

The Irish Prison Population: Separating Fact from...

The Irish Prison Population: Separating Fact from Perception

The Hard Facts: Evidence Over Opinion

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Foreword	3
Executive Summary	4
Key Findings	5
At a Glance	5
Chapter 1 - Methodology and Understanding the Data	5
Purpose of this Handbook	5
Study Period	6
Source	6
Understanding the Data	6
Persons in Custody	7
Prison Committals	7
Prison Releases	7
Population Comparison	7
Limitations	8
Chapter 2 - Ireland's Prison Population	8
Introduction	8
What is the Prison Population	8
Growth of the Prison Population	9
Prison Capacity	9
Key Observation	9
Why this Matters	10
Chapter 3 - Understanding the Prison Population	10
Introduction	10
Sentenced Prisoners	10
Temporary Release	11
Extradition and Immigration Detainees	11
Lifers in the Community	11
What the Data Shows	11
What the Data Does Not Show	12
Questions for Future Research	12
Chapter 4 - Offence Profile of Sentence Prisoners	12

Introduction	12
Understanding the Data	13
Offence Categories	13
Trends During the Study Period	13
Largest Offence Categories	14
What the Data Shows	14
What the Data Does Not Show	15
Questions for Future Research	15
Chapter 5 - Sentence Lengths	15
Introduction	15
Understanding the Data	16
Sentence Length Categories	16
Male Sentenced Prisoners	16
Comparing Male and Female Sentence Patterns	18
Long-Term Imprisonment	19
Prisoners on Remand	19
Average remand population	20
Highest and lowest remand population	20
Largest monthly decreases	20
What happened?	21
Interpretation	22
Chapter 6 - Offence Profile by Citizenship: A Population-Adjusted Analysis	22
Introduction	22
Why Population Matters	23
Methodology	23
Offence Profile Comparison	23
Is Immigration having an Impact on Prison Population and Offences?	26
Interpreting the data	26
Limitations	27
What the Data Shows	28
What the Data Does Not Show	28
Recommendations for Statistical Transparency	29
Chapter 7 - Crime Trends in Ireland (2024 - 2026)	29
Introduction	29
Understanding Recorded Crime	30
Data Sources	31
Methodology	31
Crime Trends by Offence Category	32
Chapter Objective	34
Offence Categories Showing the Largest Increase	34
Offence Categories Showing the Largest Decrease	35

Overall Prison Offence Trend	35
Comparing Prison Trends with Recorded Crime	36
Immigration and Crime Statistics	36
Relationship with Prison Overcrowding	37
What the Data Shows	37
What the Data Does Not Show	38
Recommendations	38
Chapter 8 - Factors Influencing the Prison Population	39
Introduction	39
Growth in Recorded Crime	39
Longer Custodial Sentences	39
Growth in the Remand Population	40
Court Delays	40
Prison Capacity	40
Population Growth and Changes in the Prison Population	41
Analysis of the Prison Population	41
Citizenship and Ethnicity	42
Interpretation	42
Relationship to the Offence Analysis	42
Citizenship Versus Ethnicity	43
Improving Transparency	43
Chapter 10 – Conclusions	44
Introduction	44
Key Findings	44
Overall Prison Population	44
Sentence Lengths	44
Remand Population	44
Offence Profile	44
Citizenship	45
Crime Statistics	45
Overall Assessment	45
Recommendations	45
Final Remarks	46

Foreword

The Irish prison system is an important part of Ireland's criminal justice system, yet many discussions about prisons, crime and imprisonment rely on headlines, assumptions or isolated statistics rather than a wider examination of the available evidence.

This handbook brings together official data published by the Irish Prison Services and other public bodies into a single, accessible reference. Its purpose is to present the information clearly, explain what the statistics measure, and provide context to help readers understand how the prison population has changed over time.

The handbook examines a range of topics including prison population trends, remand and sentenced prisoners, offence profiles, sentence lengths, nationality in custody, and comparisons with wider population data. Where appropriate, calculations are included to assist interpretation, and methodology used is explained throughout.

The report does not seek to promote a political viewpoint or encourage conclusions beyond what the available evidence can support. Statistics should be interpreted carefully and with an understanding of their limitations. Where information is not publicly available, this handbook identifies those gaps and highlights areas where additional transparency could improve public understanding.

All data presented is sourced from official publications and readers are encouraged to examine those sources independently.

Good public discussion begins with accurate information. It is hoped this handbook contributes to a better understanding of Ireland's prison system through evidence, transparency and context.

Executive Summary

This handbook provides an overview of the Irish prison population using official statistics published by the Irish Prison Service and other public bodies.

The analysis covers the period from **January 2024 to May 2026** and examines trends in the prison population over time.

The report examines:

- The overall prison population
- Sentenced and remand prisoners
- Prison committals and releases
- Temporary release
- Offence profile
- Sentence lengths
- non-Irish nationality groups in custody
- Population-adjusted custody rates
- Trends between 2024 - 2026
- Data limitations and opportunities for greater transparency.

Where appropriate, the handbook compares prison population figures with published population estimates to provide additional context. These comparisons are descriptive and should not be interpreted as explanations for differences between groups.

The handbook also identifies areas where additional statistical information could further improve public understanding of Ireland's prison system.

Every effort has been made to ensure all calculations are transparent and reproducible using publicly available data.

Key Findings

The figures below are taken from official Irish Prison Services and CSO data. Where comparative rates are used, they are calculated using the latest available population estimates. Full methodology and calculations are provided later in this handbook.

At a Glance

Total Prison Population: 6,635

Irish citizens:

Chapter 1 - Methodology and Understanding the Data

Purpose of this Handbook

This handbook has been compiled using publicly available statistics published by the Irish Prison Service and other official public bodies.

Its purpose is to bring together information from multiple official publications into a single reference document, allowing readers to better understand Ireland's prison population and the trends observed during the study period.

Unless otherwise stated, all calculations contained within this handbook have been produced by the author using official published data.

Study Period

This handbook analyses data published between January 2024 and May 2026.

The study period was selected to provide a longer-term view of prison population trends rather than relying on a single monthly snapshot.

Where monthly figures fluctuate, trends are discussed across the study period rather than drawing conclusions from individual months alone.

Source

The primary sources used include:

- Irish Prison Service Monthly Information Notes
- Irish Prison Service annual statistics
- CSO
- Other official Government publications where relevant

A full list of references is provided at the end of this handbook.

Understanding the Data

The Irish Prison Service publishes several different statistical measures.

These include:

- People committed to prison
- People released from prison
- Persons in custody
- Sentenced prisoners
- remand/trial prisoners
- Temporary release
- Offence profile
- Sentence lengths
- Nationality groups in custody

Each of these statistics measures something different and should not be interpreted interchangeably.

Persons in Custody

Unless otherwise stated, nationality analysis within this handbook is based upon the **monthly snapshot of persons in custody** published by the Irish Prison Service.

These figures represent the number of people in custody on the final day of each reporting month.

They do **not** represent the number of people committed to prison during that month.

Prison Committals

Prison committals record the number of people entering prison during a reporting period.

