in prison align to labour market demand, with a view to identifying the Prison Service's current capacity for creating employability for prisoners.

In examining labour market relevance, it is recognised that certain skills gaps are unlikely to be catered for in a prison environment for various reasons including low levels of educational attainment, limited employment history, and the nature of professions precluding people with previous convictions. Additional barriers to labour market entry apply to people with a sex offending history. Furthermore, it is acknowledged that not all prison leavers have the capacity to take up employment, and Work and Training serves an important role in providing structured activity to assist people in managing prison time.

The Work and Training function delivers essential services across prisons. This is provided for under the Prison Rules 2007 S.28 (1) – “a convicted prisoner shall do work consisting of the performance of tasks necessary for the maintenance and operation of the prison.” Therefore, in considering relevance to the labour market, it is borne in mind that Work and Training has a dual function in delivering essential services to the prisons and providing vocational training to prisoners.

5.1 Labour Market Demand

There is no formal process for aligning vocational training in prisons to labour market demand on a regular basis. The workshops available across the prison service have been largely static for many years, and often based on the historical skillset of staff that delivered the workshops. Some of the workshops available, particularly around metalwork, woodwork and construction skills, broadly align to current demand in the construction sector, though there is a lack of focus on specific skills deficits within that sector. While conversations with stakeholders indicate that efforts are made on an ad hoc basis to provide training relative to labour market demand, for example barbering skills, barista skills, or a CPC certificate. These efforts would be supported by the formal process of review at defined intervals, with a view to focusing funding efforts.

In determining the relevance of the current offering of Work and Training, labour market demand is identified based on the National Skills Bulletin Series published by the Skills and Labour Market Research Unit (SLMRU) in SOLAS. The 2019 edition provides the most recent analysis of labour market shortages at occupational level, while the 2020 edition outlines employment outlooks by occupation using 2019 data. It is acknowledged that the labour market landscape has evolved since the publication of these bulletins, and this is referenced in the narrative below. Nonetheless, the section captures how vocational training has aligned to labour market demand using the most recent demands estimates.

5.1.1 Fabric Workshops, Print Workshops

The Fabric Workshops supply the Prison System with essential items, such as towelling and linen, which would otherwise be sourced externally. Print workshops also deliver an essential service to IPS, and played an integral part in the response to Covid-19 through the printing infection-control signage for display across the prison system. There is no accredited training delivered in the fabric or print workshops²¹.

The National Skills Bulletin 2019 indicated that the occupation ‘Other Skilled Trades’²², which includes ‘textile trades’, ‘printers’, and ‘print finishing and binding’, had no skill shortages. Furthermore, the 2020 Bulletin indicated that the five-year employment growth rate for the occupation was below the national average. These occupations were likely to have been impacted by an overall fall in industrial activity during the COVID-19 restrictions, according to the 2020 Bulletin.

5.1.2 Catering and Bakery

Catering is an essential service across all prisons, feeding prisoners and staff across the system. There are opportunities in all prisons across the estate for prisoners to work in prison kitchens and the staff messes. There is accreditation in catering, though stakeholders reported this is not consistently available across the estate. The National Skills Bulletin 2019 indicated that employment growth in the hospitality sector was strong, with Chefs and Cooks in short supply in the labour market. Kitchen and catering assistants were not in short supply based on 2018 data, however there was continued high growth for the kitchen and catering staff specifically into 2019, with a high churn rate. The 2020 Bulletin highlights the severe impact of Covid-19 on these occupations and suggests a full recovery is

²¹ See Appendix A for a list of accredited activities available through Work and Training.

²² Weavers and knitters, Upholsterers, Footwear and leather working trades, Tailors and dressmakers, Textiles, garments and related trades n.e.c., Pre-press technicians, Printers, Print finishing and binding workers, Glass and ceramics makers, decorators and finishers, Furniture makers and other craft woodworkers, Florists, Other skilled trades n.e.c.

unlikely in the short term because of reduced capacity, reduced demand and the need for social distancing. While there is no more recent analysis of skills shortages in the hospitality sector, there is considerable media coverage and discourse at present highlighting the current difficulty in recruiting staff across the sector. Anecdotally, the prolonged closure of the sector has led skilled staff to move to other sectors of employment.

Taking into account labour market demand, ensuring both consistent and higher levels of accreditation in catering, potentially provided in partnership with the ETBs, would serve to improve the employability prospects of a large cohort of prisoners already engaged in delivering essential catering services across the estate. However, it remains to be seen how the sector will recover in terms of labour market demand.

5.1.3 Construction/Building Skills

The construction sector is a key source of employment for prison leavers according to IASIO GATE Service data. Construction/building skills activities include bricklaying, concrete work, and tiling. Safe Pass courses are also offered, although delivery is not consistent according to stakeholders. The National Skills Bulletin 2019 indicated no shortages for the specific activities offered above in the construction and building skills workshops across the estate. However, both the 2019 bulletin and a more recent 'Difficult-to-Fill Vacancies' survey published by SOLAS in October 2020, indicate there were shortages reported for construction roles including site drivers, pipe layers, curtain wallers, steel erectors/fixers, scaffolders and ground workers. Demand for these occupations has continued despite the impact of Covid-19 on the Irish labour market.

While analysis of GATE data points to the construction sector as a key area of employment for people leaving prison, there is scope for further focusing the delivery of construction or building skills according to the needs of the sector. Key stakeholders, including IASIO and COWTs, pointed to the potential value of leveraging simulator technology available in the market to deliver training in operating construction site machinery. Such technology is due to be piloted in the Progression Unit within Mountjoy Prison. If rolled out, this has the potential to provide prison leavers with the opportunity to attain roles with better wages and conditions, improving the likelihood of employment retention. Stakeholders also pointed to the need for regular Safe Pass courses, which enable people to secure employment on a construction site immediately upon release.

Furthermore, stakeholder pointed to the potential to create formal linkages with Regional Training Centres (formerly FÁS Training Centres), including the National Construction Skills Training Centre at Mount Lucas, Co. Offaly. A further link with the Limerick City Build initiative is also being explored to coincide with the opening of new workshops in Limerick prison in 2022.

5.1.4 Metalwork Skills

Prisoners are taught welding skills in Metal Workshops. 'Metal forming, welding & related trades' has been identified as an area of strong growth. A significant shortage in suitable qualified welders was identified in the National Skills Bulletin 2019, and more recently in the results of the 'Difficult-to-Fill Vacancies' survey. Continued accreditation for welding that is currently delivered in prisons would enhance prisoners' employment opportunities, in the context of a reported consistent shortage of welders in the labour market.

