

2019 — 20

About IPRT

Who we are

The Irish Penal Reform Trust is Ireland's leading independent charity campaigning for a penal system that is just and humane; protects and promotes human rights, equality and social justice; and uses prison as a last resort.

What we do

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

What we have achieved

IPRT's effectiveness over recent years is demonstrated by real achievement in terms of progressive policy change, alongside a deepening of wider public debate around prisons and prisoners, and provision of a key central resource of research and information on prisons and penal reform.

In recent years, key reforms that IPRT's work has contributed to include:

- Strategic Review of Penal Policy, which endorses the principle of imprisonment as a sanction of last resort (2014)
- Stopping out reduced to 51 in in July 2020, down from 1,000 in 2011
- Extension of the Inspector of Prisons' remit to include investigations into deaths in prison custody (2012)
- Extension of the Ombudsman for Children's remit to receive complaints from children detained in the adult prison system (2012)
- Legislation introduced to limit the use of imprisonment for failure to pay court-ordered fines (2014)
- Legislation introduced which allows certain minor convictions to become spent after 7 years (2016)
- End of the imprisoning of 16 and 17-year-old boys in the adult prison system (April 2017)
- Plans to build a 'super-prison' at Thornton Hall were cancelled (January 2019)
- A step-down unit for women leaving prison was opened in summer 2019
- Signing into law of the *Parole Act 2019*, which will establish the Parole Board on a statutory footing once enacted and remove decision-making from Ministerial control

How you can support our work

IPRT relies on the support of a diverse group of friends and donors to underwrite our mission. Contributions from both committed individuals and organisations are essential to our impact on the lives of prisoners and their families, and ongoing efforts to reform Ireland's penal system. We are deeply grateful to all our members and donors for their partnership in this work and are pleased to share this Annual Review detailing our achievements.

For more information on how you can support IPRT's work, please visit our website www.iprt.ie or call (01) 874 1400. IPRT is a registered charity (CHY11091, RCN 20029562).

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Chairperson's Foreword

It has been another year of considerable work to advance progressive penal reform in Ireland. It is our pleasure to now report on that work to our membership, supporters and friends.

This report reflects the considerable efforts and achievements by a dedicated group of people – IPRT Board members, staff and volunteers – to contribute to penal reform in Ireland. I am delighted to share an overview of our work to advance progressive policy reform this year.

This year has seen many external challenges for IPRT, including delays with the formation of a new Government, and of course, the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite these challenges, we have continued to deliver on our commitments, as well as seizing new opportunities for systemic reform.

In October 2019, we launched our third flagship report on *Progress in the Penal System*. The 2019 report identified more progress made than in 2018, however, there has also been regress in significant areas, including the most fundamental principle of penal reform: imprisonment as a last resort. It is a testament to the success of *Progress in the Penal System* in holding the State to account that we secured a further three years of funding for the project in late 2019.

In early 2020, we published *Making Rights Real for People with Disabilities in Prison*. This pioneering research went some way towards combatting a deficit of research on the experience of disability in the penal system in Ireland and we hope it will be an impetus for further research and focus from the State on the experience of disability in the penal system.

This past year has demonstrated IPRT's ability to be responsive and effective with dealing with new issues as they arise. COVID-19 highlighted existing issues in our prison system, many of which IPRT has been campaigning to address for many years, as well as creating new human rights challenges in Irish prisons. All of our work on COVID-19 has been grounded in the principle that human rights must continue to be met.

IPRT has made concrete progress on its *Strategic Plan 2017-2021*, with a small number of strategic objectives remaining to be achieved within its lifetime. In late 2020, we will begin the process of setting a new strategy with the input of our members. While there have been many hard-fought reforms in recent years and months, our new strategy is set to be developed at a time when prisons oversight is under-resourced, the number of prison committals is climbing, restricted regimes are used disproportionately, and waiting lists to access mental health services continue to grow.

