



IPRT Submission to UN Working Group on Women deprived of liberty

1st October 2018

About IPRT

Established in 1994, the Irish Penal Reform Trust (IPRT) is Ireland's leading non-governmental organisation campaigning for rights in the penal system and the progressive reform of Irish penal policy. Our vision is one of respect for human rights in the penal system, with prison as a sanction of last resort. We are committed to respecting the rights of everyone in the penal system and to reducing imprisonment. We are working towards progressive reform of the penal system based on evidence-led policies and on a commitment to combating social injustice.

IPRT publishes a wide range of policy positions and research documents; we campaign vigorously across a wide range of penal policy issues; and we have established IPRT as the leading independent voice in public debate on the Irish penal system.

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Introduction

IPRT welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the UN Working Group on Women deprived of liberty. Please note our submission is made within the parameters of IPRT's expertise. The relevant questions have been selected that we feel appropriate to provide evidence, or comment on.

Justice System

- 1. What are the main causes for women coming into conflict with the law and facing the associated deprivation of liberty, including pre-trial detention? Which are the groups of women who are most vulnerable and why? Please list the types of offenses for which women, or any particular group of women, are typically charged with, including administrative offenses.**

(i.) Causes of Women coming into conflict with the law

Numbers of Women in Custody

In 2017, the daily average number of women in custody in Ireland is 144.¹ (This is an increase of 2.9% from the 2016 daily average figure.²) The daily average of women in custody in Ireland in 2000 was 72.³ This means a 100% increase on the number of women being sent to prison in Ireland since 2000. The increasing number of women in prison (in particular remand) in the last year has been identified as an emerging trend.⁴ The sustained growth in women's imprisonment has also been viewed as a contributory factor to the overall rise in the prison population in Ireland over the last year.⁵

¹ Irish Prison Service, *Annual Report 2017*, p.5 https://www.irishprisons.ie/wp-content/uploads/documents_pdf/IPS-annualreport-2017.pdf

² Ibid.

³ Irish Prison Service, *Irish Prison Service Report 1999 and 2000*, https://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/5327/1/IPS_annual_report_1999_2000.pdf (see p.32 for daily average number of women in the Dóchas at 59 in 2000 and 13 for Limerick female prisons on p.35)

⁴ *Sixth Report of the Implementation Oversight Group to oversee implementation of the recommendations of the Penal Policy Review Group* [http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Letter from Chairperson of the Implementation Oversight Group to the Minister for Justice and Equality July 2018.pdf/Files/Letter from Chairperson of the Implementation Oversight Group to the Minister for Justice and Equality July 2018.pdf](http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Letter%20from%20Chairperson%20of%20the%20Implementation%20Oversight%20Group%20to%20the%20Minister%20for%20Justice%20and%20Equality%20July%202018.pdf/Files/Letter%20from%20Chairperson%20of%20the%20Implementation%20Oversight%20Group%20to%20the%20Minister%20for%20Justice%20and%20Equality%20July%202018.pdf)

⁵ Kane, K (2018) 'Prison capacity now at 92% following "spike" in admissions, POA conference hears', *Irish Examiner*, 19th April 2018 <https://www.breakingnews.ie/ireland/prison-capacity-now-at-92-following-spike-in-admissions-poa-conference-hears-838237.html>

The continued growth of the female prison population in Ireland is reflective of a global trend: the world's female prison population has increased by 53% since 2000.⁶ Some reasons identified internationally for this growth include: women being imprisoned as a result of poverty or discrimination; the impact of gender-based violence (a new report by the Prison Reform Trust⁷ highlights how domestic abuse is a driver for women's offending); harsher drug laws; alongside the treatment of female ethnic minorities in criminal justice systems.⁸

Committals

7,484 persons were sent to prison in Ireland in 2017 and of these 14.5% were female.⁹ The number of female persons committed has seen a decrease (from 2546 in 2016¹⁰ to 1081 in 2017¹¹). One reason for this reduction may be attributed to the positive impact of the commencement of the *Fines (Payment and Recovery Act) 2014*¹² which became operational in January 2016.¹³ The *Fines (Payment and Recovery Act) 2014* allows fines (over €100) to be paid in instalments.