5.1.5 Woodwork Skills

Prisoners are taught woodwork skills in a number of prisons. These workshops also play an important role in enabling prisoners to contribute to community through supplying towns and villages with items such as benches, planters, Christmas decorations, to name but a few. The National Skills bulletin 2019 indicated that there was a shortage of carpenters and predicted increased demand for this occupation. The 2020 bulletin reported continued strong growth in this occupation, with a particular demand for shuttering carpenters, and suggested a full recovery in employment following Covid-19 restrictions.

The delivery of pre-apprenticeship programmes in prisons, including in carpentry and joinery, has the potential to motivate prison leavers to complete an apprenticeship in the community. According to IASIO staff, many prisoners express an interest in completing an apprenticeship, but their level of education is not sufficient to allow them to access an apprenticeship immediately upon release. Currently, IASIO staff are arranging pre-apprenticeship courses upon release. IPS stakeholders reported recent engagement with the Department of Further and Higher Education to this effect, and proposals are being developed to support progression to apprenticeships for people in custody.

5.1.6 Industrial Cleaning & Laundry

Industrial cleaning is an essential service delivered by prisoners across all sites. Prisoners can acquire a CleanPass certification in industrial cleaning. While the National Skills Bulletin 2019 indicated there was no skills shortage in industrial cleaning process operations or cleaning broadly, this has become an increasingly important role in both prisons and the community since the onset of the Covid-19

pandemic, and increased focus on infection control as people return to the workplace. It remains to be seen the impact of Covid-19 and its aftermath on labour market demand in this area.

Laundry is another essential service delivered by prisoners across all sites. The Guild of Launderers are the accrediting body used by IPS in certifying prisoners to work in laundries. There was no skills shortage identified for launders, dry cleaners or pressers in the National Skills Bulletin 2019.

5.1.7 Waste Management

Waste Management is delivered by prisoners across all sites and is essential to the operation of each prison. Currently, there is no avenue for accreditation in Waste Management for prisoners. There was no skills shortage identified for 'refuse and salvage' occupations in the National Skills Bulletin 2019.

5.1.8 Horticulture

There are horticultural facilities in a number of sites. Prisoners engaged in horticultural workshops have the opportunity to give back to the community, for example through provision of plants and flowers to 'Tidy Towns' committees. The workshops also provide plants and flowers for the upkeep of grounds across the prison estate. There is an opportunity for accreditation in Horticulture.

The National Skills Bulletin 2020 reported that employment was declining in 'Horticultural, Agricultural and Fishing Trades n.e.c.'²³. The 2019 bulletin reported potential shortages in the area of fruit picking and mushroom picking, with difficulty reported in attracting and retaining workers arising from low pay.

5.1.9 Computers

There are computer workshops in a number of prisons, however stakeholders reported the delivery of relatively basic skills and frequent workshop closure. It should be noted that the Prison Education Centres deliver IT courses with a view to addressing digital literacy deficits.

According to the National Skills Bulletin 2020, the ICT sector had the strongest growth, with the 2019 bulletin indicating a shortage in 'programme and software developers,' ICT professionals and IT technicians. Furthermore, as demonstrated during Covid-19, digital literacy now constitutes a key

²³ Horticultural trades, Gardeners and landscape gardeners, Groundsmen and greenkeepers, Skilled workers in horse racing and related industries

employability skill across many sectors, with digital skills deficits creating increased barriers to employment.

5.1.10 Hairdressing

The Dóchas Centre offer City and Guilds accreditation in Hairdressing. This training is overseen by the Work and Training Staff, but delivered by an external provider. In Limerick Prison, Hairdressing training is provided by the Prison Education Service to females in custody. According to the National Skills Bulletin 2019 there was no indication of a shortage of hairdressers, while the 2020 bulletin demonstrated employment growth was below the national average over the five-year period. Hairdressers also had a higher share of part-time workers than the national share.

5.1.11 Furniture Restoration Workshop & Framing Workshop

Furniture restoration is offered in Midlands Prisons, within which furniture is restored for the Office of Public Works (OPW). This training is delivered by an external provider and overseen by Work and Training Staff. There is an option for accreditation. Framing workshops engage prisoners in framing items to order for the Prison Service and private customers. This is not an accredited activity.

According to the National Skills Bulletin 2019, there was no shortage of “Other Skilled Trades N.E.C”, which includes ‘furniture makers and other craft woodworkers’ and ‘upholsterers’.

5.1.12 Sports and Fitness

The Work and Training function oversees the gyms in all establishments. While most activities in gyms are unaccredited, a new foundation level qualification has been introduced and training has been delivered to some Gym Officers (WTOs). Furthermore, stakeholders reported that some prisoners have commenced sports and fitness degrees through Open University.

The National Skills bulletin 2019 indicated while employment growth for health and fitness occupations was above average, there were no skills shortages identified in this area. The 2020 bulletin also reported continued strong growth in this occupation but also highlight the impact of Covid-19 on the industry and suggested there was unlikely to be full recovery in the short term.

5.1.13 Social Enterprise (SE) & Employment on Temporary Release (TR)

The Open Centres, Loughan House and Shelton Abbey, provide opportunities for prisoners to work in Social Enterprises, including a car wash, coffee shop and garden centre that are open to the public. In

keeping with the ethos of an open centre, this plays an important role in re-socialising prisoners while also building up employability skills. The Working to Change Strategy points to the role of SEs in creating meaningful jobs for people with criminal convictions as a stepping stone to mainstream employment.

Furthermore, under the Criminal Justice Act 1960, persons in custody can avail of day-to-day release to engage in work or training in the community. This is subject to risk and suitability assessment. Employment on TR is facilitated under Work and Training, and creates an opportunity for prisoners to acquire experience or training in skills not available within the prison.

5.1.14 Employability Skills and Work-readiness

Beyond vocational training, there are non-technical or soft skills (e.g. CV preparation, interview skills, teamwork, communication skills, leadership, problem solving skills, time-keeping) that are essential in aiding prison leavers to secure and maintain employment. With the large majority of prisoners reporting unemployment prior to committal, the Irish Prison Service play an important role in nurturing these soft skills through both Work and Training, the IASIO Gate Service and the Prison Education Service.

The essential services workshops (i.e laundry, industrial cleaning, catering, waste management) engage prisoners in work for longer hours than the non-essential workshops. Essential workshop hours are akin to full time employment hours in the community. These roles provide structure, routine and responsibility that may previously have been absent from some prisoners lives. In addition to encouraging the development of a healthy work ethic, these roles provide experience in working as part of a team, following instruction and communicating with colleagues. In the case of non-essential workshops, however, there is less scope to nurture some of these crucial employability skills, due to short opening hours (approximately 19 hours per week), combined with frequent closures.