This report provides only an overview of the scale and quality of work carried out by the IPRT staff team, who continue to work hard, creatively and with passion. My sincere thanks to Fiona, Michelle, Lorraine and Pamela (who returned to IPRT in the new role of Communications Officer in March 2020) for making all that you will read in the Annual Review – as well as all that isn't captured – possible. This year, Lorraine has taken on new duties in the new role of Membership & Governance Officer. Other members of the IPRT staff team during the year included Eoin Delap, Lyn Fallon, Sarah Curristan and Orlaith Rice, with particular thanks to Eoin for his work on fundraising and sustainability in 2018 and 2019.

IPRT is fortunate to have Board members who give their time, expertise and commitment, contributing to the direction and success of our work. It is with pleasure and gratitude that I continued to work this year alongside Professor Aislinn O'Donnell, Kevin Gregory, Joan O'Flynn, Kathleen Leader SC, David Perry BL, Dr Suzi Lyons, Niall Walsh and Eddie D'Arcy.

I would like to thank our funders, including Pobal, the Department of Justice, the Community Foundation for Ireland, Katharine Howard Foundation, Mercy Congregation Solidarity Committee, St Stephen's Green Trust, our event sponsors, our donors and Friends for their ongoing support. Without their interest, belief and commitment to both the principle of penal reform and the approach of IPRT, we would simply be unable to deliver on our vision and improve outcomes for thousands of people across Ireland.

Finally, I would like to thank our members, Friends and supporters for their time, commitment, and financial support. I hope that you will all join me in continuing to support IPRT in pursuit of our shared goals.

*Dr Seamus Taylor,
IPRT Chairperson,
August 2020*



Introduction from the IPRT Executive Director

It is no understatement to say that it has been a 12-month period like no other for IPRT, one that has brought many unforeseen challenges but also unexpected opportunities for reform.

Our vision for IPRT is as a leader in evidence-informed policy reform, with particular focus on addressing human rights issues in the penal system, while playing a central role in shifting public perspectives on punishment.

This informed the core of IPRT's programme of activities until February 2020, when COVID-19 reached our shores. From March 2020, our work necessarily shifted in focus from long-term reforms to urgent human rights-informed interventions.

At the outset of the COVID-19 crisis, Ireland's prisons were overcrowded, with people sleeping on mattresses in a number of closed prisons. There had been a sharp increase in prison committals over the previous 2 years, and almost half of people in prison were in shared cells.

Today, there are 15% fewer people in prison than in March 2020, and the two women's prisons have been running within design capacity for the first time since 2014. The structured release of 450 prisoners over a 4-week period in spring 2020 shows what is possible when there is political will. **We believe that the evidence-led work of IPRT over many years helped nurture a public sphere in which such action could be taken.**

Nevertheless, it shouldn't require a pandemic to bring about important reforms – and many serious issues remain, and indeed have been exacerbated by pandemic-related restrictions.

Our challenge now is to ensure positive reforms are maintained while maintaining focus on the need for measures to reduce the negative impact on the human rights of people in prison and their families. Just as the pandemic has brought the pains of imprisonment into stark relief, it also laid bare the urgent need to strengthen systems of independent external oversight. Improving accountability across the penal system continues to be a central concern of IPRT.

Despite the challenges of COVID-19, IPRT has continued to deepen the comprehensive evidence base from which the organisation draws its rights-based mandate, and which informs our effective engagement with domestic legislative and policy processes and international human rights monitoring processes. The following pages in this report go some way towards capturing the breadth and depth of this ongoing work.

All of IPRT's achievements are shared by the entire team, and the highlights presented in this report represent only a portion of the work carried out by my colleagues. My sincere thanks to Michelle, Lorraine and Pamela for their continued hard work and dedication to penal reform throughout a challenging period for everyone.

Thanks also to Eoin Delap, Lyn Fallon, Sarah Curristan and Orlaith Rice who worked with us in 2019 and 2020, along with our mighty volunteers: Mairéad Deevy, Rebecca Connolly, Annmarie Maher, Eloise Thompson-Tubridy and Doireann O'Brien.

My personal thanks for the ongoing support, guidance and expertise provided by all members of the Board of IPRT, in particular Dr Seamus Taylor as Chair, Prof Aislín O'Donnell as Vice Chair and Chair of the PIPS Advisory Group, and Kevin Gregory as Treasurer. All of IPRT's board members have supported me in their areas of expertise throughout the year: thank you all.

Our achievements are made possible through the financial support of our funders, donors, members and Friends and their belief in the importance of penal reform. We are very grateful to those who have already become Friends of IPRT by contributing €250, with many pledging to give over three years. We ask members who have the means to consider becoming Friends of IPRT to help ensure that we can together achieve our vision for change.

As we enter an uncertain autumn, the importance of IPRT's work in ensuring necessary reforms are embedded and not reversed will be more critical than ever. At a time when all of society is experiencing restrictions in their everyday life, IPRT will have to work hard to maintain attention on human rights issues experienced by men, women and children in the penal system. Over the next 12 months, we will seize key opportunities to progress reforms in law, policy and practice, while continuing to call the State to account – all with the goal of a penal system in Ireland that supports better, more equal and safer communities for everyone.

*Fiona Ní Chinnéide,
IPRT Executive Director
August 2020*



Our Vision

IPRT's vision is of a penal system that

- is just and humane;
- protects and promotes human rights, equality and social justice; and
- uses prison as a last resort.

Our Mission

IPRT's mission is to work towards progressive reform of penal policy and practice to achieve a penal system in line with our vision.

Our Values

Our values guide us in how we achieve our mission.

Independent we are fearless in our voice and in our actions	Committed to holding the State to account	Fair we are committed to tackling social injustice	Authoritative we are guided by human rights frameworks and best international standards
Informed our advocacy is based on high quality research and evidence-informed policies	Constructive we are constructive in our work with others in the penal system	Engaged we are mindful of the importance of engaging directly with people in prison and their families	Accountable we are committed to the highest levels of good governance and financial integrity

Our People

Patron of IPRT



Michael D. Higgins
President of
Ireland

Advocates of IPRT



Paula Meehan
Poet



Peter Sheridan
Author and
Director



Ivana Bacik
Senator



John Lonergan
Former Governor
of Mountjoy
Prison

IPRT Board of Directors

IPRT is governed by a voluntary Board of Directors, made up of a minimum of seven members with expertise in a range of areas relevant to penal reform. The Board focuses on the broader strategic goals of the organisation. At least seven members of the Board are elected at the organisation's AGM and further members may be co-opted by the Board.



Dr Seamus Taylor
Chairperson
Lecturer in Social
Policy, Maynooth
University



**Prof. Aislinn
O'Donnell**
Vice Chairperson
Professor of
Education,
Maynooth
University



Kevin Gregory
Treasurer
Director of
Finance, IT &
Governance with
Barnardos Ireland



Kathleen Leader
Secretary
Barrister,
Senior Counsel



Eddie D'Arcy
CEO, Solas Project



Joan O'Flynn
Independent
Consultant,
Acting CEO of
Glencree



David Perry
Barrister and
Lecturer at the
Honorable Society
of King's Inns



Niall Walsh
Manager,
Pathways Centre



Dr. Suzi Lyons
Senior
Researcher,
Health Research
Board

IPRT Staff

In 2019-2020, the day-to-day work of IPRT was carried out by a team of 3-5 staff.



Fiona Ní Chinnéide
Executive Director



Lorraine Whitty
Membership &
Administration
Officer



Michelle Martyn
Senior Research
& Policy Projects
Manager



Pamela Drumgoole
Communications
Officer (from
March 2020)



Eoin Delap
Development
Manager (until
December 2019)

Lyn Fallon, Orlaith Rice and Sarah Curristan also played an essential role on the IPRT staff team across the course of the year.