Characteristics of the Female Prison Population in Ireland

There has been a lack of recent domestic research on the female prison population in Ireland. Older domestic studies have found women engaged with the criminal justice system in Ireland were often characterised by poverty, social disadvantage, limited access to education and higher levels of unemployment.¹⁴ These women are more likely to have experienced trauma, childhood sexual abuse, domestic and sexual abuse, poor mental health, addiction and homelessness.¹⁵

⁶Penal Reform International (2018) *Global Prison Trends 2018*, p. 16 https://www.penalreform.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/PRI_Global-Prison-Trends-2018_EN_WEB.pdf

⁷Prison Reform Trust (2017) "There's a reason we're in trouble" *Domestic abuse as a driver to women's offending* [http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/Portals/0/Documents/Domestic abuse report final lo.pdf](http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/Portals/0/Documents/Domestic%20abuse%20report%20final%20lo.pdf)

⁸Penal Reform International (2018) *Global Prison Trends 2018*, p. 16 https://www.penalreform.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/PRI_Global-Prison-Trends-2018_EN_WEB.pdf

⁹ Irish Prison Service, *Annual Report 2017*, p.27 https://www.irishprisons.ie/wp-content/uploads/documents_pdf/IPS-annualreport-2017.pdf

¹⁰ Irish Prison Service, *Annual Report 2016*, p.31 http://www.irishprisons.ie/wp-content/uploads/documents_pdf/12631-IPS-annualreport-2016_Web.pdf

¹¹ Irish Prison Service, *Annual Report 2017*, p.33

¹² Irish Statute Book, *Fines (Payment and Recovery) Act 2014* <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2014/act/7/enacted/en/html>

¹³ Department of Justice & Equality, *Minister Fitzgerald commences Fines (Payment and Recovery) Act 2014*, <http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/PR16000009>

¹⁴ Carmody, P. & M. McElroy (1996) *A study of Irish female prisoners*, The Stationery Office, Dublin and Comiskey, C, O'Sullivan K & J.Crody (2006) *Hazardous Journeys to better places: positive outcomes and negative risks associated with the care pathway before, during and after an admittance to the Dochas centre, Mountjoy Women's prison in Ireland*, <https://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/6064/1/3060-3242.pdf>

¹⁵ Kennedy et al., (2005) *Mental health in Irish prisoners: psychiatric morbidity in sentenced, remanded and newly committed prisoners*, National Forensic Mental Health Service, Dublin. O'Mahoney, P. (2008) *Key Issues for drugs policy in Irish prisons*, Drug Policy Action Group, Dublin. Maycock P. & S. Sheridan (2012) *Women's 'Journeys' into Homelessness: Key Findings from a Biographical Study of Homeless Women in Ireland*, Trinity College Dublin. IPRT (2012) *The Vicious Circle of Social Exclusion and Crime: Ireland's Disproportionate Punishment of the Poor*.

A report in 2015 estimated that approximately 85% of women prisoners in Ireland have addiction issues, *‘they have been in and out of prison on multiple occasions and have been engaged in substance abuse for a long time.’*¹⁶ It was reported in 2017 that ‘lifetime prevalence’ and ‘past month use’ of heroin, crack and powder cocaine is much higher for female prisoners compared to both the male prison population and the general population.¹⁷

There is also a high prevalence of mental health issues among female prisoners reported.¹⁸

*‘I’ve seen people go off their head inside prison, they’ve had so much time to think. What they’ve done, what’s happening outside...I’ve seen women that have put ropes around their necks. Travelling women, for the same reasons. Dead. All that time, so much time to think.’*¹⁹

Overcrowding in Women’s Prisons

Snapshot 2018 Prison Populations²⁰ figures demonstrate on the first date of every month in 2018, women’s prisons have been consistently above operating capacity:

Date	Dóchas Centre (Capacity)	Limerick Female Prison (Capacity)
1 st January 2018	118%	113%
1 st February 2018	117%	121%
1 st March 2018	118%	138%
2 nd April 2018	119%	158%
1 st May 2018	127%	163%
1 st June 2018	139%	175%
2 nd July 2018	130%	171%
1 st August 2018	134%	125%
3 rd September	117%	117%

¹⁶ Clarke A., & Eustace A. (2016) *Review of Drug and Alcohol Treatment Services for Adult Offenders in Prison and in the Community*, p.74

https://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/26569/1/PS_IPS_Probation_Review_of_treatment_for_offenders.pdf