The GATE Service, delivered by IASIO, supports prisoners in developing employability skills, depending on their needs. Amongst other things, IASIO TEOs assist prisoners with CV preparation, interview skills, advice on disclosing criminal records, setting up an email address and accessing job-sites. They also run a 'changing course', which seeks to change often self-defeating attitudes and beliefs around employment. However, there is the six FTE TEO posts across the estate, meaning that service is not delivered across all prisons and TEOs typically have considerable waiting lists.

Prison Education Centres also offer a range of soft skills and personal development programmes including some accredited pre-employment programmes. Furthermore, the recently upgraded sentence management system on PIMS provides for greater engagement and transparency between the Work Training and Education services on the pre-employment programmes engaged in by prisoners.

5.2 Alignment with SOLAS Adult Education and Skills Training Services

Stakeholders reported recent engagement between IPS, the Department of Higher and Further Education and SOLAS on the development of formal progression pathways for people in custody to adult education, skills training and apprenticeships to be overseen by SOLAS (Education and Training Authority) and the 16 Education and Training Boards, nationally. A work plan entitled 'Building Bridges' has been agreed with a view to expanding opportunities for progression for people in custody. The plan aims to improve outcomes for people with a criminal past by exploring progression routes from work and training and prison education services via ETB adult guidance services onwards to FET provision, to include traineeship, apprenticeship and other adult education programmes. The Apprenticeship Action Plan launched in April 2021 provides for greater flexibility and a broader range and reach for apprenticeships into the future. There is potential for greater alignment of work and training and education provision with post release progression opportunities, requiring greater integration in the delivery of work and training and education in prisons.

5.3 Section Summary

The programme of work and training in the Prison Service is partially aligned to labour market demand, based on the most recent analysis of skills shortages in Ireland. There is scope to further align the programme through analysis of labour market demand at regular intervals. Any efforts to focus delivery based on labour market demand should be accompanied by opportunities for accreditation at an appropriate level to attain employment. While essential service delivery will not always align to labour market demand, it has a key role in preparing prisoners for employment on release through the development of transferrable skills. The Work and Training function, Prison Education Centres and IASIO GATE Service do important work in nurturing employability skills. The move toward aligning the delivery of work and training with SOLAS Adult Education and Skills Training Services signifies a positive move toward expanding progression pathways for people in custody.

6. Stakeholder views of effectiveness and efficiency

This section provides insight into stakeholder perceptions of the effectiveness and efficiency of Work and Training across the estate. Stakeholders interviewed include a sample of participants from each of the following stakeholder groups: nine men and six women in custody, five Chief Officers in Work and Training, five IASIO GATE Service staff, one Criminal Justice Sector Social Enterprise Project Manager and 'Working to Change' Strategy representative, two Prison Officer Association (POA) representatives, and relevant staff across IPS Headquarters, as required.

6.1 Regime management planning and workshop closure

A common frustration expressed by stakeholders interviewed relates to the high rate of workshop closure due to redirection of resources, as provided for in each prison's Regime Management Plan (RMP). The RMP is a management tool designed to ensure the delivery of IPS policies and structured activities against the backdrop of reduced staffing levels, while ensuring a safe environment for staff and prisoners. The principles of the RMP document, issued by the HR Directorate, places an emphasis on keeping workshops open at reduced staffing levels. By keeping workshops open, according to the POA, there are more prisoners engaged in structured activities, less prisoners in the yard, more opportunities for training and improved employment outcomes on release. Open workshops, according to the principles of Regime Management Planning, should complement the Discipline Function, through keeping prisoners engaged in purposeful activity, leading to reduced assaults, reduced hospital escorts and creating a safer environment for both prisoners and staff.

In practice, however, COWTs described the Work and Training function as secondary to the Discipline function and the Prison School. It was reported that while essential services (i.e. catering, laundry, industrial cleaning and waste management) have been largely prioritised, the non-essential workshops were routinely closed and resources diverted elsewhere. This was the reported to be the case both during and before the Covid-19 pandemic. Routine workshop closures were described as contributing to a lack of motivation among Work and Training staff, disengagement of prisoners and an impediment to accreditation (COWTs, POA, IASIO). Stakeholders (COWT, POA) called for Work and Training to be resourced and prioritised as an essential service, with a commitment to this reflected in each Prison's RMP. Keeping the workshops open at reduced staffing levels, under the agreed principles of the RMP, would mean closing the yard to prisoners who do not wish to engage in structured activity and would require a cultural change on the part of some prisons (POA).

While Work and Training has often been praised by Prison Visiting Committees, routine workshop closures have been identified as contributing to limited prisoner rehabilitation progress in some of the most recent Prison Visiting Committee Annual Reports^{24 25}.

6.2 Prisoner Progression Planning

A number of stakeholders (POA and COWTs) indicated that “*all prisons cannot be everything to every prisoner*” and continue to function effectively. For example, where a Work Training Prison also acts as a committal prison and holds protection prisoners, remand prisoners, sex offenders and Organised Crime Gang (OCG) affiliated prisoners it make it impossible to operate workshops consistently and at full capacity. This is due to resource redeployment for court escorts for the remand population, armed escorts for OCG affiliated prisoner population and not being able to mix protection prisoners and the general population. Currently, all prisons have a Work and Training function. However, some stakeholders identified a Prisoner Progression Plan as a potential solution to current inefficiencies in the delivery of Work and Training. A Prisoner Progression Plan would formally designate certain prisons as Work and Training Prisons. It would also see protection prisoners housed in separate prisons to the general population. A progression plan, according to stakeholders, would ensure a defined pathway from a designated committal/remand prison before transfer to a designated work training prison for the general population or separate prison for protection prisoners or high security prisoners. Finally, eligible prisoners would leave via an open centre. There would be regional flexibility in the flow plan. According to stakeholders, such a model would serve to maximise churn of prisoners through workshops and in turn improve employability of more prisoners.

6.3 Delivery of accreditation

There is no standardised approach to recording accreditation received by prisoners engaged in Work and Training across IPS. Therefore, this review could not quantify the level of accreditation delivered across the Prison Service. While it was stressed by many stakeholders interviewed that accreditation should not be the only measure of success, it was identified as a crucial factor in securing employment that interests the individual and delivers a living wage (COWTs, POA, IASIO, Working to Change representative). A number of stakeholders agreed it is crucial that IPS improve the level of

²⁴

<http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Mountjoy%20Prison%20Visiting%20Committee%20Annual%20Report%202019.pdf/Files/Mountjoy%20Prison%20Visiting%20Committee%20Annual%20Report%202019.pdf>

²⁵

<http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Cork%20Prison%20Visiting%20Committee%20Annual%20Report%202019.pdf/Files/Cork%20Prison%20Visiting%20Committee%20Annual%20Report%202019.pdf>

accreditation delivered to people in their custody (Persons in Custody, COWTs, IASIO, CJS Working to Change representative). One prisoner stressed that people on longer sentences should be able to get industry standard accreditation while in custody to enable them to take up employment on release. In his case, he is embarking on a three-year culinary course upon release from prison, having spent four years working in the prison kitchen.