IPRT Volunteers

Our work is supported by a team of dedicated volunteers, who bring their skills and passion for social justice and penal reform to their work with IPRT.

- **Mairéad Deevy BL:**
August 2019
- **Rebecca Connolly:**
July 2019 - December 2019
- **Orlaith Rice:**
September 2019 - January 2020
- **Anmarie Maher:**
February 2020 - May 2020
- **Eloise Thompson-Tubridy:**
February 2020 - June 2020
- **Doireann O'Brien:**
February 2020 - June 2020

Our Strategic Priorities

IPRT is committed to reducing imprisonment, ensuring access to human rights in prisons, and progressive reform of the penal system based on evidence-led policies.

The focus of our activities is on: the use of imprisonment, including sentencing policy; alternatives to custody and diversion; and the treatment and rehabilitation of those in detention. All of our work is underscored by our commitment to promoting equality and to combating social injustice.

All of IPRT's actions over the period were guided by our new strategic priorities, as outlined in our *Strategic Plan 2017-2021*:

01

Progressive Penal Policy

IPRT advocates for a national penal policy that is:

- just and humane,
- promotes effective non-custodial responses to crime, and
- uses prison as a last resort.

02

Humane Penal System

IPRT promotes a national penal system that is:

- humane as experienced by people who are detained,
- protects and promotes human rights and equality, and
- strives to achieve international best practice in formal regimes, daily practices and overall culture.

03

Our Organisation

IPRT ensures that the organisation is a sustainable, well-resourced, respected and collaborative stakeholder in penal policy in Ireland.

Priority 1: Progressive Penal Policy

IPRT advocates for a national penal policy that is: just and humane, promotes effective non-custodial responses to crime, and uses prison as a last resort.

Penal Policy

A key strategic goal of IPRT is to contribute to the development of an Irish penal policy that operates a long-term, system-wide and evidence-informed approach to the causes and contributing factors to offending.

Securing commitments in the Programme for Government (PfG) is an important lever for progressing reform over the lifetime of the government. With this in mind, IPRT campaigned vigorously on 5 key recommendations for the PfG in advance of the 2020 General Election and in the weeks that followed. IPRT engagement activities included the development and dissemination of: key questions for election candidates; key recommendations for the next programme for government; and analysis of party manifestos from a penal reform perspective.

All of IPRT's recommendations for inclusion in the PfG were supported by solid evidence and research of what works in response to offending. All of our priorities, in some form, were included in the final PfG. This is no small feat. While the inclusion of these priorities is in part down to the tireless work of IPRT in advance of the election, their inclusion was only possible because IPRT's work over many years helped to shape an environment where progressive criminal justice reform can become a reality.

While a commitment on each of IPRT's recommendations is positive, the establishment of a Penal Policy Consultative Council, in particular, will drive the development of long-term evidence-led penal policy within the Department of Justice. Over the lifetime of the Government, IPRT will work with all stakeholders to ensure progress and delivery on these commitments, and where necessary will use our independent voice to hold the State to account.

Sentencing Reform

IPRT promotes the need for reform of Irish sentencing practice in a number of key areas, and for the principle of imprisonment as a last resort to be enshrined in law.

2019/2020 was marked by further strong advocacy around the need for publication of sentencing data and analysis, in PIPS 2019, media engagement and in direct engagement with stakeholders. With the passage of the *Judicial Council Act 2019*, the Sentencing Guidelines and Information Committee was formally established by the Judicial Council on 30 June 2020. The Committee will be responsible for compiling guidelines designed to increase consistency in relation to criminal sentences and monitor the operation of these guidelines. Given the reverberating impact of sentencing across both the justice system and society, IPRT will actively engage with this process where appropriate.