¹⁷ Department of Health (2017) *Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery, A health-led response to drug and alcohol use in Ireland 2017-2025*, p.45 <https://health.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Reducing-Harm-Supporting-Recovery-2017-2025.pdf>

¹⁸ Kennedy H., Monks S., Curtin K., Wright B., Linehan S., Duffy D., Teljeur C & A. Kelly (2005) *Mental health in Irish prisoners: psychiatric morbidity in sentenced, remanded and newly committed prisoners*, National Forensic Mental Health Service, Dublin.

http://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/6393/1/4338_Kennedy_Mental_illness_in_Irish_prisoners.pdf

¹⁹ IPRT (2014) *Travellers in the Irish Prison System*, p. 28. <http://www.iprt.ie/contents/2624>

²⁰ Irish Prison Service, *2018 Prison Populations*, <https://www.irishprisons.ie/information-centre/statistics-information/2015-daily-prisoner-population/2018-prison-populations/>

Girls in Detention

Oberstown Campus is the only child detention facility in Ireland.²¹ Oberstown is licenced to accommodate 6 girls.²² During 2017 there were two girls detained in Oberstown.²³ Following an external review, it was recommended that girls should no longer be placed in Oberstown.²⁴ The Department of Children and Youth Affairs and Oberstown Child Detention Campus have stated that implementing this recommendation would require a change in law.²⁵

Pre-trial Detention

There is no separate remand facility for females in prison in Ireland. As of the 10th July 2018, there were 36 females on remand in the Dóchas centre.²⁶ 16 of those females were sharing a cell with a sentenced prisoner.²⁷

There were 422 female remand committals in 2017,²⁸ with a daily average of 30 women on remand.²⁹ This compares to 392 female remand committals in 2016³⁰ with a daily average of 27.³¹ In 2015, there were 382 remand female committals³² with a daily average of 22.³³ In 2018, the growing number of women on remand in custody has been highlighted as a concern.³⁴

The Strategic Review Group on Penal Policy previously found a 'higher use of remand in the case of females (18.9%) in 2013 compared to males (14%).'³⁵

²¹ See website, *Oberstown Child Detention Campus*, <https://www.oberstown.com/2018/09/27/oberstown-publishes-report/>

²² Oberstown Campus, *Annual Report 2016/2017*, p.4 <https://www.oberstown.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/OberstownAnnualReportFINAL.pdf>

²³ *Ibid.* p.14

²⁴ Department of Children and Youth Affairs, see Recommendation 20, <https://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/20180627RevImplGroupRecomdsAccordThemes.pdf>

²⁵ Oberstown Children Detention Campus & Department of Children and Youth Affairs, *Review Implementation Group*,

²⁶ Houses of the Oireachtas, *Prisoner Data*, 10th July 2018 <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2018-07-10/303/>

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Irish Prison Service, *Annual Report 2017*, p.33 https://www.irishprisons.ie/wp-content/uploads/documents_pdf/IPS-annualreport-2017.pdf

²⁹ *Ibid.* p.66

³⁰ Irish Prison Service, *Annual Report 2016*, p.31

³¹ *Ibid.*, p.66

³² Irish Prison Service, *Annual Report 2015*, p.29

³³ *Ibid.*, p.53.

³⁴ *Sixth Report of the Implementation Oversight Group to oversee implementation of the recommendations of the Penal Policy Review Group* http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Letter_from_Chairperson_of_the_Implementation_Oversight_Group_to_the_Minister_for_Justice_and_Equality_July_2018.pdf/Files/Letter_from_Chairperson_of_the_Implementation_Oversight_Group_to_the_Minister_for_Justice_and_Equality_July_2018.pdf

³⁵ Strategic Review of Penal Policy Final Report, p.64

Proportionately, women are more likely to be placed on remand for committing non-violent offences. Committal on remand has been described as often used to provide stability in a chaotic lifestyle, or provide access to services to which the woman would not otherwise have access to.³⁶

The Strategic Review Group on Penal Policy (2014)³⁷ recommended undertaking research on high number of female subjected to committal on remand. However, this research has not been published.

(ii.) Over-representation of Traveller women

Traveller women are over-represented in the Irish prison system. It is estimated that the risk of a Traveller woman being imprisoned is 22 times more likely than for non-Traveller women.³⁸ The relative risk of imprisonment for female Travellers was also higher than for male travellers.³⁹ CEDAW⁴⁰ (2017) recommended that the Irish State address the root causes of the overrepresentation of Traveller women in places of deprivation of liberty.