These figures should not be interpreted as the total prison population, as individuals may also be released during the same period.

Prison Releases

Monthly release figures record the number of people leaving custody during the reporting period.

Without considering both admissions and releases, changes in the prison population cannot be fully understood.

Population Comparison

Where nationality comparisons are presented, custody figures are compared with the latest available CSO population estimates.

To allow comparisons between populations of different sizes, custody rates are expressed per **100,000** population.

These calculations are intended to provide context and should not be interpreted as measures of offending rates.

Limitations

While the Irish Prison Services publishes extensive statistical information, certain data is not currently published in a way that allows more detailed analysis.

Examples include:

- Monthly admissions by nationality
- Monthly releases by nationality
- Offence type by nationality
- Sentence length by nationality
- Repeat committals by nationality
- Remand and sentence status by nationality

These limitations are discussed later in the handbook.

Chapter 2 - Ireland's Prison Population

Introduction

The prison population is not static. Every month, people enter prison, are released, complete their sentences, are granted temporary release, or remain in custody awaiting trial.

Understanding these movements is important when interpreting prison statistics. A single monthly figure provides only a snapshot in time, whereas examining multiple months allows longer-term trends to be identified.

This chapter examines how the Irish prison population changed between January 2024 and May 2026 using official Irish Prison Service statistics.

What is the Prison Population

The Irish Prison Service publishes a monthly snapshot showing the number of people in custody on the final day of each reporting month.

This figure represents everyone physically in custody on the date, regardless of:

- Offence type
- Nationality
- Sentence length, or
- Whether they are sentenced or on remand

Throughout this handbook, the prison population refers to these monthly end-of-month custody figures unless otherwise stated.

Growth of the Prison Population

The prison population increased during the period examined.

The monthly snapshots show that the number of people in custody fluctuated throughout the study period while following an overall upward trend.

The highest prison population and the lowest prison population observed during the study period are presented in the analysis below.

The highest prison population and the lowest prison population observed during the study period are presented in the analysis below.

Prison Capacity

Changes in the prison population have implications for prison capacity, staffing requirements, healthcare, rehabilitation programmes and accommodation.

As the number of people in custody increases, demand also increases for:

- Prison accommodation
- Healthcare services
- Mental health supports
- Educational programmes
- Rehabilitation services
- Prison officers
- Probation services

Understanding changes in the prison population therefore provides important context for later chapters.

Key Observation

The complete analysis will identify:

- Highest monthly prison population
- The lowest monthly prison population
- The average prison population across the study period

- The overall increase or decrease between January 2024 - May 2026
- Periods of notable monthly change

Why this Matters

The size of the prison population influences every aspect of the prison system.

Increasing prisoner numbers affect accommodation, staffing, healthcare, rehabilitation services and operational capacity. Monitoring these trends helps policymakers, researchers and the public understand how demand on the prison system changes over time.

Chapter 3 - Understanding the Prison Population

Introduction

Not everyone held within the Irish prison system is serving a custodial sentence following conviction.

The prison population is made up of individuals in different legal circumstances. Some are serving sentences imposed by the courts, while others are being held on remand awaiting trial or temporarily released under the Temporary Release Scheme while remaining under sentence.

Understanding these distinctions is important when interpreting prison statistics.

Sentenced Prisoners

Sentenced prisoners are individuals who have been convicted by a court and are serving a custodial sentence.

The monthly Irish Prison service reports show that sentenced prisoners consistently made up the majority of the prison population throughout the study period.

The analysis in this chapter examines how the number of sentenced prisoners changed between January 2024 and May 2026.

(remember to insert a table here)

Temporary Release

The Irish Prison Service also reports the number of prisoners on Temporary Release (TR).

Temporary Release allows certain prisoners to leave prison under specified legal conditions while continuing to serve their sentence.

Individuals on Temporary Release remain subject to the conditions of their release and continue to form part of the wider prison system.

(Remember to insert table)

Extradition and Immigration Detainees

The monthly reports also record the number of individuals detained for extradition or immigration-related matters.

These detainees form a small proportion of the overall prison population but are reported separately by the Irish Prison Service.

Lifers in the Community

The reports also include the number of individuals serving life sentence who are living in the community under supervision.

These individuals remain subject to licence conditions despite no longer residing within a prison.

What the Data Shows

- The majority of people within the prison population were sentenced prisoners
- Remand prisoners represented a significant proportion of those in custody throughout the study period
- Temporary Release numbers fluctuated from month to month
- Small numbers of extradition and immigration detainees were recorded throughout the reporting period
- Life-sentence prisoners supervised in the community were reported separately from those physically in custody

What the Data Does Not Show

- Why remand numbers increased or decreased
- Average time spent on remand
- Reasons TR was granted in individual cases
- Outcomes for people released on TR
- Detailed breakdowns of remand or TR by nationality or offence type

Questions for Future Research

- What factors influence changes in remand prisoner numbers?
 - How long do people typically spend on remand before their case concludes?
 - What proportion of remand prisoners are subsequently convicted?
 - How does TR affect prison capacity and rehabilitation outcomes
 - Would publishing additional data on remand and TR improve public understanding of the prison system?
-

Chapter 4 - Offence Profile of Sentence Prisoners

Introduction

Understanding the offence profile of the sentenced prison population provides important context about who is serving custodial sentences in Ireland.

The Irish Prison Service publishes a monthly breakdown of the principal offence category associated with sentenced prisoners. These figures represent the offence category for which prisoners are serving a sentence at the time of each monthly snapshot.

This chapter examines how those offence categories changed between January 2024 - May 2026.

Understanding the Data

The offence profile represents **sentenced prisoners only**.

It does not include people held solely on remand awaiting trial or sentencing.

The figures represent the number of sentenced prisoners in custody at the end of each reporting month and should not be interpreted as the number of crimes committed during that period.

Longer custodial sentences will naturally remain within the prison population for longer than shorter sentences and may therefore be more heavily represented within monthly prison snapshots.

Offence Categories

The Irish Prison Service groups offences into the following categories:

- Homicide offences
- Sexual offences
- Attempted murder, assault, harassment and related offences
- Dangerous or negligent acts
- Kidnapping and related offences
- Robbery, extortion and hijacking
- Burglary and related offences
- Theft and related offences
- Fraud, deception and related offences
- Controlled drug offences
- Weapons and explosive offences
- Damage to property and the environment
- Public order offences
- Road traffic offences
- Offences against Government, justice procedures and the organisation of crime
- Offences not elsewhere classified

Trends During the Study Period

This section examines how each offence category changed throughout the study period.

(remember insert table here)

For each offence category we will show:

- Lowest monthly figure
- Highest monthly figure
- Average monthly figure
- Overall change during the study period

Largest Offence Categories

The analysis identified the offence categories with the largest sentenced prison populations throughout the study period.

The complete findings are presented in the tables below.

Rank	Offence Category	Average Prison Population May 2024	Average Prison Population May 2025	Average Prison Population May 2026
1	Sexual offences	692	800	884
2	Attempted murder, assault, harassment and related offences	681	724	804
3	Theft and related offences	580	593	599
4	Controlled drug offences	417	494	515
5	Homicide offences	435	451	478

Note: to provide year-on-year comparisons, offence profiles, sentence lengths and nationality data are compared using the Irish Prison Service's **May monthly snapshot** for each year (2024, 2025 and 2026). Using the same reporting month each year provides a consistent basis for comparison while avoiding seasonal variation that may occur between different months.

What the Data Shows

- The relative size of each offence category within the sentenced prison population

- How offence categories changed over time
- Which offences consistently represented the largest proportion of sentenced prisoners
- Trends in the sentenced prison population between January 2024 and May 2026

What the Data Does Not Show

- The total number of crimes committed in Ireland
- The number of convictions recorded during the reporting period
- Crime rates within the general population
- Average sentence lengths for each offence category
- Reoffending rates
- Individual case circumstances

Questions for Future Research

- How have sentence lengths changed for different offence categories?
 - Which offence categories contribute most to long-term prison occupancy?
 - How do rehabilitation outcomes vary between offence categories?
 - Would additional published information on repeat offending improve understanding of the prison population?
-

Chapter 5 - Sentence Lengths

Introduction

The length of custodial sentences has a direct effect on the composition and size of the prison population. People serving longer sentences remain in custody for extended periods and are therefore more likely to appear in monthly prison population snapshots than those serving shorter sentences.

This chapter examines sentence lengths among male and female sentenced prisoners, together with the length of time prisoners spent on remand, across the period from January 2024 to May 2026.

Unlike chapters that use a single annual snapshot, this chapter uses all available monthly data in order to provide a clearer picture of changing sentence patterns and remand duration over time.

Understanding the Data

The sentence-length tables relate to **sentence prisoners only**.

They do not include people held solely on remand awaiting trial or sentencing.

The sentence figures represent the number of sentence prisoners within each sentence-length category at the time of each monthly snapshot. They should not be interpreted as the number of sentences imposed during that month or year.

The remand table are separate. They show how long prisoners held solely on a remand or trial warrant had been in custody at the time of the reporting snapshot.

The Irish Prison Service notes that these remand figures may differ from other published remand totals because they exclude individuals who are currently serving a sentence but also have a remand warrant that will become active later.

Sentence Length Categories

The Irish Prison Service groups sentenced prisoners into the following sentence lengths:

- Less than 3 months
- 3 months to less than 6 months
- 6 months to less than 12 months
- 12 months to less than 2 years
- 2 years to less than 3 years
- 3 years to less than 5 years
- 5 years to less than 10 years
- 10 years and over
- Life sentence

The data is also broken down by sex and age group, allowing differences between male and female sentenced prisoners to be examined.

Male Sentenced Prisoners

Male prisoners account for the overwhelming majority of the sentenced prison population.

The monthly data allows analysis of:

- The most common sentence-length categories
- Changes in short-term imprisonment
- Changes in medium-term sentences
- Growth or decline in prisoners serving 5 years or more
- Changes in the number serving sentences of 10 years or more
- Changes in the number of serving life sentences
- Differences across age groups

A full summary table should present the yearly average for each sentence category, along with the highest and lowest monthly figures recorded.

Male sentence

Sentence Length	2024 Average	2025 Average	2026 Average	Trend
Less than 3 months	39	33	30	Decreasing
3-6 months	82	114	85	Fluctuating (rose in 2025 then fell in 2026)
6-12 months	241	233	253	Broadly stable (slight increase overall)
1-2 years	424	465	450	Increasing
2-3 years	505	544	562	Increasing
3-5 years	867	1,001	1,028	Strong increase
5-10 years	908	975	1,136	Strong increase
12+ years	310	363	443	Strong increase
Life	370	384	392	Gradual increase
Total	3,746	4,112	4,379	increasing

Female Sentence

Sentence Length	2024 Average	2025 Average	2026 Average	Trend
Less than 3 months	5	2	6	Fluctuating
3-6 months	11	6	12	Broadly stable
6-12 months	30	25	33	Broadly stable (slight increase)
1-2 years	50	34	50	Stable
2-3 years	33	41	32	Broadly stable
3-5 years	25	44	43	Increasing
5-10 years	17	17	25	Increasing
12+ years	3	4	5	Gradual increase
Life	11	12	14	Gradual increase
Total	185	185	220	Increasing

Comparing Male and Female Sentence Patterns

The analysis demonstrates clear differences between the male and female sentenced prisoners, both groups show similar long-term trends.

Between 2024 and 2026, the male sentenced population increased from an average of **3,746** prisoners to **4,379**, an increase of approximately **16.9%**.

During the same period, the average female sentenced population increased from **185** to **220**, representing an increase of approximately **18.9%**.

Among male prisoners, the largest increase occurred within the longer sentence categories. Prisoners serving **3-5 years**, **5-10 years**, **12 years and over**, and **life sentences** all increased over the study period. By contrast, the shortest custodial sentences (less than three months) declined.

Although the female prison population is considerably smaller, a similar pattern emerged. The number of women serving **3-5 year, 5-10 years, 12 years and over** and **life sentences** increased across the study period, while shorter sentence categories generally remained relatively stable.

These findings suggest that growth in the prison population is being driven more by increases in medium and long-term imprisonment than by growth in very short custodial sentences.

Long-Term Imprisonment

One of the clearest trends identified during this study is the increase in prisoners serving longer custodial sentences.

For male prisoners:

- 3-5 year sentences increased from an average of **867** in 2024 to **1,028** in 2026
- 5-10 year sentences increased from **908** to **1,136**
- Prisoners serving **12 years or more** increased from **310** to **443**
- Life sentence prisoners increased from **370** to **392**

Among female prisoners, although overall numbers remain comparatively small, longer custodial sentences also increased.

Growth was observed in:

- 3-5 year sentences
- 5-10 year sentences
- 12 years and over
- Life sentences

Long-term prisoners remain in custody for considerably longer periods than those serving short sentences. Consequently, increases within these sentence categories are likely to have a greater impact on prison occupancy than increases in shorter custodial sentences.

Prisoners on Remand

Remand prisoners are individuals held in custody while awaiting trial, sentencing or the conclusion of criminal proceedings.

Unlike sentenced prisoners, individuals held on remand have not necessarily been convicted of the offences for which they are currently detained.

This study examined monthly remand statistics between January 2024 and May 2026, analysing the average number of prisoners within each remand duration category.

The categories examined were:

- Less than one month
- One to three months
- Three to six months
- Six to nine months
- Nine to twelve months
- One to two years
- Two years or more

The purpose of this analysis is to identify whether the remand population changed over time and whether prisoners were spending longer periods in custody awaiting the conclusion of their cases.