National and international policy consensus is that mandatory sentencing does not work to reduce crime and build safer communities. IPRT continued to counteract regressive mandatory sentencing proposals with research and evidence this year, including direct engagement on a Private Members' Bill and a proposal in one party manifesto in the run up to the General Election. We welcomed the provision in the *Judicial Council Act 2019* requiring a review of the appropriateness of all existing minimum sentences (whether presumptive or mandatory) to be undertaken within the next two years.

Parole Reform

Passage of the *Parole Act 2019*, which establishes an independent parole board on a statutory basis, was a key strategic objective in IPRT's *Strategic Plan 2017-21*. The *Act* was signed into law by the President on 23 July 2019. However, as we had outlined in a number of direct submissions to the Minister and to the Oireachtas in 2018 and 2019, the provisions of the legislation are mixed from a penal reform perspective. More info on the *Act* and our campaigning on parole reform is available at iprt.ie/parole

While we broadly welcomed the *Act* as an opportunity to achieve clarity in law and practice on parole, as of end June 2020 the *Act* has yet to be fully operationalised. Responses by the Minister indicate that delays are due to changes in the process of appointments to the Parole Board, funding, and additional staffing requirements. IPRT has continued to highlight how essential it is that the Parole Board is fully resourced in order to meet its important remit, and ensure that all eligible prisoners are reviewed in a timely manner.

This year, we continued our media engagement to better inform the wider public on the positive role of parole and temporary release in promoting public safety, often serving as the go-to voice on dispelling myths about parole and the parole process in the media.

Alternatives to Custody

Reducing Ireland's over-reliance on imprisonment as punishment is at the core of IPRT's mission. While IPRT has secured various policy commitments and recommendations on decarceration in recent years, analysis of key standards in IPRT's 'PIPS 2019' demonstrates that imprisonment is not being used as a last resort in Ireland.

Worryingly, the Irish Prison Service Annual Report 2019 showed a significant increase of people committed to prison in Ireland in 2019, including a 21% increase in the number of committals on sentences of less than 12 months, with 76% of all sentenced committals being for sentences of less than 12 months. This is despite consistent evidence that it is cheaper, often more effective and less damaging to respond to less serious offending through community service, restorative justice and other community alternatives to prison.

The period also saw a sharp increase in the number of people detained on remand, along with increases in the number of people declaring themselves as homeless on committal to prison. IPRT's actions included direct engagement with the Minister for Justice & Equality, the Department of Justice & Equality, the Irish Prison Service, and in media. We called for a detailed analysis to identify reasons for the growing numbers and have called for the provision of bail hostels and supported bail schemes.

Promising alternatives have been introduced in recent years, including the *Criminal Justice (Community Service) (Amendment Act) 2011* and the *Fines (Payment and Recovery) Act 2014*.

While there has been a significant fall in the number of prison committals for fines default, the moderate increase in community service orders has been far outpaced by the increase in the use of short prison sentences. IPRT continued to voice our concerns that if measures are not having the desired impact or if there is little confidence in these measures, a comprehensive review to understand why is urgently necessary to end cycles of imprisonment.

In advance of the General Election, IPRT was critical of proposals in a party manifesto to increase prison capacity. Increases in prisoner numbers in 2019 and early 2020 – particularly those on short sentences – are largely linked with failures in social policy, including homelessness, mental health issues and addictions. This will not be solved by further warehousing of social disadvantage in prisons. In early 2020, bed capacities for several prisons were increased, despite no change in the space available. This is concerning.

One welcome development during this period was the opening of a new supported facility, the Outlook Women's Programme in Dublin, which provides accommodation and support services for women leaving prison. IPRT has called for such a facility in order to meet the distinct needs of women leaving prison for many years. However, such provision needs to be national.

Spent Convictions

IPRT continued our campaign work on improving legislative supports for people with convictions and with experience of prison during 2019 and 2020. Activities included direct engagement with Oireachtas members, a presentation to the Justice Committee in July 2019, media work, and close co-operation with Senator Lynn Ruane on her Private Member's Bill. The *Criminal Justice (Rehabilitative Periods) Bill 2018*, which seeks to give fairer and broader access to spent convictions, progressed to Report stage in November 2019. Amendments to the *Bill* at Committee Stage were quite progressive – including the removal of the limit to eligible convictions – but the *Bill* could go further in terms of length of sentence to which the legislation will apply.