Stakeholders identified a number of challenges to delivering accredited training to prisoners. The challenge of holding individuals constant to complete accreditation was cited as a barrier to accreditation by IASIO staff and COWTs. Prisoners completing individual accredited training may be released or transferred to another facility before certification. For example, Cork Prison pioneered an initiative with CIT, with eight prisoners embarking on a level 6 Culinary Studies course. Only three prisoners completed this course, as five prisoners were transferred before completion. Offering accreditation in a more modular, “bitesize” format was recommended as one means of ensuring people can work toward an over-arching accredited award, in the context of possible transfer or release.

In other instances COWTs identified barriers including inconsistent workshop opening hours to ensure delivery of all necessary modules; WTOs not having the relevant training to deliver accreditation; a loss of motivation on the part of WTOs due to routine workshop closures; and a failure to identify new external verifiers when those previously in place move on.

6.4 Defining purpose and measuring success

Conversations with stakeholders, including people in custody, COWTs, IASIO staff, the CJS Working to Change representative, and other IPS staff, point to a number of purposes of Work and Training that can be summarised as follows:

- Delivery of accreditation and skills to secure employment upon release, contributing to desistance from criminality;
- Delivery of essential services across the prison estate that would otherwise be outsourced;
- Engagement in purposeful activity with a view to managing prison time and maintaining positive mental health and wellbeing;
- Instilling confidence, building self-esteem and cultivating pride and work ethic in individuals; and
- Creating hope for the future, allowing individuals to organise their present differently.

There was a consensus among all stakeholders that a true measure of success was broader than measuring accreditation or employment outcomes. Although these are the ultimate goals, there are often incremental steps required to get people to a place where they can attain and retain employment that should be considered when measuring performance. For example, one prisoner described his work in both the prison laundry and prison kitchen as having given him a sense of what it is like to get up early for work and got him used to having a routine, having been long-term unemployed prior to committal. He intends to pursue further training and subsequent employment on release. Furthermore, a prisoner in the Dóchas centre described the opportunity for training as important for instilling confidence. She described a sense that in prison everything feels out of your control, but if she could pre-train for a career in prison it would give her confidence when she is released.

By defining the breadth of purpose of work and training, IPS can begin to consider whether there are indicators of success that are not currently captured.

6.5 Engaging Employers

The CJS Working to Change stakeholder cited the role of employers in contributing to the design and delivery of the programme of Work and Training as key piece that is missing in the current model of delivery. Conversations with IASIO staff and COWTs highlighted examples of good practice with regard to employer engagement, whereby prisons have built up relationships with employers in the community resulting in training and employment opportunities for people on TR or upon release. However, best practice in England and Wales demonstrates the positive impact of involving employers at the earliest stage in the process i.e. defining the training to be delivered. By involving employers from the outset, it increases their understanding of what happens in prison and allows IPS to incorporate employers needs into the programme delivered. Furthermore, it alerts employers to the skills and talents they may be missing by not recruiting from this cohort of people. The DOJ-led employers forum initiated under the 'Working to Change Strategy' provides an opportunity for the Justice Sector to engage potential employers in planning for Work and Training in prisons.

6.6 Work and Training Options

Many stakeholders (COWTs, IASIO, Prisoners, CJS Working to Change representative) felt there is a need to broaden the programme of training offered in prisons. Stakeholders discussed a number of options, including pre-apprenticeship programmes, barista training, barbering, ITEC health and fitness

training, safepass, manual-handling, constructions site driver ticket training, chef training, silver service and menu creation, accredited waste management, bike repair, and driver CPC. That being said, IASIO TEOs acknowledged that there are a lot of activities available in the prison at present that, if accredited, would be useful in terms of labour market activation for people preparing for release.

Stakeholders, including IASIO staff and prisoners, also called for an increased focus on preparing women for employment on release. They indicated that training opportunities for female prisoners are limited when compared with the male prisons. Stakeholders also described how the lack of an Open Centre for women to progress to impacts on women's motivation to develop their employment skills. While employment on day-to-day release is usually facilitated for women in the Dóchas Centre, these opportunities have not been available since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Stakeholders identified a need to look at what the prisoners themselves value in delivering training. For example, IASIO stakeholders referenced a difficulty in engaging Travellers with work training or structured activity in prison. In engaging Travellers in structured activity, Midlands prison facilitated workshops to align with the interests of Travellers in custody, ultimately resulting in the introduction of a Furniture Restoration workshop.

Persons in custody for sexual offending face additional barriers to employment on release. Stakeholders discussed the development skills opportunities for self-employment upon release as one key factor in overcoming barriers to progression post-release.

6.7 Digital Literacy and Innovation

While the Work and Training function and Prison Education Centres deliver some digital literacy training, it was highlighted by stakeholders (IASIO, CJS Working to Change Representative) as an area requiring increased coverage by key stakeholders. As identified in section 4.5, the impact of Covid-19 in moving employment and training online has created a barrier for some people upon release due to poor digital literacy and/or a lack of access to a device to get online. Concerns were also expressed by IASIO stakeholders around the longer term impact on shifts in workplace and training culture i.e. remote/blended learning and remote working, and how this will serve to compound prison leavers disadvantage in obtaining training and employment opportunities.

There was also discussion among stakeholders around how digital innovation could be leveraged to broaden the programme of work and training delivery within the limitations of a prison environment. For example, key stakeholders, including IASIO and COWTs, pointed to the potential value of

leveraging simulator technology available in the market to deliver training in operating construction site machinery (see section 5.1.3).

6.8 Work Training Officer Vacant Posts

A barrier to workshops opening and accreditation of staff identified across most sites visited was WTO vacancies. COWTS described a situation where vacant WTO posts have meant that workshops are permanently closed in some cases or in other cases Prison Officer Grades with skills in the area will act up to ensure certain workshops can open. COWTs described this as a daily challenge and an impediment to accreditation for prisoners.

6.9 Section Summary

Routine workshop closures and limited delivery of accreditation were two key issues identified by stakeholders as needing to be addressed in order to improve outcomes for prison leavers. Stakeholder recommendations for more efficient and effective service delivery include adherence to the core principle of Regime Management Planning across the estate, the introduction of a prisoner progression model, a shift to delivering accredited training in a more modular way and engaging employers in both the development and delivery of the Work Training programme. In measuring outcomes, there is a need to define the mission and purpose of Work and Training, taking into consideration the broad work that goes into preparing prisoners for employment, and communicate this to staff and prisoners across the system.

7. International Comparisons

Prison Systems vary in their delivery of vocational skills training to persons in their custody. Given geographical location and labour market similarities, the Northern Ireland Prison Service, HMPPS England and Wales and the Scottish Prison Service are examined in this section with a view to determining good practices in creating employability for prison leavers through delivery of vocational training in prison. It is not possible to compare the cost of vocational training due to the disparity in the model of delivery between IPS and the jurisdictions reviewed.

7.1 Northern Ireland Prison Service

The Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) has a prison population of approximately 1,400 people²⁶. There are three prison establishments:

- **Maghaberry:** a modern high security prison housing adult male long-term sentenced and remand prisoners, in both separated and integrated conditions.
- **Magilligan:** a medium to low security prison which holds male prisoners with six years or less to serve and who meet the relevant security classification.
- **Hydebank Wood College and Women's Prison:** has a focus on education, learning and employment accommodates young people between the ages of 18 and 21. It also accommodates female remand and sentenced prisoners.

The most recent re-offending estimates from Northern Ireland indicate that 45% of adults released from custody in the 2017/2018 financial year, re-offended within one year of release²⁷. This compares with 48% of adults in the Republic of Ireland.

The Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) operate an import model of learning and skills. Since 2017, NIPS have outsourced its Learning and Skills (L&S) to Belfast Metropolitan College at Hydebank Wood and Maghaberry, and North West Regional College at Magilligan, with the aim of “ensuring that individuals are supported to improve their learning and skills while in prison custody, thereby increasing employability, supporting effective resettlement and reducing the risk of future offending”.²⁸ The most recent Service Level Agreement (SLA) providing for the delivery of ‘Learning and Skills’ in all three custodial establishments, will be in place for the next five years. This SLA

²⁶ See <https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/topics/statistics-and-research/ni-prison-service-statistics>

²⁷ Analytical Services Group, Department of Justice (2020). ‘Adult and youth reoffending in Northern Ireland (2017/2018 Cohort)’. Department of Justice.

²⁸ See <https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/topics/prisons/learning-and-skills>

between NIPS and Belfast Metropolitan College (acting on behalf of the College partnership) is funded by the Northern Ireland Prison Service.

Training and education are delivered under the remit of '*Learning and Skills*'. Each establishment has a dedicated Learning & Skills Centre, which provides a curriculum of 30 subjects/activities to prisoners in custody across Northern Ireland. Each of these activities are accredited, with Level 3 the highest level of accreditation attainable currently (see appendix C). The day-to-day delivery of these services are managed locally in partnership between a NIPS Activities Governor and a College Head of Learning in each Establishment, with strategic operational oversight provided by a college Regional Head of Prison Programmes manager to ensure consistency and coherence across the three sites. There is a formal process in place for review of the curriculum, with the curriculum set for review two years after the initiation of the SLA. The delivery model, while based on a Further Education curriculum does not follow the academic year, with continuous delivery over a 48-week period.

There are also purposeful activities delivered outside the remit of '*Learning and Skills*' that offer holistic stimulation for some prisoners that do not wish to engage in accredited learning or skills development. The list of purposeful activities available is broad and includes personal development modules, crafts and skills, and parenting and family matters modules. An Activities Governor manages purposeful activity locally, and depending on the activity, is delivered by Prison Staff, NIPS Psychology Service Staff, and Voluntary and Community Sector organisations. Currently, where there are opportunities to accredit purposeful activities, the Further Education Colleges will link in locally and develop accreditation where appropriate. There is an increased focus under the most recent Service Level Agreement on promoting a more collaborative approach with other service providers to ensure NIPS' Further Education partners are engaged in developing/assisting new opportunities for accredited learning.

The partnership with FE colleges has seen the gradual phase out of the NIPS equivalent to Work Training Officer i.e. Grade C Instructor. While a small number remain in their post currently, the delivery of Grade C Instructor workshops is guided by the FE Colleges to ensure the standards required by the awarding bodies for accreditation. Upon outsourcing the delivery of Learning and Skills to FE Colleges in 2017, all former prison teaching staff became employees of the FE colleges. Furthermore, any new teaching staff are recruited and employed by the Colleges.

7.2 HMPPS England and Wales

As of June 2021, there were approximately 78,000 people living in 131 prisons across 17 regions in England and Wales²⁹. The most recent re-offending estimates from England and Wales indicate that 26% of adults released from custody from July to September 2019, re-offended within one year of release.

Prison Industries and prison services are the main employer of prisoners across prisons in England and Wales. Prison industries (PI) employ approximately 12,500 prisoners at any one time for 17.4 hours per week on average³⁰. PI provide a wide range of goods and services for the prison estate, commercial companies and Government Departments. Approximately 13,000 prisoners also work in prison services locally, such as catering and cleaning³¹. Prison service employees (instructional officers) deliver training and supervision in prison industries and services. Unlike Ireland, instructional officers are not trained as prison officers. They are prison service staff employed for the purpose of delivering training.

The presence of prison officers in these workshops is dependent on the category of Prison/Prisoner. In England and Wales, prisoners are categorised based on risk of escape, harm to the public, if they were to escape and their threat to the control and stability of a prison. Dependent on the prison/prisoner category, a prison officer may always be present in a workshop with the IO; one prison officer may rotate across a number of workshops; or in the case of Open Prisons, no prison officer is present with the IO.

There has been a change in focus for HMPPS in recent years, from purposeful activity to employability. In 2018, The Ministry of Justice published their 'Education and Employment Strategy', which set out key steps in reforming the delivery of work, training and education in prisons and preparing prisoners for employment. The strategy shifts the focus from the short-term goal of purposeful activity while incarcerated, to long-term success of sustainable employment opportunities on release. This shift of focus is reflected in the HMPPS Prison Performance Framework, which now sets a target for each prison with regard to the 'rate of employment at six weeks following release'. Targets are set locally, with the most recent data indicating 4% of prisons in England and Wales are meeting their target with regard to the rate of employment six weeks following release. On average across the England and

²⁹See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/prison-population-figures-2021>

³⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-and-employment-strategy-2018>

³¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-and-employment-strategy-2018>

Wales Prison Estate, 9.6% of prison leavers were recorded as being in employment six weeks after release³².