(iii.) Offence type

There were 563 female committals in 2017 as a result of the non-payment of a court ordered fine (this compares with 1,698 males) and 2 female debtors committed during 2017.⁴¹

Snapshot figures show the majority of females under sentence on the 30th November were for *'Theft and Related Offences.'*⁴²

³⁶ Strategic Review Group on Penal Policy, p. 65.

³⁷ Department of Justice & Equality (2014) *Strategic Review of Penal Policy, Final Report*, <http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Strategic%20Review%20of%20Penal%20Policy.pdf/Files/Strategic%20Review%20of%20Penal%20Policy.pdf>

³⁸ University College Dublin (2010) *All-Ireland Traveller Health Study: Summary of Findings*, p.110 https://www.ucd.ie/t4cms/AITHS_SUMMARY.pdf

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, *Concluding Observations on the second periodic report of Ireland*, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CAT/Shared%20Documents/IRL/INT_CAT_COC_IRL_28491_E.pdf

⁴¹ Irish Prison Service, *Annual Report 2017*, p.36 https://www.irishprisons.ie/wp-content/uploads/documents_pdf/IPS-annualreport-2017.pdf

⁴² Irish Prison Service, *Offence Group of prisoners under sentence on comparable day each year 2017-2017*, https://www.irishprisons.ie/wp-content/uploads/documents_pdf/SNAPSHOT-Offence-Group-Year-2007-to-2017.pdf

Offence Group	Snapshot for females under sentence, 30 th November 2017 ⁴³
Theft and Related Offences	47
Homicide Offences	18
Attempts, Threats to Murder, Assaults, Harassments and Related Offences	13
Burglary and Related Offences	10
Controlled Drug Offences	6
Road and Traffic Offences	4
Government, Justice Procedures and Organised Crime Offences	3
Public Order and Other Social Code Offences	3
Sexual Offences	2
Fraud, Deception & Related Offences	2
Weapons and Explosive Offences	2
Damage to Property & environment offences	1
Kidnapping and related offences	1
Robbery, extortion and hijacking offences	0
Offences not elsewhere classified	0

2. What are the main challenges for women’s access to justice, including, for example, the availability and quality of legal representation, the ability to pay for bail, and the existence of gender stereotyping and bias in judicial proceedings?

IPRT’s expertise does not extend to trial matters. However we raise a number of access to justice issues arising within prison.

(1.) Bail

The Strategic Review Group of Penal Policy (2014) previously noted that:

“Anecdotally, there is a sense that women are complicit in their committal to prison, either through an inability to raise bail or not seeking bail and perhaps preferring the support offered by the prison system.” ⁴⁴

The group recommended further research to be completed on reasons behind the number of female offenders on remand. This research has not been published.

⁴³ This information has been taken from the Irish Prison Service, *Offence Group of prisoners under sentence on comparable day each year 2017-2017*, https://www.irishprisons.ie/wp-content/uploads/documents_pdf/SNAPSHOT-Offence-Group-Year-2007-to-2017.pdf

⁴⁴ Strategic Review of Penal Policy (2014) *Final Report*, p.68
<http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Strategic%20Review%20of%20Penal%20Policy.pdf/Files/Strategic%20Review%20of%20Penal%20Policy.pdf>

(2.) Inspections and Monitoring

Ireland is the second last EU country to ratify OPCAT.⁴⁵ The last inspection report by the Inspector of Prisons Office for the main women's prison was published in 2013.⁴⁶ This was described as an 'interim'⁴⁷ report with a full report to be published following a six month period. This, or indeed any inspection report on the Dóchas female prison by the Inspector of Prisons has not been published since 2013.

(3.) Complaints

Ireland has no independent external complaints mechanism for prisoners. Furthermore, there is no individual advocacy service for the prisoner population in Ireland.

3. What have been the main drivers for the increasing or decreasing of the female prison population in your country in the past decade? To what extent are non-custodial measures used, in accordance with the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (Bangkok Rules)?