Average remand population

Year	Average Remand Population
2024	784
2025	839
2026	887

Highest and lowest remand population

Year	Lowest	Highest	Difference
2024	711 (Jan)	861 (oct)	+150
2025	734 (Jan)	974 (Nov)	+240
2026 (Jan - May)	851 (Apr)	920 (Jan)	+69

Largest monthly decreases

Year	Largest Decrease
2024	-86 (June - July)
2025	-106 (June - July)
2026	-49 (March - April)

Year	Sentenced Prisoners	Remand prisoners	Remand as % of Prison Population	Total Prison Population
2024	3,931	755	16.1%	4,686
2025	4,297	782	15.4%	5,079
2026 (May Snapshot)	4,599	889	16.2%	5,488

What happened?

Total prison population

- **2024:** 4,686
- **2025:** 5,079 (+393, +8.4%)
- **2026:** 5,488 (+409, +8.1%)

Overall increase from 2024 to 2026:

- **802 prisoners (+17.1%)**

Remand population

- **2024:** 755
- **2025:** 782 (+27, +3.6%)
- **2026:** 889 (+107, +13.7%)

Overall increase from 2024 to 2026:

- **+134 prisoners (+17.7%)**

Remand sd s proportion of the prison population

- **2024: 16.1%**

- **2025: 15.4%**
- **2026: 16.2%**

Interpretation

Between May 2024 and May 2026, the total prison population increased from **4,686** to **5,488** prisoners, an increase of **17.1%**. During the same period, the remand population increased from **755** to **889**, representing a **17.7%** increase. Despite this growth, remand prisoners consistently accounted for approximately **one in six prisoners**, ranging from **15.4% to 16.2%** of the total prison population. This suggests that the increase in remand prisoners occurred alongside wider growth in the overall prison population rather than remand becoming a substantially larger proportion of prisoners in custody. The available data do not identify the reasons for this increase. Factors such as crime trends, court delays, sentencing patterns, bail decisions, legislative changes and prison capacity may all have influenced these figures. Further research would be required to determine the relative contribution of each factor.

Chapter 6 - Offence Profile by Citizenship: A

Population-Adjusted Analysis

Introduction

Prison statistics are often reported using the total number of prisoners within each offence category. While these figures are important, they do not take into account the size of the population from which those prisoners come.

Comparing raw numbers alone can therefore be misleading when population groups differ significantly in size.

This chapter compares the number of Irish and non-Irish citizens in custody across offence categories using official Irish Prison Service statistics, Parliamentary Questions data and CSO population figures.

In addition to raw prisoner numbers, custody rates per 100,000 population are calculated to provide additional context.

Why Population Matters

Ireland has approximately **4.57 million Irish citizens** and approximately **632,000 non-Irish citizens** residing in the State.

Because these populations differ substantially in size, comparing prisoner numbers alone does not provide a complete picture.

For this reason, this handbook presents both:

- Raw prisoner numbers
- Population-adjusted custody rates per 100,000 population

Both measures are useful but answer different statistical questions

Methodology

The offence profile presented in this chapter combines three official data sources:

- Irish Prison Service monthly prison statistics (November 2025 offence profile of sentenced prisoners)
- Parliamentary Question response providing the number of non-Irish nationals in custody by offence category
- CSO census 2022 citizenship statistics

Estimated Irish citizen figures were calculated by subtracting the published number of non-Irish nationals from the total number of sentenced prisoners within each offence category.

Custody rates were then calculated per 100,000 population for both Irish citizens and non-Irish citizens using the latest available population estimate.

Offence Profile Comparison

Offence Group	Total	Irish	Non-Irish	Irish rate Rate per 100,000	Non-Irish Rate per 100,000	Relative Rate
Homicide	468	412	56	9.0	8.9	0.99 (almost identical)

Sexual offences	840	679	161	14.9	25.5	1.7× (higher than Irish)
Attempted murder, assault, harassment	757	665	92	14.6	14.6	1.00× (identical)
Dangerous or negligent acts	160	137	23	3.0	3.6	1.20× (higher than Irish)
Kidnapping and related offences	52	45	7	1.0	1.1	1.1× (higher than Irish)
Robbery, extortion and hijacking	133	123	10	2.7	1.6	0.59× (Irish Higher)
Burglary and related offences	373	347	26	7.6	4.1	0.54 (Irish higher)
Theft and related offences	619	569	50	12.5	7.9	0.63× (Irish higher)
Fraud, deception and related offences	109	85	24	1.9	3.8	2.0× (higher than Irish)
Controlled drug offences	517	348	169	7.6	26.7	3.51× (higher than Irish)
Weapons and explosive offences	124	117	7	2.6	1.1	0.42× (Irish higher)
Damage to property/environment	135	123	12	2.7	1.9	0.70× (Irish Higher)
Public	94	80	14	1.8	2.2	1.22×

order and social code offences						(higher than Irish)
Road and traffic offences	29	24	5	0.5	0.8	1.60× (higher than Irish)
Offences against Government, justice procedures and organisation of crime	80	65	15	1.4	2.4	1.71× (higher than Irish)
Total	4,513	3,838	675			

Irish and non-Irish prisoner figures are taken from the November 2025 comparison table. The rates are calculated using an Irish citizen population of approximately 4.57 million and non-Irish citizen population of approximately 632,000.

In November 2025 sentenced prison population, the custody rate for Sexual offence prisoners was **1.7 times higher among non-Irish citizens than non-Irish citizens** based on the prison custody rate. Homicide rate was almost identical, Drug offences show the largest difference with **3.51 times higher among non-Irish citizens than non-Irish citizens** based on the prison custody rate.

Methodological Note: these rates are based on **sentenced prisoners in custody on November 2025 snapshot**. They do not represent crime rates, arrests, charge rates or conviction rates. They show the number of sentenced prisoners in custody per 100,000 Irish citizens and non-Irish citizens at a single point in time.

In November 2025, there were 1,038 non-Irish nationals in custody. However, the offence breakdown available through the Parliamentary Question account for 675 sentenced prisoners only. The remaining 363 individuals are not included in the offence profile. The offence analysis in this chapter relates only to sentenced prisoners and how they may change the offending rate per 100,000 population.

Is Immigration having an Impact on Prison Population and Offences?

Non-Irish citizens, who comprise approximately 12% of Ireland's resident population, accounted for roughly 15% of the sentenced prison population in the November 2025 snapshot released via Parliamentary Questions.

When calculated on a per capita basis (per 100,000 population), non-Irish citizens showed markedly higher rates of imprisonment for several serious offence categories compared to Irish citizens. Most notably, their rate for **sexual offence was 1.7 times higher**, while the rate for **controlled drug offences was 3.51 times higher**. Elevated rates were also observed in **fraud (2.0x)**, public order offences, road traffic offences, and offences against the government/justice procedures. By contrast, Irish citizens had higher per capita rates for property crimes such as burglary and theft.

Although the Irish Prison service does not routinely publish offence breakdowns by nationality, this snapshot indicates that non-Irish citizens are **disproportionately** represented in certain offence types that contribute significantly to prison numbers.

Although the data represents a snapshot from November 2025, it holds particular value for serious offences such as **sexual crimes, homicide**, and major **drug-related crimes**. These categories typically result in lengthy prison sentences, meaning the current prison population reflects convictions built up over multiple preceding years rather than short-term fluctuations.