The Strategy introduced a 'New Futures Network' (NFN), which has an "explicit remit to broker partnerships between prisons and employers that create opportunities for ex-prisoners on release, in addition to delivering purposeful activity in prison". The NFN has 20 staff in total, with 17 Regional Employment Brokers across the estate. The role of the NFN is to identify regional employment needs based on labour market intelligence and work with prisons to commission services or programmes to meet these needs. The NFN also source sustainable employment options for prison leavers through engagement with a regional network of employers. Labour market needs are revised annually and fed back to prisons. Governors have autonomy in commissioning a programme of training, with an expectation of annual revision based on labour market need.

HMPPS have rolled out a number of initiatives to promote sustainable employment for prison leavers, including:

- **Work History and Skills Database:** In order to improve the skills matching of prison leavers with roles, NFN are developing a database of prisoners' work history prior to imprisonment, skills and experience acquired in prisons and aspirations for employment on release. This is considered an important step to promoting employment retention through placing people in the right roles. Prisoners can also self-refer to NFN for roles of interest, based on jobs boards available at digital kiosks on prison wings and also on a virtual campus available to prisoners.
- **Social Value Clause:** The NFN are working with the MOJ and other Government Departments to ensure the inclusion of a 'Social Value Clause' into all supplier contracts, indicating that there is an expectation that all suppliers winning contracts provide sustainable employment opportunities, wherever it is deemed proportionate and relevant to the nature of the procured service, for an agreed number of prison leavers.
- A representative of the NFN sits on **The Employers' Forum for Reducing Re-offending (EFFRR)**. EFFRR is a HMPPS-led collective of local and national employers that provide training and employment opportunities for offenders. This forum offers a dialogue between HMPPS and employers in terms of employers and prison leaver needs. The forum also facilitates mentoring of businesses who are considering or starting out in employing prison leavers.

³² <https://data.justice.gov.uk/prisons/life-after-prison/employment-on-release>

- **Academy model:** HMPPS introduced an 'academy model' whereby businesses set up, fund and run workshops within a prison, delivering industry-standard qualifications reflecting labour-market gaps. The academy model also delivers employment opportunities on release. Halfords bicycle retailer, for example, enable prisoners to train as bicycle mechanics and facilitate employment opportunities for trainees on both day release and full release. Timpson also run an academy across a number of UK prisons, training prisoners on all aspects of working at a Timpson branch, including use of machinery and equipment, completing paperwork and cashing up shop tills. London School of Fashion and Greggs Bakery also run training academies and provide employment opportunities upon release.

Text Box 1. The Clink Rehabilitation Model

The Clink Rehabilitation Model, funded through philanthropic grants and donations, is proven to successfully create the link between training and employment within prison to opportunities for employment on release, in turn reducing re-offending. The Clink Charity works in partnership with Her Majesty's Prison & Probation Service to deliver 14 training projects across prisons in England and Wales. These projects include four fine dining training restaurants behind prison walls, six production kitchens, three Gardens and one events catering business. The five step, though the gate, integrated programme involves a) prison based training and accreditation b) work experience, facilitated in the prison kitchen c) a workplace placement on day release at one of the 200+ Clink partners in the catering industry d) employment on release, brokered by the Clink, and e) mentoring support post release. Estimates show the rate of reoffending for prisoners who participated in the scheme was 15%, compared to 22% for those who did not. A cost-benefit analysis of the Clink's integrated training and support model estimated that for every £1 invested, The Clink Charity is likely to generate at least £4.80 back to the prison service, government and society in reduced reoffending rates.

7.3 Scottish Prison Service

The Scottish Prison Service (SPS) have 15 establishments in total, 13 of which are operated by the SPS and two of which are run by private sector operators under contract to the SPS. There are approximately 8,000 people in custody in Scotland. The most recent re-offending estimates from Scotland indicate that 26.3% of adults released from 2017 to 2018, re-offended within one year of release.

Similar to the Irish Prison Service, the SPS model of delivery of training workshops is different to that of education. The Education Function is delivered by Tutors and Support Staff from Fife Further Education College. Training workshops, including essential services, are delivered by Prison Officers. For certain roles, e.g. joinery, electrician, chef, individuals are recruited based on their qualifications to deliver training in a specific workshop, and subsequently complete Prison Officer Training. This grade (Officer Instructor) is classed as operational staff and require the same annual discipline training as other Prison Officers.

Within each establishment there is a 'Link Centre' which delivers a holistic service that creates a point of contact between people in custody and services including, but not limited to:

- Department of Work and Pensions – to deliver information on social supports and benefits,
- Prison Work Coaches - to provide advice, CV writing and support prison leavers into employment,
- Fair Start Scotland - who link in with a range of employers and provide support to offenders on release with creating links to employment,
- Skills Development Scotland - who provide employability advice, access and guidance for people,
- a range of employment agencies and supportive employers - for work opportunities, including possible apprenticeships, and
- housing agencies.

The Scottish Prison Service Employability Strategy 2017-2022 points to the need to move toward more qualitative measures of performance, in addition to traditional measure of churn through workshops. As echoed in the IPS stakeholder narrative, SPS recognise that in some cases progress may be modest whilst, in others, the change may be profound. The strategy highlights the need to identify and report on the distance travelled in each case.

While the education and vocational training workshops are delivered under separate models in SPS, the SPS Learning and Skills Strategy 2016-2021 promotes the integration of education activities with vocational training and life skills to improve levels of engagement and delivery of services and outcomes through more embedded learning.

The Employability Strategy also provides for early employer/partner engagement in providing direction on skills required and potential employability opportunities. SPS have hosted some enterprise workshops in a number of establishments. Barriers to the success of such workshops were identified as location of establishments and the suitability of persons in custody.

7.4 Section Summary

The key difference between the delivery of vocational training in IPS, as compared with NIPS and HMPPS England and Wales is the staffing model, whereby Prison Officers deliver training in Ireland. In Northern Ireland, England and Wales, accredited vocational training is delivered by external providers including Further Education partners, instructional officers (non-discipline), and to a lesser extent, private industries and charities. SPS adopt a similar model to IPS, in that Prison Officers deliver vocational training, however for certain roles individuals are recruited based on their qualifications to deliver training in a specific workshop, and subsequently complete Prison Officer Training. Within IPS applicants must have at least three years operational experience, including prisoner contact and discipline, and are not required to have prior experience or qualifications in the types of work training activities delivered by the Irish Prison Service, with some specific exceptions in specialised training roles.

In reviewing other jurisdictions, it was apparent that there had been key shifts in strategy and delivery of vocational training with a view to improving post release outcomes. The mission of training delivery in HMPPS England and Wales demonstrates a clear shift in focus from purposeful activity to employment retention. Initiatives recently introduced by HMPPS England and Wales, such as employment brokers, a social value clause and an employer's forum, illustrate a focus on creating opportunities for secure employment. NIPS have adopted and revised a partnership approach with FE colleges with a view to enhancing post-release employability outcomes for prisoners. The strategy and model of delivery of vocational training within IPS, however, not evolved in recent years, to the extent of its UK counterparts.

