Seirbhís Phríosúin
na hÉireann
Irish Prison Service

IRISH PRISON SERVICE DRUGS STRATEGY

2023-2026

Irish Prison Service
www.irishprisons.ie

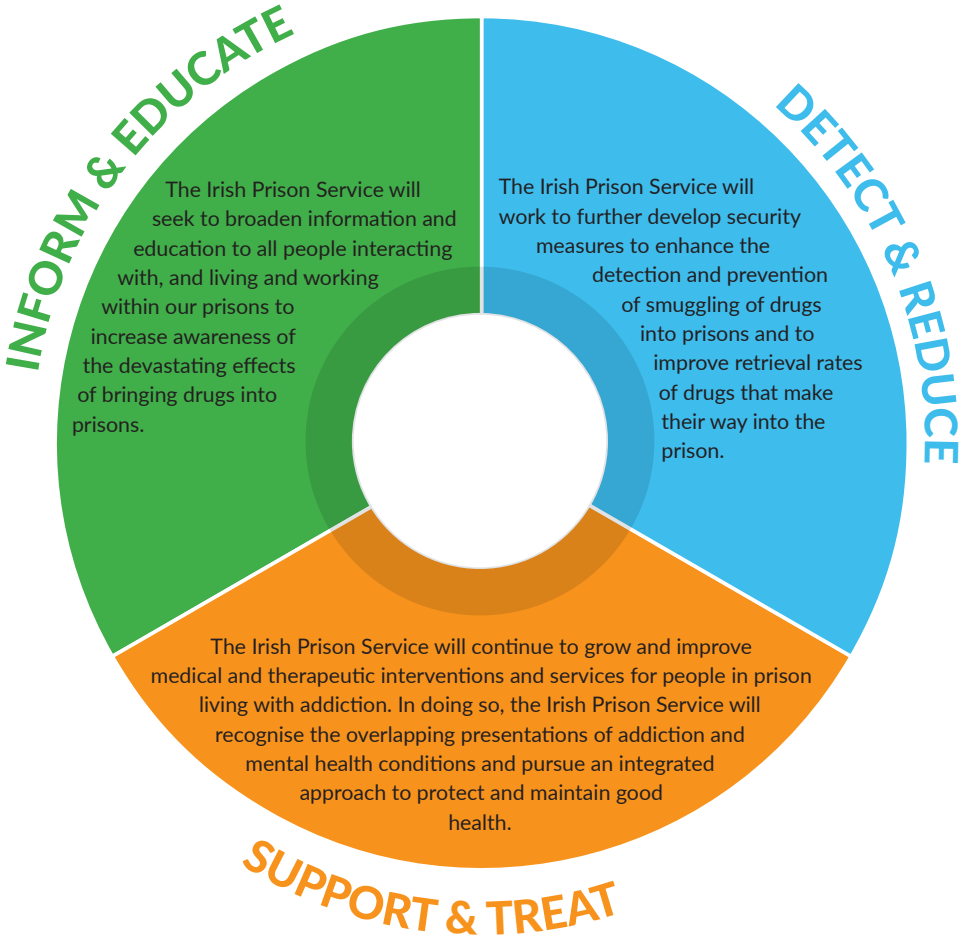
Delivering a more sustainable prison environment

1 INTRODUCTION

The mission of the Irish Prison Service (IPS) is to provide safe, secure and humane custody for people who are sent to prison. The IPS is committed to managing custodial sentences in a way which encourages and supports prisoners in their endeavouring to live law abiding and purposeful lives as valued members of society.

The pernicious nature of the problems caused by the presence of harmful drugs in prisons, and in communities, has been well-documented. The incursion of illicit drugs to the prison environment poses a number of challenges and problems for prisoners and prison-based staff, not only in terms of the negative health issues caused by addiction, but also by increasing threats to safe custody and good order as manifested in acts of violence, self-harm, bullying and other criminal activity.

The purpose of the Irish Prison Service Drugs Strategy 2023-2026 is primarily to update the commitments of the *IPS Keeping Drugs Out of Prison Strategy*, and to set out clear measures to be taken by the IPS to tackle the problem of substances of abuse in prisons over the next three years. For the purposes of this document, the generic terms of 'drugs' and 'substances of abuse' will be used to refer to both illicit and prescribed drugs controlled under Misuse of Drugs legislation, and any substance abused for any physiological and/or psychoactive response in the user. The Irish Prison Service seeks to confront the issue of substances of abuse in prisons with the following interactive components to our approach:



It must be recognised that the prison environment mirrors the same range of activity and challenges arising in many communities grappling with the scourge of illicit drug use. In order to meaningfully tackle the issue of substances of abuse in prisons, the Irish Prison Service must work in partnership with all agencies across the criminal justice sector, additional support agencies that are active in Irish prisons, and relevant community-based organisations to achieve the goals of this strategy together.

2 OBJECTIVES

INFORM & EDUCATE	DETECT & REDUCE	SUPPORT & TREAT
Deter all those who seek to bring substances of abuse into the prison environment with information regarding harmful effects	Increase detection and intelligence-gathering capabilities to disrupt the availability of substances of abuse in prisons	Continue to build an integrated care model to address dual diagnoses of addiction and mental health illness
Increase awareness and understanding of drug-related harm	Increase the use and consistency of operational drug-screening and use incentives effectively to reduce drug-use	Continue to collaborate with multiple agencies to enhance drug treatment and counselling options to maximise opportunities to reduce harm while in prison custody

3 TARGETS FOR IMPLEMENTATION IN THE LIFE-TIME OF THE STRATEGY

1. Inform & Educate			
No.	**Action**	**Process**	**Owner(s)**
1.1	Increase understanding and awareness of drug-related harm with : ▲ Prisoners ▲ Visitors to Prisons ▲ Staff ▲ Visiting Support Services ▲ Community-Based Support Services.	1.1.1 Increase and improve media presence on all IPS media platforms regarding drug-related harm and the IPS partnership approach to harm reduction	Care & Rehabilitation, Corporate Services
		1.1.2 Improve messaging in Prison Visit Area & Online Booking Messaging on Website to address harm reduction practices	Care & Rehabilitation, Corporate Services
		1.1.3 Devise & publish harm reduction, addiction service, and peer support service information on Prisoner Information TV Channel	Care & Rehabilitation
		1.1.4 Increase use of Peer-Led Red Cross Programme to support harm reduction message	Care & Rehabilitation
		1.1.5 Work with our Education & Training Board (ETB) and clinical partners to deliver harm reduction awareness in prison schools	Care & Rehabilitation
1.2	Continue to publicise use of Confidential Phone Line to ensure people are aware of its existence	1.2.1 Evaluate the current delivery model for the publicly available Confidential Phone Line to review efficacy	Operations
		1.2.2 Scope potential to expand the Confidential reporting service for all who come into contact with the Irish Prison Service to include contact through text message and/or online anonymous messaging	Operations, ICT
		1.2.3 Re-invigorate publicity for Confidential Phone Line Service via website and targeted messaging for visitors and service providers	Operations, Corporate Services, Care & Rehabilitation
		1.2.4 Use IPS social media & media engagement to promote Confidential Phone Line	Corporate Services
		1.3.1 Maintain membership of established international networks to continuously evaluate and develop new health approaches to manage the health impact of drugs in prisons	Operations, Care & Rehabilitation

1.3	Increase and sustain interaction with other state partners and other prison jurisdictions to gain insight into new technologies and therapeutic programmes that support the reduction of supply and demand for illicit substances	1.3.2 Continue to develop and enhance information sharing networks with criminal justice partners and other state agencies to share learning regarding deterrent and detection advances in drug supply management	Operations, Care & Rehabilitation
		1.4.1 Disseminate NPS information on Prisoner Information TV Channel to deter consumption	Care & Rehabilitation
1.4	Continue to monitor information on known and New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) within the prison estate	1.4.2 Continue IPS formal representation on National Early Warning Emergent Trends forum and feedback internally on contemporary developments	Care & Rehabilitation

2. Detect & Reduce			
No.	**Action**	**Process**	**Owner(s)**
2.1	Review of Physical Infrastructure	2.1.1 Drug detection & prevention to form part of Prison Security Audits as they progress across the estate	Operations
		2.1.2 Continue research to inform the introduction of specialised security scanning technologies for more effective screening, to bring the IPS into line with latest and most effective international standards	Operations
		2.1.3 Continue research to inform the ongoing development and enhancement of security measures for exercise yards as significant incursion risk points for illicit substances	Operations, Estates
2.2	Action the IPS Canine Unit Implementation Plan	2.2.1 Invest resources in the implementation of the IPS Canine Unit Implementation Plan	Operations
		2.2.2 Improve the competencies of Canine Handlers through ongoing training	Operations, IPSC
		2.2.3 Employ home-kennelling as an alternative to centralised kennelling	Operations
		2.2.4 Explore potential benefits of considering a bespoke Canine Training Facility versus on-site training	Operations, Estates

2. Detect & Reduce			
No.	**Action**	**Process**	**Owner(s)**
2.3	Enhance Security at Main Access points to Prisons	2.3.1 Increase number of screened visit areas	Operations, Estates, Human Resources
		2.3.2 Implement mandatory process to present recognised photo ID for all adult visitors	Operations, Corporate Services, ICT
		2.3.3 Examine alternative ID requirements and establish consistent practice for the identification of children presenting for visits	Operations, Corporate Services, DCYA, DPC
		2.3.4 Seek legal advice and child protection guidance to : (a) develop safe searching procedures for minors; and, (b) develop clear procedures to follow during incidents where minors are suspected of being used for drug-trafficking	Operations, Care & Rehabilitation, DCYA, DPC, An Garda Síochána, CSSO,AGOs
		2.3.5 Audit details of visitor records	Operations
		2.3.6 Invest in development of security screening areas to improve ventilation to support canine olfaction	Operations, Human Resources, Estates
		2.3.7 Evaluate and enhance internal and external training modules for relevant staff to assist in contraband detection and prevention	IPSC, Human Resources
		2.3.8 Sustain competency of x-ray screening staff with regular training and assessment for image interpretation	Operations, IPSC, Human Resources
2.4	Enhance security screening for deliveries and supplier access to prisons	2.4.1 Ensure that contractors and suppliers are aware of their obligations to safeguard against the use of deliveries and equipment to conceal contraband when entering prisons	Finance, CPU
		2.4.2 Review the predictability of supply lines from warehouses to prison stores on an ongoing basis	Finance, CPU, Operations, Human Resources
		2.4.3 Consider new methodologies and invest in security scanning technology that more efficiently identifies contraband located in supplies and deliveries entering the prison	Operations, Human Resources, Finance
2.5	Formalise Search Procedures	2.5.1 Establish formal operating procedures for general search practice	Operations, Human Resources
		2.5.2 Review the formal Service Level Agreement between Operational Support Group (OSG) & Local Prison Search Teams to continue standards of practice, and clarity for roles and responsibilities	Operations, Human Resources

2. Detect & Reduce			
No.	**Action**	**Process**	**Owner(s)**
2.6	Drone Mitigation	2.6.1 Review implementation of Drone Mitigation Project to measure effectiveness and inform future of project	Operations
2.7	Introduce a formal Drug Detection & Prevention Security Policy	2.7.1 Develop a policy document detailing security measures to be applied by staff to prevent drugs being smuggled into prisons, and the steps to be taken by staff to search for and retrieve drugs that enter the prison	Operations, An Garda Síochána, Human Resources
		2.7.2 Develop a formal document to comprehend roles and responsibilities for internal and external parties involved in the prevention of drugs being smuggled into prisons	Operations, An Garda Síochána
2.8	Improve Intelligence Capture & Information Management	2.8.1 Further develop our Intelligence Information Management Framework and centralise within Operations Directorate	Operations, ICT
		2.8.2 Collaborate with our partner agencies to examine pathways for the collation and distribution of intelligence information	Operations, Partner Agencies
		2.8.3 Develop the IPS data collection plan to facilitate greater comparisons in contraband seizures, and to support decision making regarding the allocation and deployment of finite OSG resources	Operations, ICT
		2.8.4 Develop information sharing pathway between Operations & IPS Healthcare to share learning on detection patterns and improving test mechanisms	Healthcare, Operations
2.9	Anti-Corruption Support for Staff	2.9.1 Conduct research with other criminal justice agencies and other prison jurisdictions, with particular reference to the An Garda Síochána model, to gain insight into additional anti-corruption advice, support and training options for staff	Human Resources, Operations