Lack of Gender Specific Community Sanctions

The Irish Prison Service and the Probation Service committed in a strategy 2014-2016 committed to '*develop women specific Community Service and Community Return options⁴⁸*' and explore other potential research opportunities to inform effective delivery of service in the community and custody. There is little published data or analysis on what these options look like for women. It was acknowledged previously by the Strategic Review Group of Penal Policy, the '*lack of appropriate community based programmes for female offenders impacts on the level of committals.*⁴⁹

The Community Return Programme⁵⁰, (though highly successful with the male prison population at a compliance rate of 90%⁵¹), was not as successful for women. It was previously reported that a large proportion (60%) of women were returned to prison.⁵²

⁴⁵See OPCAT Database <https://www.apt.ch/en/opcat-database/>

⁴⁶ *Interim report on the Dóchas Centre by the Inspector of Prisons Judge Michael Reilly October 2013*, <http://www.inspectorofprisons.gov.ie/en/IOP/Dochas%20Centre%20Report%20%202013.pdf/Files/Dochas%20Centre%20Report%20%202013.pdf>

⁴⁷ Inspector of Prisons Reports, *Interim Report on the Dóchas Centre*, http://www.inspectorofprisons.gov.ie/en/iop/pages/inspection_of_prisons_reports

⁴⁸ Joint Probation Service-Irish Prison Service Strategy 2014-2016, *An Effective response to Women who Offend*, p.12 http://www.irishprisons.ie/images/pdf/female_strategy.pdf

⁴⁹ Strategic Review on Penal Policy (2014), *Final Report*, p.69

⁵⁰ The Community Return is a structured form of release for prisoners serving between 1 and 8 years to do supervised community sentence as opposed to the remainder of the sentence, more information on Community Return available here <http://www.justice.ie/EN/PB//WebPages/WP16000037>

⁵¹ See Department of Justice & Equality, *Minister Flanagan publishes the Probation Service Strategy 2018-2020 One Vision, One Team, One Standard, the third Probation Service and Irish Prison Service Joint Strategic Plan 2018-2020 and the Probation Service and Irish Prison Service Annuals Reports 2017* <http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/PR18000207>

⁵² Porporino F. (2015) "*New Connections*" *Embedding Psychology Services and Practice in the Irish Prison Service*, p.23 http://www.irishprisons.ie/wp-content/uploads/documents_pdf/porporino_report.pdf

An explanation offered for this was reported as a result of failure or an ‘inability’ to comply with conditions of release. It was suggested that access to a follow up therapeutic relationship that was commenced in prison may ameliorate this situation.⁵³

In 2017 the Probation Service worked with 1,400 female offenders.⁵⁴ 218 Community Service Orders were given to female offenders in 2017.⁵⁵ This is a slight increase from the number of Community Service Orders handed out at 215 in 2016 and 175 in 2015.⁵⁶ IPRT believes that further investigation is required in order to assess whether there are sufficient gender-specific community sanctions available to women nationwide.

Accommodation and Wraparound Supports

Female offenders in Ireland are 4.6 times more likely than males to experience difficulties with accommodation.⁵⁷ While male prisoners have access to two open prisons in Ireland, there is currently no open provision for females in Ireland. Commitments of a timeline to establish a step down facility for females by the State have not been met. This is despite a recommendation for the establishment of a less restrictive regime for females by the *Strategic Review of Penal Policy* and a commitment by the Department of Justice and Equality in its *National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017–2020*.⁵⁸

The first report⁵⁹ of the Implementation Oversight Group who monitor progress on recommendations made by the Strategic Review Group of Penal Policy indicated that the facility was due to open by quarter 4 of 2016; the second progress report⁶⁰ indicated the unit would open by quarter 2 of 2017; and the third⁶¹ report gave a timeline of quarter 4 of 2017. The *National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017–2020*⁶² gives a timeline for the opening of the facility of quarter 1 2018. The new timeline provided for in the fifth Implementation Oversight Group report is quarter 4 of 2018.⁶³

⁵³ Ibid. p.28

⁵⁴ The Probation Service, *Annual Report 2017*, p.18

[http://www.inis.gov.ie/en/JELR/Probation Service Annual Report 2017.pdf/Files/Probation Service Annual Report 2017.pdf](http://www.inis.gov.ie/en/JELR/Probation%20Service%20Annual%20Report%202017.pdf/Files/Probation%20Service%20Annual%20Report%202017.pdf)

⁵⁵ Ibid. p.52

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Kelly, J. & J. Brogue (2014) Gender Differences in Criminogenic Needs among Irish Offenders, *Irish Probation Journal*, p.97

⁵⁸ Department of Justice & Equality, *National Strategy for Women & Girls 2017-2020: creating a better society for all*, p.46 [http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017 - 2020.pdf/Files/National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017 - 2020.pdf](http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/National%20Strategy%20for%20Women%20and%20Girls%202017%20-%202020.pdf/Files/National%20Strategy%20for%20Women%20and%20Girls%202017%20-%202020.pdf)

⁵⁹ Department of Justice and Equality (2015) *First Report of the Implementation Oversight Group to the Minister for Justice and Equality-November 2015* [http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/Penal Policy Review](http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/Penal%20Policy%20Review)

⁶⁰ Department of Justice and Equality (2016) *Second Report of the Implementation Oversight Group to the Minister for Justice and Equality-June 2016* [http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/Penal Policy Review](http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/Penal%20Policy%20Review)

⁶¹ Department of Justice and Equality (2017) *Third Report of the Implementation Oversight Group to the Minister for Justice and Equality-March 2017* [http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/Penal Policy Review](http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/Penal%20Policy%20Review)

⁶² Department of Justice and Equality, *National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017–2020*, p. 46 [http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017 - 2020.pdf/Files/National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017 - 2020.pdf](http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/National%20Strategy%20for%20Women%20and%20Girls%202017%20-%202020.pdf/Files/National%20Strategy%20for%20Women%20and%20Girls%202017%20-%202020.pdf)

⁶³ Penal Policy Review Group (2018) *Fifth Report of the Implementation Oversight Group* [http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/Penal Policy Review](http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/Penal%20Policy%20Review)

The latest published report on the main's female prison, the Dóchas Centre, by a Visiting Committee⁶⁴ in 2016 highlighted four key issues for women:

1. Unequal treatment of women due to lack of open facilities and the failure to provide gender specific community based open or step down facilities for women
2. Unacceptable condition of Dóchas campus
3. Homelessness and difficulty accessing supported safe accommodation on release
4. Overcrowding

In terms of accommodation supports the Visiting Committee observed:

“A number of vulnerable women are leaving Dóchas, which is state care, homeless. They do not have safe or supported accommodation and only have sufficient funds for Bed & Breakfast accommodation for one night. Thereafter, their only option is to try to get into a nightly hostel. Thus they are immediately thrown back onto the streets, into the milieu of drugs, alcohol, criminality and danger that has often fuelled their problem in the first instance and the hard work of the dedicated staff and supports in Dóchas, and of the women themselves, is undone.”⁶⁵

The absence of graduated supports upon leaving prison and post-release leaves women at risk of repeated cycles of homelessness and imprisonment.

IPRT hopes the information provided is helpful to the Working Group. Please do not hesitate to contact IPRT (contact details provided on the cover page) if any additional information is required.

⁶⁴ Prison Visiting Committee, *Dóchas Centre Visiting Committee Annual Report 2016*, http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/Prison_Visiting_Committee_Annual_Reports_2016

⁶⁵ Ibid.

Appendix A: Relevant Concluding Observations made to the Irish State

Concluding Observations by the UN Committee against Torture⁶⁶ (2017) to the Irish State for women in prison included:

16 (b.) Continue efforts aimed at reducing overcrowding and improving material conditions in all places where women are detained, in line with the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-Custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules)

16 (c.) Consider increasing the use of non-custodial measures and alternatives to detention, in keeping with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for Non-Custodial Measures (the Tokyo Rules)

Concluding Observation by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women⁶⁷ recommended:

In line with the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules), the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Improve women's conditions in all places of deprivation of liberty by addressing the problem of overcrowding in line with international standards, and ensure that monitoring and oversight mechanisms are in place and that clear procedures for complaints are available;

(b.) Irish State address the root causes of the overrepresentation of Traveller women in places of deprivation of liberty.

⁶⁶ Committee against Torture, *Concluding Observations on the second periodic report of Ireland*, p.14
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CAT/Shared%20Documents/IRL/INT_CAT_COC_IRL_28491_E.pdf

⁶⁷ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, *Concluding Observations on the second periodic report of Ireland*,
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CAT/Shared%20Documents/IRL/INT_CAT_COC_IRL_28491_E.pdf