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

Data gaps hindered a comprehensive evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of Work and Training. It is not currently possible to identify outcomes such as accreditation or employment, training or education on release for persons in custody who engage in Work and Training. Stakeholders discussed the development of a Work and Training database. The integration of Work & Training data with that currently captured on the Prisoner Education Management System (PEMS) would serve to provide a complete view of prisoner engagement in accredited and/or structured activity while in custody.

To facilitate effective oversight of Work and Training, it is recommended that the Irish Prison Service ensure the systematic collation of the following data:

- Prisoner IDs of all persons engaged in work and training
- Work Training activities attended
- Duration of engagement
- Accreditation detail, where relevant.

A follow-up review of the effectiveness and efficiency of Work and Training in Prisons should be commenced once the data gaps identified during this research have been addressed.

Based on conversations with key stakeholders, the data on Work and Training currently collated by IPS is subject to data quality issues and was therefore not used as part of this analysis. A standardised approach to data collection needs to be defined and communicated in order to ensure data is accurate and comparable across the prison estate. The rollout of a system to capture Work and Training information should assist in standardising data collection and improve data quality. However, this is dependent on a shared understanding across the service of definitions behind each data point, for example, the minimum number of hours a workshop must be open to be classified as 'open' for that day. Clear guidelines are required to promote this shared understanding. Furthermore, training for COWTs around data collection would also improve the quality of the data generated. This should be incorporated into the training needs analysis for the COWT role that is currently being undertaken by IPS.

Once the aforementioned data is systematically collated, it becomes possible to evaluate programme effectiveness, through linking objectives, inputs and activities, to outputs and outcomes. Identification of outputs and outcomes, such as employment retention and desistance from offending

will require access to data from external sources, subject to data protection compliance. In terms of employment retention, the IPS should explore options to leverage existing administrative data through the National Data Infrastructure (NDI)³³ led by the CSO. Previous analysis of prisoner outcomes, based on linked administrative data, demonstrates the potential policy insights to be achieved through the inclusion of IPS data in the NDI³⁴. Furthermore, the inclusion of a Work and Training indicator in the Prison Re-Offending Series published by the CSO would make it possible to explore the potential impact of engagement in Work and Training on recidivism.

There is a need for clarity and alignment on performance indicators, underpinned by a clear purpose and mission of Work and Training. Accreditation, while important, is not the only measure of success, according to the majority of stakeholders interviewed. Indeed, the Prison Service in England and Wales measure employment at six weeks following release, where engagement with employers highlighted an appetite for people with a good work ethic as being more important, in some cases, than accreditation. That being said, there is a need for improved oversight of accreditation, as one tangible and key outcome of the delivery of Work and Training.

International evidence and best practice points to the value of aligning vocational training in prisons to labour market demand. Both HMPPS England and Wales and Northern Ireland Prison Service have a formal process in place for aligning vocational training to labour market need. It is recommended that IPS leverage labour market intelligence to ensure the work and training programme in prisons is flexible and responsive to labour market need.

The operating framework underpinning Work and Training would need to support a shift toward creating a programme that is flexible and responsive to the labour market. While stakeholders discussed co-operation between the Work and Training Service in Prisons and the Prison Education Centres delivered by ETBs, there is scope for greater integration and alignment of these services to provide a programme of education and skills that is flexible and responsive to labour market demand, and maximises progression opportunities for prison leavers. With a view to improving progression pathways for people in custody, IPS have begun engagements with SOLAS, who provide a range of Further Education and Training (FET) programmes that are responsive to regional social, economic

³³ The National Data infrastructure (NDI) is one element of a multi-faceted approach to promoting the sharing data across Government to facilitate better service delivery, support better decision making, increase the ease of access to services and drive efficiencies.

³⁴ <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/fp/p-offo/offenders2016employmenteducationandotheroutcomes2016-2019/>

and skills demand. In addition to this, there is scope for IPS to focus their current offerings, for example in construction, to incorporate specific skills in which there are identified shortages.

Best practice in England and Wales demonstrates the positive impact of involving employers at the earliest stage in the process i.e. defining the training to be delivered. The DOJ-led employers forum initiated under the 'Working to Change Strategy' provides an opportunity for the Justice Sector to engage potential employers in planning for Work and Training in prisons.

While acknowledging the security challenges to digital innovation within prisons, there is a growing need to expand programmes around digital literacy and digital competence as core employability skills. There is scope to co-ordinate delivery of IT skills between the Work and Training function and Education Centres, with a view to maximising the impact of these offerings for people in custody. Furthermore, with continued skills deficits forecast in the ICT sector, there is an opportunity for IPS and the Criminal Justice Sector broadly to engage with employers around training prisoners and prison leavers to meet those skills gaps.

The Irish Prison Service Training College completed an audit of competency of Work Training in 2020. This process should be repeated with a view to ensuring any gaps in competency to deliver accreditation where relevant are addressed.

The stakeholder narrative identified the adverse impact of resourcing issues on the delivery of Work and Training. In making the above recommendations, it is acknowledged that these are the core issues that need to be addressed for Work and Training to function efficiently and effectively. It is beyond the scope of this paper to make recommendations on how to resolve issues including Work Training Officer Vacancies, the impact of the court escorts and hospital escorts on Workshop opening through the redeployment of staff, and the impact of consistent reduced starting level detail on redeployment of staff. A previous recommendation from a 'Value for Money and Policy Review of Prisoner Escorts in the Criminal Justice System' pointed to the potential of Videolink technology to substantially reduce the need for escorts and associated resources. The onset of Covid-19 accelerated the use of Videolink between the Prison Service and Courts Service. If this is sustained and built upon, it has the capacity to free up resources at the prison level. Furthermore, the IPS are currently undertaking an internal review of Work Training Areas, with a view to making recommendations on staffing requirements.