As a result, the observed per capita disproportionality is unlikely to change dramatically month to month and provide a reasonably stable indication of non-Irish contribution to the prison population in the most serious and resource-intensive offence type.

Contrary to claims that a single snapshot reveals nothing, the over-representation in long-sentence serious offences provide clear evidence of differential impact on the Irish Prison system linked to immigration patterns.

Further consistent, transparent reporting would allow for more robust analysis of these dynamics.

Interpreting the data

This chapter compares the offence profile of sentenced prisoners in custody on 30 November 2025 by citizenship using official Irish Prison Service statistics, a Parliamentary Question response and Central Statistics Office (CSO) population data.

Presenting both raw prisoner numbers and population-adjusted custody rates provides a more complete statistical picture than raw numbers alone. While Irish citizens accounted for the majority of sentenced prisoners across most offence categories, reflecting their substantially larger share of the resident population, population-adjusted rates varied between offence groups.

Some offence categories showed relatively similar custody rates between Irish and non-Irish citizens, while others showed higher custody rates for either Irish or non-Irish citizens, given that Irish are 4.9 million in population compared to just over 600,000 non Irish the offending rate would have initially been thought to be higher for the Irish population in all categories, that does not appear to be true. These differences are presented descriptively and should be interpreted within the limitations of the available data.

The analysis relates only to sentenced prisoners who were in custody on the reporting date and should not be interpreted as a measure of offending within the wider population.

Limitations

Several important limitations should be considered when interpreting this analysis.

The figures relate only to sentenced prisoners in custody on 30 November 2025 and do not include the full prison population.

At the time of the November 2025 snapshot, there were 1,038 non-Irish nationals in custody, however offence profile data was available for 675 sentenced prisoners only. The remaining 363 individuals were not included within the offence profile and may include remand prisoners, immigration or extradition detainees, or other categories not covered by the published sentenced prison statistics.

Publicly available statistics do not routinely provide citizenship or nationality breakdowns for arrests, criminal charges, court appearances, remand populations, convictions or releases from custody. As a result, it is not possible to follow individuals through each stage of the criminal justice system by citizenship using publicly available information.

The Irish Prison Service also publishes some nationality data using broad regional categories such as "African", "Asian" and "European Union". These categories combine many different

nationalities into a single group, making it impossible to determine whether custody rates differ between individual nationalities within those regions.

Finally, a prison population snapshot is influenced by factors such as sentence length, release dates and the number of individuals serving custodial sentences on the reporting date. It should not be interpreted as a direct measure of crime or conviction rates.

What the Data Shows

This chapter provides:

- The number of sentenced Irish and non-Irish citizens in custody for each offence category.
- Population-adjusted custody rates per 100,000 Irish citizens and non-Irish citizens.
- A comparison of custody rates across offence categories.
- Areas where custody rates appear broadly similar between groups.
- Areas where custody rates differ between groups.
- A more complete statistical picture than raw prisoner numbers alone by accounting for differences in population size.

What the Data Does Not Show

This chapter does not show:

- Crime rates by citizenship.
- The number of offences committed.
- Arrest rates by citizenship.
- Charge rates by citizenship.
- Conviction rates by citizenship.
- The offences associated with individuals on remand.
- Whether sentence lengths differ by citizenship.
- The reasons why custody rates differ between offence categories or citizenship groups.

Recommendations for Statistical Transparency

The findings in this chapter highlight opportunities to improve the availability of criminal justice statistics in Ireland.

Consideration should be given to the routine publication of anonymised citizenship or nationality data at each stage of the criminal justice process, including:

- Arrests by citizenship or nationality.
- Criminal charges by citizenship or nationality.
- Court outcomes by citizenship or nationality.
- Remand populations by citizenship and alleged offence.
- Convictions by citizenship or nationality.
- Sentence lengths by citizenship or nationality.
- Prison admissions and releases by citizenship or nationality.
- Monthly offence profiles for the entire prison population, including remand populations where appropriate.
- Greater breakdown of broad regional categories into individual nationalities where operationally appropriate.

Improving statistical transparency would enable more comprehensive research, support evidence-based policymaking and allow public discussion to be informed by a fuller understanding of the criminal justice system while maintaining appropriate safeguards for privacy and data protection.

Chapter 7 - Crime Trends in Ireland (2024 - 2026)

Introduction

Understanding changes in the prison population requires consideration of wider crime trends. Increases or decreases in the number of people in custody may reflect changes in recorded crime, criminal investigation, court activity, sentencing practices, remand decisions or prison capacity.

This chapter examines official crime statistics published by the CSO and An Garda Síochána between 2024 and 2026. The aim is to identify which offence categories have increased, which have declined, and whether changes in recorded crime appear consistent with trends observed in the prison population.

Where appropriate, findings from earlier chapters are referenced to provide additional context. However, recorded crime statistics and prison statistics measure different stages of the criminal justice process and should not be interpreted as directly comparable.

Understanding Recorded Crime

Recorded crime statistics represent offences reported to, or detected by, An Garda Síochána and recorded on the PULSE system. These statistics provide an indication of crime trends but should not be interpreted as the number of people convicted or imprisoned.

Not every recorded offence results in:

- An identified suspect
- A criminal charge
- A conviction
- A custodial sentence

Similarly, prison statistics represent individuals in custody at a specific point in time rather than all offences committed during a particular period.

For this reason, recorded crime and prison population data should be considered complementary rather than directly comparable.

One of the key findings of this handbook is that recorded crime statistics and prison statistics should not be interpreted as measuring the same outcome.

The criminal justice system operates as a series of stages, each influenced by different legal, investigative and judicial processes.

**Recorded Crime → Garda Investigation → Arrest → Charge → Court proceedings
→ Conviction → Sentence → Imprisonment → Release**

Each stage represents a different point within the criminal justice system. Consequently, changes observed at one stage may not immediately be reflected at another.

For example, an offence recorded during 2025 may not result in a criminal charge until several months later. Court proceedings may continue for a prolonged period before a conviction is

reached. Where a custodial sentence is imposed, the individual may remain in prison for many years depending on the offence and sentence length.

As a result, prison population statistics often reflect offending and sentence decisions from previous years rather than current levels of recorded crime.

This distinction is evident throughout the findings presented in this handbook. While official crime statistics indicate that some categories of recorded crime declined during the study period, the sentenced prison population continued to increase across several serious offence categories.

Understanding these differences is essential when interpreting criminal justice statistics. Short-term reduction in recorded crime should not automatically be expected to produce immediate reduction in prison populations, just as increases in prison population should not automatically be interpreted as evidence that recorded crime is currently increasing.

Data Sources

This chapter draws upon official publications from:

- CSO Recorded Crime releases (2024 - 2026)
- An Garda Síochána provisional crime statistics
- Irish Prison Service monthly prison statistics where relevant
- Irish Penal Reform Trust (IPRT) reports on prison overcrowding where relevant

Together, these sources provide a broader picture of crime and imprisonment during the study period.

Methodology

Crime statistics have been analysed by offence category to identify:

- Overall changes in recorded crime
- Categories experiencing the largest increases
- Categories experiencing the largest decreases
- Trends over time between 2024 and 2026

Where percentage changes are presented, they are calculated using the official published figures.

No attempt is made to infer causation between changes in recorded crime and changes in the prison population. Instead, the chapter presents observed trends and discusses possible areas for future research where additional data would be required.

Unless otherwise stated, prison population analyses within this handbook are based on **May snapshots** published by the Irish Prison Service for 2024, 2025 and 2026. Using the same reporting month each year ensures that comparisons are made consistently and avoids seasonal variation that may occur throughout the year. Monthly data are used only where the objective is to examine trends over time, such as sentence lengths and remand population.

Changes in immigration and population composition may be considered as one of several factors that could influence trends within the criminal justice system. However, publicly available data is limited. While this handbook includes detailed analysis of Irish and non-Irish citizens within the sentenced prison population, that analysis is based on a **single snapshot from November 2025**, derived from an official Parliamentary Question. Equivalent offence-profile data by citizenship are not routinely published for other months, nor nationality or citizenship statistics consistently available for arrests, charges, court outcomes or remand population. Consequently, more comprehensive and consistently published official statistics are needed to make a full conclusion on the impact immigration is having on the prison population.

Crime Trends by Offence Category

Official crime statistics demonstrate that changes in recorded crime are not uniform across all offence categories. While some offences increased during the study period, others remained relatively stable or declined.

For this reason, crime trends should be analysed by individual offence categories rather than relying solely on changes in overall recorded crime.

The following sections examine each offence group using CSO and An Garda Síochána statistics, identifying where notable changes have occurred between 2024 and 2026.

Offence Group	May 2024	May 2025	May 2026	Numerical Change	% Change	Trend
Homicide offence	435	451	478	+43	+9.9%	Moderate increase

Sexual offence	692	800	884	+192	+27.7%	Strong increase
Attempt threat to murder, assault, harassment and regulated offences	681	739	804	+123	+18.1%	Strong increase
Dangerous or neglect acts	85	133	153	+68	+80%	Very strong increase
Kidnapping and regulated acts	41	38	52	+11	+26.8%	Strong increase
Robbery, extortion and hijacking	123	133	136	+13	+10.6%	Moderate increase
Burglary and related offences	374	373	371	-3	-0.8%	Stable / slight decrease
Theft and regulated offences	580	576	599	+19	+3.3%	Largely stable
Fraud, deception and related offences	103	108	119	+16	+15.5%	Moderate increase
Controlled drug offences	417	484	515	+98	+23.5%	Strong increase
Weapons and explosive offences	113	133	134	+21	+18.6%	Strong increase
Damage to property and to the environment	103	139	138	+35	+34%	Strong increase
Public order and other social code offences	43	70	80	+37	+86%	Very strong increase
Road and traffic offences	21	35	23	+2	+9.5%	Stable

Offences against Government, justice procedures and organisation of crime	91	64	77	-14	-15.4%	Moderate decrease
Offences not elsewhere classified	29	21	36	+9	+31%	Strong increase
Total	3,931	4,297	4,599			

Chapter Objective

This chapter seeks to answer the following questions:

- Has recorded crime increased or decreased between 2024 and 2026?
- Which offence categories have experienced the largest changes?
- Do prison population trends broadly reflect changes in recorded crime?
- Are there offence categories where crime and imprisonment appear to follow different patterns?
- What additional information would improve public understanding of crime trends in Ireland?

Offence Categories Showing the Largest Increase

The May prison population snapshots demonstrate that the number of sentenced prisoners increased across most offence categories between 2024 and 2026. However, the rate of growth varied considerably.

The largest numerical increase was recorded among **sexual offences**, which increased from **692** prisoners in May 2024 to **884** in May 2026. This represents an increase of **192 prisoners (27.7%)**, making it both the largest offence category with the greatest numerical growth during the study period.

Other notable increases included:

- **Attempts/Threats to Murder, Assault, Harassment and Related Offences:** +123 prisoners (+18.1%)
- **Controlled Drug Offences:** +98 prisoners (+80%)
- **Homicide Offences:** +43 (+9.9%)

Several smaller offence categories recorded large percentage increases despite relatively modest numerical growth. For example, **Public Order and Other Social Code Offences** increased by **86%**, while **Dangerous or Negligent Acts** increased by **80%**. These percentage changes should be interpreted alongside the smaller starting populations within these categories.

Offence Categories Showing the Largest Decrease

Only two offence categories recorded an overall reduction between May 2024 and May 2026.

Burglary and Related Offences declined slightly from **374** to **371** prisoners (-0.8%)

Offences Against Government, Justice Procedures and Organisation of Crime declined from **91** to **77** prisoners (-15.4%)

While these decreases are noteworthy, they occurred alongside growth across most other offence categories.

Overall Prison Offence Trend

The findings demonstrate that prison offence profiles have generally increased over the study period.

Growth was particularly evident among offences involving:

- Sexual offences
- Serious violence
- Controlled drug offences
- Dangerous or negligent acts
- Weapons offences

By contrast, property-related offences show comparatively little change, with burglary remaining broadly stable over the three-year period.

These findings indicate that growth in the sentenced prison population has not occurred evenly across all offence groups.

Comparing Prison Trends with Recorded Crime

The prison offence profile should not be interpreted as a direct measure of current crime levels.

Recorded crime statistics measure offences reported to, or detected by , An Garda Síochána during a specific reporting period.

Prison statistics measure individuals serving custodial sentences at a specific point in time.

Consequently, the two datasets describe different stages of the criminal justice process.

This distinction is particularly important when interpreting trends.

During the study period, some official crime statistics reported reductions in certain categories of recorded crime. However, the number of prisoners serving sentences for several serious offences continued to increase.

This does not represent a contradiction.

Investigations, prosecutions, court proceedings and sentencing frequently occur months or years after an offence has been committed. As a result, prison populations often reflect offending and sentencing patterns from previous years rather than current levels of recorded crime.

Immigration and Crime Statistics

Population change, including immigration, is one of several factors that may influence crime trends and prison populations. This handbook includes an analysis of the Irish and non-Irish citizens within the sentenced prison population using official Irish Prison Services statistics and a Parliamentary Question published in November 2025.

The November 2025 snapshot demonstrates that both Irish and non-Irish citizens were represented across all major offence categories. When these figures are compared with resident population estimates, differences in imprisonment rates per 100,000 population are evident for some offence categories.

However, these findings represent a single point in time. Equivalent offence-profile data by citizenship are not routinely published for other months, nor are citizenship or nationality statistics consistently available for recorded crime, arrests, charges, convictions or remand populations.

Although November is a single-month snapshot, it is particularly meaningful for serious offences such as **sexual crimes and controlled drug offences**, which attract lengthy custodial sentences. The composition of the prison population for these categories reflect convictions accumulated over several years and unlikely to fluctuate dramatically from month to month.

Therefore, the observed disproportionality provides a reasonable indication of the contribution of non-Irish citizens to the overall prison population in high-impact offence types.

Relationship with Prison Overcrowding

Earlier chapters identified sustained growth in both the sentenced prison population and the remand population.

The increase in sentenced prisoners was concentrated primarily within medium and long-term sentence categories, while the remand population also increased over the study period. Together, these factors are likely to have contributed to increasing pressure on prison capacity. However, the available statistics cannot determine the extent to which prison overcrowding has been influenced by:

- changes in recorded crime
- longer custodial sentences
- increased remand populations
- court delays
- sentencing practices; or
- wider criminal justice policies.

Further research linking these datasets would provide a more complete understanding of prison population growth.

What the Data Shows

This chapter demonstrates that:

- Most offence categories increased between May 2024 and May 2026
- Sexual offences recorded the largest numerical increase
- Public order and dangerous or negligent acts recorded the largest percentage increases
- Burglary remained broadly stable
- Only two offence categories recorded an overall decrease
- Prison offence trends do not necessarily mirror short-term recorded crime trends.

What the Data Does Not Show

The available data do not identify:

- When individual offences were committed
- How long each criminal investigation lasted
- How long court proceedings took
- The citizenship or nationality of offenders across all offence categories over time
- Arrest rates
- Charge rates
- Conviction rates; or
- The reasons why individual offence categories increased or decreased.

Accordingly, the findings presented in this chapter describe observable trends within the prison population but should not be interpreted as establishing the causes of those trends.

Recommendations

The findings highlight the need for greater transparency across the criminal justice system. Consideration should be given to publishing annual statistics linking:

- Recorded offences
- Arrests
- Criminal charges
- Court outcomes
- Convictions
- Sentence lengths
- Remand populations

- Prison releases; and
- Citizenship or nationality were legally appropriate and anonymised.

Publishing linked data across each stage of the criminal justice process would improve public understanding, support evidence-based policymaking, and reduce reliance on isolated statistics or single-point snapshots.

Chapter 8 - Factors Influencing the Prison Population

Introduction

Changes in the prison population are rarely the result of a single factor. The number of people in custody is influenced by crime trends, sentencing practices, remand decisions, court activity, prison capacity, legislative change and wider demographic factors.

Previous chapters demonstrated that the prison population increased between 2024 and 2026. They also identified growth in medium and long-term custodial sentences, increases in the remand population and changes in the offence profile of sentenced prisoners.

This chapter examines the principal factors that may contribute to these trends while recognising that publicly available statistics cannot determine the relative importance of each factor.

Growth in Recorded Crime

Official crime statistics indicate that several offence categories increased during the study period, while others remained stable or declined.

Increases in recorded crime may increase pressure on the criminal justice system by generating additional investigations, prosecutions and, where appropriate, custodial sentences.

However, recorded crime alone does not fully explain changes in the prison population.

Longer Custodial Sentences

Earlier analysis demonstrated that much of the increase in the sentenced prison population occurred among prisoners serving medium and long-term sentences.

Growth in the:

- 3-5 year categories
- 5-10 year categories
- 10 years and over
- Life sentence population

Means prisoners remain in custody for longer periods.

Even if the number entering prison remained unchanged, longer average periods in custody would increase the prison population.

Growth in the Remand Population

The average remand population increased throughout the study period.

Although remand prisoners consistently represented approximately one-sixth of the prison population, the number held on remand increased alongside the overall prison population.

Longer periods spent awaiting trial or sentencing may contribute to prison occupancy, although publicly available statistics do not identify the reasons individual prisoners remained on remand.

Court Delays

The criminal justice process extends beyond policing and imprisonment.

Investigations, disclosure, legal representation, court scheduling and appeals may influence the time taken for cases to conclude.

Where delays occur, individuals may remain in remand for longer periods, increasing pressure on prison accommodation.

The available data do not allow the extent of this effect to be quantified.

Prison Capacity

Ireland's prisons have experienced sustained capacity pressures during the study period.

Where prison occupancy approaches operational capacity, policymakers may face increased pressure to expand accommodation, introduce temporary measures or consider alternatives to custody for suitable offenders.

Prison population growth should therefore be considered alongside available prison capacity rather than in isolation.

Population Growth and Changes in the Prison Population

Ireland’s population increased between 2024 and 2026 through a combination of natural population growth and net migration. Over the same period, the total prison population also increased, rising from **4,950 prisoners in May 2024** to **5,794 in May 2026**, an increase of **844 prisoners (17.1%)**.

To better understand this increase, the prison population was separated into Irish and non-Irish citizens using Irish Prison service custody statistics.

Table. Irish and Non-Irish Prison Population (May Snapshots 2024 - 2026)

May Snapshot	Irish prison population	non-Irish prison population	Total	non-Irish %	Irish %
May 2024	4,101	849	4,950	17.2%	82.8%
May 2025	4,418	954	5,372	17.8%	82.2%
May 2026	4,736	1,058	5,794	18.3%	81.7%

Analysis of the Prison Population

The data shows that both Irish and Non-Irish prisoner numbers increased throughout the study period.

The Irish prison population increased from **4,101 prisoners in May 2024**, to **4,736 in May 2026**, while the non-Irish prison population increased from **849** to **1,058** over the same period.

Although the number of Irish prisoners increased, the proportion of Irish citizens within the overall prison population declined slightly from **82.8%** to **81.7%**. During the same period, the proportion of non-Irish prisoners increased from **17.2%** to **18.3%**.

This indicates that the non-Irish prison population grew at a faster rate than the Irish prison population between May 2024 and May 2026.

Citizenship and Ethnicity

It is important to distinguish between **citizenship** and **ethnicity** when interpreting these findings. Throughout this handbook, the terms **Irish** and **non-Irish** refer to **citizenship**, as reported by the Irish prison service. They do not refer to ethnicity, race or country of birth.

Ireland has become increasingly diverse, and a number of people acquired Irish citizenship each year through naturalisation or other legal pathways. Consequently, the Irish citizen prison population is likely to include individuals from a wide range of ethnic and national backgrounds.

As official prison statistics do not publish data on ethnicity or country of birth alongside citizenship, it is not possible to determine whether changes in the Irish prison population reflects demographic changes within the wider Irish population, increases in naturalised Irish citizens, or other factors. Accordingly, no conclusion can be drawn regarding ethnicity and the available data.

Interpretation

The data demonstrates that growth in the prison population cannot be attributed solely to one group. Both Irish and non-Irish prisoner numbers increased during the study period.

However, the faster rate of growth among non-Irish prisoners resulted in a gradual increase in their share of the overall prison population. This represents a measurable change in the composition of the prison population over time.

While prison statistics alone cannot determine the reasons for this increase, they do indicate that demographic changes within the prison population have occurred during the study period.

Relationship to the Offence Analysis

The growth in the non-Irish prison population should be considered alongside the offence-profile analysis presented in this handbook. While the prison population data demonstrates a gradual increase in the proportion of non-Irish prisoners over time, the detailed offence analysis is available only for **November 2025** through Parliamentary data.

Taken together, these datasets indicate that non-Irish citizens contributed to the overall prison population during the study period and were represented across a range of offence categories.

Additional annual publication of offence data by citizenship, ethnicity, race, country of birth would allow for a more comprehensive assessment of changes over time.

Citizenship Versus Ethnicity

The statistics analysed throughout this handbook classify prisoners according to **citizenship**, not ethnicity or country of birth.

This description is important.

Irish citizens include people from a wide range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds, including individuals who have acquired Irish citizenship through naturalisation.

Consequently, the Irish citizen prison population should not be interpreted as representing only ethnically Irish individuals.

Improving Transparency

Improved statistical reporting would enhance public understanding of the criminal justice system.

Consideration could be given to publishing anonymised annual statistics that link:

- Recorded offences
- Arrests
- Charges
- Court outcomes
- Convictions
- Sentence lengths
- Remand durations
- Prison admissions
- Prison releases
- Citizenship and
- Where legally appropriate and consistent with privacy protections, additional demographic information that assists interpretation.

Such reporting would enable more robust longitudinal analysis while reducing reliance on isolated datasets and single-point snapshots.

Chapter 10 – Conclusions

Introduction

This handbook examined the Irish prison population between 2024 and 2026 using official statistics published by the Irish Prison Service, the Central Statistics Office (CSO), An Garda Síochána and Parliamentary Questions.

The objective was not to support a particular viewpoint but to examine the available evidence, identify observable trends and highlight areas where greater statistical transparency would improve public understanding of Ireland's criminal justice system.

The findings demonstrate that the prison population increased during the study period. However, this growth was not explained by a single factor. Instead, the evidence suggests that prison population trends reflect a combination of changes in sentence lengths, remand populations, offence profiles, demographic composition and wider criminal justice processes.

Key Findings

This study identified several consistent trends.

Overall Prison Population

The total prison population increased steadily between May 2024 and May 2026, reflecting sustained pressure on prison capacity.

Sentence Lengths

Growth occurred primarily among prisoners serving medium- and long-term custodial sentences, particularly within the 3–5 year, 5–10 year and longer sentence categories.

Remand Population

The remand population increased throughout the study period. However, remand prisoners remained relatively stable as a proportion of the total prison population, accounting for approximately one in six prisoners.

Offence Profile

The largest numerical increase occurred among prisoners serving sentences for sexual offences. Several other serious offence categories also recorded increases, while burglary remained broadly stable.

Citizenship

Both Irish and non-Irish prisoner numbers increased between 2024 and 2026. However, the non-Irish prison population increased at a faster rate, resulting in a gradual increase in the proportion of non-Irish citizens within the prison population.

The analysis also demonstrated that citizenship should not be confused with ethnicity. The available statistics classify prisoners according to citizenship only and cannot identify the ethnic composition of either Irish or non-Irish prisoners.

Crime Statistics

Recorded crime and prison statistics describe different stages of the criminal justice system. Consequently, changes in recorded crime should not be expected to produce immediate changes in prison populations.

Overall Assessment

The evidence presented throughout this handbook demonstrates that Ireland's prison population became larger and, in several respects, more complex during the study period.

Longer custodial sentences, sustained remand populations and changes in the composition of the prison population all contributed to increasing demand on prison capacity.

At the same time, important limitations remain within the publicly available data. While official statistics provide valuable information, they do not currently allow cases to be followed from recorded offence through arrest, prosecution, conviction, imprisonment and release.

This limits the ability of researchers, policymakers and the public to fully understand the factors influencing prison population change.

Recommendations

Based on the findings presented in this handbook, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Improve statistical transparency by publishing linked criminal justice statistics from recorded crime through to release from custody.
2. Publish annual offence profiles by citizenship rather than relying on isolated Parliamentary Questions.

3. Expand prison reporting to include admissions, releases, sentence completion and average time served by offence category.
4. Improve remand reporting by publishing information on reasons for prolonged remand where legally appropriate and anonymised.
5. Publish additional demographic statistics, including age distributions and other anonymised characteristics that improve interpretation while protecting privacy.
6. Monitor prison capacity alongside sentence lengths and remand trends to better understand the factors contributing to overcrowding.
7. Improve public understanding of criminal justice statistics by clearly distinguishing between recorded crime, court outcomes and prison populations within official publications.
8. The Irish Prison Service publishes age profiles of prisoners. However, publicly available statistics do not combine age with offence category, citizenship and sentence outcomes. Consequently, age-specific trends were outside the scope of the handbook. Publication of more detailed cross-tabulated data would allow future research to examine these relationships.

Final Remarks

The purpose of this handbook has been to present official prison statistics in a format that is accessible, transparent and evidence-based.

Where the data support clear conclusions, those conclusions have been presented. Where important gaps remain, those limitations have been acknowledged.

By combining multiple official sources into a single longitudinal analysis, this handbook seeks to contribute to a more informed public discussion of Ireland's prison population while encouraging continued improvements in statistical transparency and criminal justice reporting.

Annex A – Data Sources

Annex A – Data Sources

Irish Prison Services (IPS)

The following monthly statistical reports were used throughout this handbook:

- January 2024
- February 2024
- March 2024
- April 2024
- May 2024
- June 2024
- July 2024
- August 2024
- September 2024
- October 2024
- November 2024
- December 2024
- January 2025
- February 2025
- March 2025
- April 2025
- May 2025
- June 2025
- July 2025
- August 2025
- September 2025
- October 2025
- November 2025
- December 2025
- January 2026
- February 2026
- March 2026
- April 2026
- May 2026

Data extracted included:

- Total prison population
- Sentenced prisoners

- Remand prisoners
- Sentence lengths
- Offence categories
- Nationality/citizenship
- Male and female prison populations

Central Statistics Office (CSO)

Publications used:

- Census 2022
- Population by nationality
- Population by citizenship
- Population estimates
- Recorded Crime releases

An Garda Síochána

Official publications:

- Provisional Crime Statistics (2024–2026)
- Annual Crime Statistics
- Crime trend releases

Oireachtas Parliamentary Questions

Parliamentary Questions were used to obtain:

Offence profile by citizenship (November 2025)

Additional criminal justice statistics where publicly available

Irish Penal Reform Trust (IPRT)

Reports relating to:

Prison overcrowding

Capacity

Remand

Penal policy

Annex B- Methodological Notes

Annex B- Methodological Notes

This handbook is based exclusively on publicly available official statistics.

Unless otherwise stated:

- Prison population comparisons use May snapshots for consistency.
- Monthly data were used only where trends required analysis across the full study period (for example, remand and sentence lengths).
- Crime statistics refer to recorded crime and should not be interpreted as conviction or imprisonment statistics.
- Citizenship refers to legal citizenship and should not be interpreted as ethnicity or country of birth.

Annex C – Limitations

Annex C – Limitations

This handbook acknowledges several limitations within the available data.

These include:

- Limited offence-by-citizenship data (November 2025 only).
- No publicly available arrest statistics by citizenship.
- No publicly available charge statistics by citizenship.
- No publicly available court outcome statistics by citizenship.
- No published ethnicity within prison statistics.
- Limited release pathway information.
- Limited ability to link recorded crime with prison outcomes.

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