2. Detect & Reduce			
No.	**Action**	**Process**	**Owner(s)**
2.10	Review & Formalise Operational Drug Screening Programme for Prisoners	2.10.1 Review and update procedures for Operational Drug Screening Programme for Prisoners	Operations, Human Resources, Finance, Governance
		2.10.2 Sustain human resource allocation for Operational Drug Screening for Prisoners on an ongoing basis	Operations, Human Resources
		2.10.3 Maintain a training programme for Operational Drug Screening for Prisoners with the supplier as staff changes arise	Operations, Finance, CPU, IPSC
		2.10.4 Agree weekly targets for random and intelligence-led operational drug screening for prisoners in each prison	Operations, Human Resources, Finance, Governance
		2.10.5 Develop and formalise IPS Inter-Directorate communication pathways regarding supply, availability, typology and impact of illicit drugs in prisons	Operations, Healthcare, Governance
		2.10.6 Develop recording mechanism in PIMS to record operational drug screening results and enable sharing of information on detection trends with Healthcare	Operations, Care & Rehabilitation, ICT
2.11	Develop and enhance partnership working with An Garda Síochána	2.11.1 Work with An Garda Síochána to develop specific actions to disrupt supply and prosecute those responsible	Operations, An Garda Síochána
		2.11.2 Agree a Service Level Agreement with An Garda Síochána to agree measures to reduce drug trafficking into prisons	Operations, An Garda Síochána
		2.11.3 Meet Senior Management and Divisional Liaisons in An Garda Síochána annually with local Governors to share information on trends and best practice in order to develop joint actions to target the illicit drug supply chain	Operations, An Garda Síochána, Governors
2.12	Work to develop legislative changes to support efforts to deter trafficking of illicit substances into prisons	2.12.1 Seek to have a specific offence created for the trafficking of drugs into a prison	Operations, An Garda Síochána, Department of Justice, Office of Parliamentary Counsel

3. Support & Treat			
No.	**Action**	**Process**	**Owner(s)**
3.1	Continue to improve multi-agency collaboration to give effect to the recommendations of the 'Review of Drug & Alcohol Services for Adult Offender in Prison and in the Community 2016'. The IPS commits to supporting the recommendations of the National Drug Strategy: "Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery" and will pay particular attention to the recommendations around mental health and addiction in the Final Report of the High Level Task Force on Mental Health (2022).	3.1.1 Appoint a National Clinical Lead for Mental Health & Addiction Service to create a robust Governance Structure and Business Plan for effective Mental Health & Addiction Services	Care & Rehabilitation, Human Resources
		3.1.2 Continue to develop a co-ordinated approach for referral treatment options in line with HSE Integrated Care Management Process and the National Drug Strategy: "Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery"	Care & Rehabilitation, HSE
		3.1.3 Engage with the HSE to implement a Dual Diagnosis Programme in prisons to tackle the challenges of mental health and addiction in line with the National Drug Strategy: "Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery" & the Government Mental Health Task Force Report (2022)	Care & Rehabilitation, HSE
		3.1.4 Increase inter-agency communication with all stakeholders for continuity of care planning in line with HSE Integrated Care Development Process from committal through to completing post-release planning	Care & Rehabilitation, HSE
		3.1.5 Increase collaboration with community-based agencies to audit the effectiveness of treatment post-release	Care & Rehabilitation, HSE, Health Research Board
		3.1.6 Evaluate the 'Drug Treatment Programme' available in Mountjoy Prison with a focus on improving the physical environment and operating procedures to achieve good clinical outcomes	Care & Rehabilitation, Estates
3.2	Increase & foster collaboration between the IPS, HSE, the National Forensic Mental Health Service, the IPS National Addiction Service & Drug Treatment Programme and Community-Based Organisations	3.2.1 Continue to improve integrated treatment in prisons by working with the HSE/National Forensic Mental Health Service (NFMHS) on establishing the prevalence of mental health and addiction across the prison estate as recommended in "Sharing The Vision" and the "High Level Task Force Report on Mental Health, 2022"	Care & Rehabilitation, HSE
		3.2.2 Review Addiction Counselling Allocations with the supplier across all prisons	Care & Rehabilitation, HSE
		3.2.3 Implement the Government Mental Health Task Force recommendations pertaining to the development of Dual Diagnosis approach with the IPS Forensic Mental Health facilities	Care & Rehabilitation, HSE, NFMHS

This Strategy seeks to re-affirm work already underway across the prison estate to interrupt the pathway of substances of abuse and to support those in active addiction when they are committed to the care of the Irish Prison Service. With the support of sufficient resources the Irish Prison Service will continue to set targets to research, review and enhance methods to tackle the problem of substances of abuse and the prevailing demand for harmful drugs in the prison environment.

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CREATING A BETTER ENVIRONMENT

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