Appendix A. Accreditation available through Work & Training

Prison	Training Activity	Possible Accreditation Available	Course Details
Arbour Hill	Carpentry	City and Guilds Skills Foundation and/or Proficiency Certificate in Basic Carpentry	Basic carpentry skills using hand tools.
Castlerea	Carpentry	City and Guilds Skills Foundation and/or Proficiency Certificate in Basic Carpentry	Basic carpentry skills using hand tools.
		City and Guilds Construction Skills 6219	This course facilitates entry level to diploma – each level for each prison to be approved by City and Guilds. Modules available in construction, carpentry, painting/decorating, tiling.
Cork	Kitchen/Mess	City and Guilds Catering foundation and Proficiency course 3528-50/3529-50	
	Gym	Community Coaching certification FETAC Level 3 in association with the gym staff, education dept. and sports partnership (external) .	
	Print shop	ECDL foundation level available,	
	Industrial Cleaning	CleanPass	
	Gym	Fetac Level 3 C	Community Coaching certification FETAC Level 3 in association with the gym staff, education dept. and sports partnership (external).
Limerick*	Carpentry	City and Guilds Skills Foundation and/or Proficiency Certificate in Basic Carpentry	Basic carpentry skills using hand tools.
	Laundry	Guild of Cleaners and Launderers	
	Kitchen	City & Guilds/FSAI, Food Safety & You, National Hygiene Partnership	
	Staff Mess	City & Guilds/FSAI Food Safety & You, National Hygiene Partnership	
	Industrial Cleaning	Clean Pass	
	Computer/Print	ECDL	

Loughan	Industrial Skills	Entry Level 3 Award in Construction Skills 6219-01	This course facilitates entry level to diploma – each level for each prison to be approved by City and Guilds. Modules available in construction, carpentry, painting/decorating, tiling.
Midlands	Carpentry	City and Guilds Construction Skills 6219	See below
	Building Skills	City and Guilds Construction Skills 6219	This course facilitates entry level to diploma – each level for each prison to be approved by City and Guilds. Modules available in construction, carpentry, painting/decorating, tiling.
	Metalwork	Accreditation levels in welding conform to EN9606 as part of the EN1090 umbrella.	
	Furniture Restoration	QQI Level 5	External provider
	Stone & Wood Carving	Certificate of Competency	External provider
Wheatfield	Carpentry	City and Guilds Construction Skills 6219	See below.
	Construction/Building Skills	City and Guilds Construction Skills 6219	This course facilitates entry level to diploma – each level for each prison to be approved by City and Guilds. Modules available in construction, carpentry, painting/decorating, tiling.
	Metalwork	Accreditation levels in welding conform to EN9606 as part of the EN1090 umbrella.	
	Industrial Cleaning	Clean Pass	
	Catering	City and Guilds Proficiency in Basic Food Preparation	
	Laundry	Guild of Cleaners and Launderers	Practical Laundry Certification
	Gym	University Of Limerick Foundation Skills Health & Fitness	
	Ind Skills (Framing)	In-house Beginners & Advanced Certs In House	

*Building Skills, Stores, Horticulture, Furniture Restoration, Carpentry/Hurley Repair Workshops under Construction in Limerick Prison new build

Appendix B: Stakeholder groups engaged

Key stakeholder interviews were carried out with the following groups as part of this review:

15 Persons in Custody – nine men; six women

5 Chief Officers in Work and Training (COWTs), *Irish Prison Service*

5 GATE Service Staff, *Irish Association for Social Inclusion Opportunities (IASIO)*

2 Representatives , *Prison Officer Association (POA)*

1 Social Enterprise Project Manager ('Working to Change: Social Enterprise and Employment Strategy 2021-2023' representative), *Irish Criminal Justice Sector*

1 Head of Learning and Skills, *Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS)*

1 Head of Strategy (New Futures Network), *HM Prison and Probation Service England and Wales (HMPPS)*

1 Policy Lead on Prison Education, *HM Prison and Probation Service England and Wales*

1 Chief Executive, *The Clink Restaurant*

Several Irish Prison Service staff were also consulted as required from the following areas:

- Care and Rehabilitation Directorate Staff
- HR Directorate Staff
- Irish Prison Service College Staff

Appendix C. Learning and Skills Curriculum – Northern Ireland Prison Service

	Magilligan	Maghaberry	Hydebank
Art	Level 1 Level 2	Up to 'A' level	Entry level 3 Level 1 Level 2 GCSE
Art – Certificate in creative techniques in 2D		Level 1 Level 2	
Art – Award in Creative Techniques in 2D and 3D		Level 1	
Barbering	Level 1 Level 2	Level 2 Level 3	Level 2
Barista Skills		Level 2	Level 2
Business Admin		Level 2	Level 1
Construction	CSR card		
Construction (Bricklaying)		Level 1	
Construction (carpentry and Joinery)	Level 1 Level 2	Level 2 Level 3	Level 1
Construction (Painting and decorating)	Level 1 Level 2	Level 1 Level 2	
Construction (Tiling)	Level 1 Level 2	Level 1 Level 2	
Construction (Woodworking)	Level 1 Level 2		
Customer Service			Level 2
Creative writing	Level 1 Level 2 Level 3		
Employability	Level 1 Level 2	Level 1	Level 1
English		Up to level 2	
Environmental Management	Level 1 Level 2		
ESOL	Entry Level to Level 2	Entry level to level 2	
Essential Skills - ICT	Level 1 Level 2	Up to level 2	Entry level 3
Essential Skill - Literacy	Entry level 1 to level 2	Up to level 2	Entry level 2-3 Level 1 Level 2
Essential Skills – Numeracy	Entry level to level 2	Up to level 2	Entry level 2-3 Level 1 Level 2
Entry level IT	Entry level 3		
Facilities management			Level 1
Food safety and Hygiene	Level 2	Level 1	
Hair and beauty			Entry level 3 Level 2
Health & Safety Contact Dermatitis		Level 2	Level 2
Health & Safety in the workplace		Level 2	Level 1
Health & Safety in the workplace (Supervisors)		Level 3	
Horticulture	Level Level 2	Level 1 Level 2	Entry level 3 Level 1
Horticulture – working in agriculture and production		Level 2	

	Magilligan	Maghaberry	Hydebank
Hospitality and catering		Level 1 Level 2	Level 1 Level 2
Industrial cleaning		Entry level 3 Level 1 Level 2	Entry level 3 Level 1 Level 2
Irish	Up to level 2	GCSE up to A Level	
Manual handling		Level 2	Level 2
Maths		Up to level 2	
Nutrition	Level 2	Level 1	Level 1
PC Maintenance	Level 1 Level 2 Level 3		
Peer mentoring – advice and guidance		Level 3	
Peer mentoring – learning support practitioners		Level 2	
Retail skills			Level 1
Waste and recycling			Level 1
Welding	Level 1 Level 2		

Quality Assurance process

To ensure accuracy and methodological rigour, the author engaged in the following quality assurance process.

- ✓ Internal/Departmental
 - ✓ Line management
 - ✓ Spending Review Steering group
 - ✓ Other divisions/sections
 - ✓ Peer review (IGEES network, seminars, conferences etc.)
- ✓ External
 - ✓ Other Government Department
 - ✓ Peer review (IGEES network, seminars, conferences etc.)