

# Victims Charter



**Rialtas na hEireann**  
Government of Ireland

# Section 7

## Prison Service

### Role of the Prison Service

The Prison Service manages prisons in Ireland.

Our role covers the following seven categories:

1. [Prisons](#)
2. [Rehabilitation](#)
3. [Sentence remission](#)
4. [Release from prison](#)
5. [Sex offenders](#)
6. [Temporary release](#)
7. [Parole board](#)

These seven categories are explained briefly below.

#### **1. Prisons**

We provide safe, secure custody for people sent to prison by the courts. Prisons range from high-security institutions to open prisons with lower levels of security. Each prisoner is placed in the type of prison that is consistent with their offence, the length of sentence and the degree of risk. You can get more information about prisons and places of detention in Ireland in the section headed 'Your guide to prisons and places of detention' towards the end of this section.

#### **2. Rehabilitation**

To prevent prisoners from re-offending when they get released from prison, we aim to rehabilitate offenders. Rehabilitation services treat and address issues such as offending behaviour, drug and alcohol addiction, lack of education and training, anger management and self-

management. This encourages the personal development of prisoners and prepares them for their release when they will have to re-settle into the community.

### **3. Sentence remission**

All prisoners with a sentence to which remission applies automatically are, under law, entitled for a one quarter remission of their sentence on the basis of their good behaviour (the term remission here means a reduction in the length of a prison sentence). This is taken into account by judges when passing sentence.

In addition, all such prisoners who have taken part in authorised activity may apply to receive an enhanced remission period of greater than one quarter but not more than one third of their sentence. However, there is no automatic entitlement to enhanced remission.

Prisoners who cannot benefit from remission include those serving life sentences.

Prisoners serving life sentences have no set release date and are only freed with the approval of the Minister for Justice and Equality following a recommendation by the Parole Board.

### **4. Release from prison**

Offenders are usually released from prison when they complete their sentence, or when they are approved for temporary release. A life-sentenced prisoner released from prison is subject to certain conditions for life, including supervision by the Probation Service and other conditions designed to protect the public. If they breach [do not follow] these conditions, the prisoner may have to return to prison.

Prisoners may be released as a result of an appeal or some other legal process. In certain cases, a prisoner who has not been convicted may be released on bail, after an application to the courts.

## **5. Sex offenders**

All sex offenders released from prison after September 2001 are subject to certain restrictions. They must notify An Garda Síochána of their current address and of any future change in address.

## **6. Temporary release**

This allows us to re-integrate an offender into the community in a planned way. Temporary release arrangements include:

- release under the direct supervision of the Probation Service;
- release under the Community Return Scheme or Community Support Scheme;
- release to employment or training programmes;
- compassionate release because of ill-health or family circumstances; or
- release to help the offender re-integrate when they are nearing the end of their sentence.

We take many factors into account when considering prisoners for temporary release, including any possible danger to the public and to their victim. When we release an offender on temporary release, we try to make sure that they do not come into contact with the victim of their crime.

## **7. Parole Board\***

The Board advises the Minister for Justice and Equality about long-term prison sentences. As with temporary releases, the Board takes a wide range of factors into account when it makes a recommendation. A victim, or the family of a victim who has died as a result of the crime, may make a written submission to the Parole Board. The Minister may fully or partly accept the recommendations of the Parole Board, or reject them completely.

**\*Please note that the Parole Act, 2019 provides for the establishment of an independent statutory Parole Board and work is underway in providing for these new arrangements.**

## **What you can expect from the Prison Service**

**Our mission** – to provide safe and secure custody, dignity of care and rehabilitation to prisoners for safer communities.

**Our vision** – to make communities safer through excellence in a prison service built on respect for human dignity.

The Victim Liaison Service is a voluntary and strictly confidential service. If you wish to receive information **about an offender convicted for an offence against you**, we will register your name and contact details and you will be a 'registered victim' with the Irish Prison Service Victim Liaison Service.

### **We will:**

- try to rehabilitate offenders sentenced to prison, so that other people will not become victims of their crimes;
- make sure that we will take into account possible risks to you in all cases of temporary release;
- make sure all efforts are made to prevent an offender in prison from causing further upset to victims.

**Based on their request we will also tell registered victims (victims registered with our Victim Liaison Service) the following information.**

**We will tell you when:**

- when the offender is to be released from prison, either on temporary release **or** at the end of their sentence **if** you or a member of your family have requested this information;
- if the release is ordered by the Court (We would usually do this **after** the release has happened.);
- any release or discharge conditions;
- information about other relevant developments about the prisoner's sentence **if** you request this. (These include developments such as transfers between prisons or Parole Board hearings (for prisoners sentenced to eight years or more);
- if the prisoner has escaped from custody;
- if the prisoner dies while in custody or on temporary release.

**We will also tell An Garda Síochána about the release of all sex offenders**

If you or a family member or a third party acting on your behalf would like to **register with our Victim Liaison Service** to be kept informed of significant developments in a particular prisoner's case, please contact the Prison Service Victim Liaison Officer. Contact details are given below.

As a registered victim, if you have any questions about the Irish Prison Service, you can contact the:

Victim Liaison Officer  
Irish Prison Service Headquarters  
IDA Business Park, Ballinalee Road  
Co Longford.

**Tel:** (043) 333 5100

**Email:** [vlo@irishprisons.ie](mailto:vlo@irishprisons.ie) **Website:** [www.irishprisons.ie](http://www.irishprisons.ie)

## If we do not meet your expectations

If you wish to make a complaint about any aspect of our service, you can do so by putting your complaint in writing and sending it to the following address:

Where to contact us	
<b>Address:</b>	Operations Directorate Irish Prison Service Headquarters IDA Business Park. Ballinalee Road Co Longford.
<b>Tel:</b>	043-333 5100
<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:info@irishprisons.ie">info@irishprisons.ie</a>

## Your guide to prisons and places of detention

We do our best to place prisoners in an institution as near as possible to their homes, so that relatives and friends can visit. This is not always possible, for example, in the case of prisoners who may be a threat to the public and must be kept in a high-security prison. A committal prison is a prison to which a court can send a person directly. The Prison Service can transfer prisoners from a committal prison to other prisons or institutions.

More information on the Irish Prison Service is available at

[www.irishprisons.ie](http://www.irishprisons.ie) and the following table provides a list of our prisons:

Prison	Type of prison	Location and telephone
Arbour Hill Prison	A closed, medium-security prison for adult males. The prisoner profile is largely made up of long-term sentenced prisoners and sex offenders	Arbour Hill Dublin 7 D07YV40 01-472 4000

Prison	Type of prison	Location and telephone
Castlerea Prison	A closed, medium-security prison for adult males. It is the committal prison for remand and sentenced prisoners in Connacht and also takes committals from counties Cavan, Donegal and Longford.	Harristown Castlerea Co. Roscommon F45X330 094-962 5213
Cloverhill Prison	A closed, medium-security prison for adult males, which primarily caters for remand prisoners committed from the Leinster area.	Cloverhill Road Clondalkin Dublin 22 D22WC84 01-630 4580
Cork Prison	A closed, medium-security prison for adult males. It is the committal prison for counties Cork, Kerry and Waterford.	Rathmore Road Cork City T23Y642 021-238 8000
Dóchas Centre	A closed, medium-security prison for adult females. It is the committal prison for females committed on remand or sentenced from all Courts outside the Munster area.	North Circular Road Dublin 7 D07YC97 01- 885 8987
Limerick Prison	A closed, medium-security prison for adult males and females. It is the committal prison for males for counties Clare, Limerick and Tipperary and for females for all six Munster counties.	Mulgrave Street Limerick V94P8N1 061-204700
Loughan House	An open, low-security prison for adult males who are regarded as requiring lower levels of security.	Open Centre Blacklion Co. Cavan F91NY76 071-983 6021

Prison	Type of prison	Location and telephone
Midlands Prison	A closed, medium-security prison for adult males. It is the committal prison for counties Carlow, Kildare, Kilkenny, Laois, Offaly and Westmeath. It is also the main prison for sex offenders.	Dublin Road Portlaoise Co. Laois R32F796 057-867 2110 or 057-867 2100
Mountjoy Prison	A closed, medium-security prison for adult males. It is the main committal prison for Dublin city and county.	North Circular Road Dublin 7 D07YC97 01-806 2800
Portlaoise Prison	A closed high-security prison for adult males. It is the committal prison for those sent to custody from the Special Criminal Court and prisoners accommodated here include those linked with subversive crime.	Dublin Road Portlaoise Co. Laois R32KN97 057-868 1300
Shelton Abbey	An open, low-security prison for adult males who are regarded as requiring lower levels of security.	Arklow Co. Wicklow Y14T638 0402-42300
Wheatfield Prison	A closed, medium-security prison for adult males	Cloverhill Road Clondalkin Dublin 22 D22Y2V5 01-778 9400