The *Bill* represented an important opportunity to embed the principle of rehabilitation in legislation, and to allow a greater number people who have served their punishment and who have moved away from offending to move on with their lives.

The PfG, following prolonged campaigning by IPRT and others, contains a commitment to broaden the range of convictions that are considered spent by current spent convictions legislation. Although the *Criminal Justice (Rehabilitative Periods) Bill 2018* fell with the dissolution of the 32nd Dáil, the PfG creates a positive political and policy-making landscape for the *Bill* to be returned, debated and hopefully finalised in.

Families and Imprisonment

Imprisonment of a household member has lasting effects on a child. We estimate there are approximately 6,500 children with a parent in prison in Ireland on any given day, while more than 10,000 experience parental imprisonment each year. Yet there is no national strategy that recognises the distinct needs and experiences of this significant cohort of children.

In summer 2020, IPRT launched an exciting new three-year project that aims to reduce harm for children and families affected by imprisonment, with particular focus on reducing female imprisonment. The project will comprise: research; advocacy; events; and the formation of a network of organisations working in the area of prisoner family support. This work will build upon promising work already, including IPRT's 2012 ground-breaking research report *Picking up the Pieces* and our 2017 work on *Unseen Unheard: Principles of Action for Children with a Parent in Prison* in association with UCC and the Children's Rights Alliance.

The first meeting of the network is set to take place virtually in August 2020.

To run in tandem with this project, we'll also be partnering with Dr Fiona Donson and Dr Aisling Parkes (both UCC) on a similar one-year project supported by the Irish Research Council's New Foundations Scheme to investigate how, if at all, children in particular are supported in the context of familial imprisonment.

This 3-year project is supported by the Katharine Howard Foundation and St Stephen's Green Trust.

Young Adults (18-24s)

There is a growing body of evidence that advocates for a criminal justice approach that considers the special circumstances of young people transitioning into adulthood. Since 2014, IPRT has campaigned for alternative and nuanced approaches to addressing offending by young people aged 18-24.

In November 2019, IPRT and the Irish Criminal Bar Association co-hosted a seminar on 'Developing Youth Justice'. The event platformed the need for a distinct approach for young adults in the criminal justice system, with a focus on the *Criminal Justice (Rehabilitative Periods) Bill 2018*. Then-Minister David Stanton opened the event. Other expert contributors included Senator Lynn Ruane, Dr Laura Janes (Howard League for Penal Reform), Ian Power (SpunOut) Sarah-Jane Judge BL and Eddie D'Arcy (Solas Project).

In May 2020, IPRT responded to promising proposals to extend supports to young people up to age 24 contained in the *Draft Youth Justice Strategy* when it was published. The following month, IPRT made a submission on the Strategy to the Department of Justice, focusing on – among other issues – the need for 18-24s to be a priority area in the Strategy. In the submission, IPRT recommended that this could be achieved by extending diversion; developing age-appropriate bail schemes; and amendment of the *Children Act 2001* to allow for maturity assessments.

FOCUS ON: The impact of COVID-19 on prisons in Ireland (March – 30th June 2020)

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted existing issues and flaws in our prison system, many of which IPRT had been campaigning to address for many years, such as overcrowding, cell sharing, access to sanitary facilities and health services.

COVID-19 and related restrictions have been IPRT's largest and most pressing areas of work since March 2020.

Prisons, and in particular poor prison conditions, are high-risk environments for the transmission of infectious diseases such as COVID-19. Prison populations disproportionately experience complex, co-occurring health problems with higher levels of ill-health and chronic conditions. If COVID-19 enters a prison setting, the impacts are likely to be more severe than in the general community.

The Department of Justice & