Seirbhís Phríosúin na hÉireann
Irish Prison Service

PRESS RELEASE
Publication of the SADA – Self-Harm in Irish Prisons 2020/2021 Report

The Irish Prison Service has today 13th September 2024, published its fourth report on episodes of self-harm recorded in Irish Prisons. This Report includes data on episodes of self-harm that occurred during the year 2020 – 2021. The SADA project (Self-Harm Assessment and Data Analysis) was developed in 2016 by the Irish Prison Service, in collaboration with the HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention and the National Suicide Research Foundation. The reports, which are published for each year, inform and update the Irish Prison Service in response to maintaining safer prisons.

The SADA project ensures that each incident of self-harm is reviewed and lessons are learned in order to prevent future episodes of harm. It represents a unique, multi-disciplinary, inter-agency, national collaboration to making life in prisons safer place. In 2021, the SADA project recorded 421 episodes of self-harm nationally, involving 217 persons. The annual person-based rate of self-harm in 2021, at 2.6 per 100 prisoners, was significantly lower (27.8%) than the rate recorded in 2020 (3.6 per 100), but similar to the rate recorded in 2019 (2.7 per 100).

On publication of the report Director General of the Irish Prison Service, Caron McCaffrey said, “I am encouraged by the progress shown in the latest SADA report, highlighting a decrease in self-harm incidents within Irish prisons. The collaborative efforts of the SADA project continue to guide us in creating a safer environment for all individuals in our care. We remain committed to learning from each incident and implementing measures to prevent future harm, ensuring the well-being of staff and those in our custody.”

The report continues to highlight those individuals who are at greatest risk of self-harm and suicide in a prison setting and compares its findings to those in the community. The highest rates of self-harm were among female prisoners (36.9 per 100 in 2020 and 15.6 per 100 in 2021), albeit based on small numbers. The rate was higher amongst younger prisoners aged 18-29 years (4.9 per 100 in 2020 and 2.3 per 100 in 2021). The rate of self-harm decreased amongst sentenced prisoners and those on remand since 2019, although it was still 2 times higher among prisoners on remand.

The full Report is available on the Irish Prison Service Website English Version / Irish Version

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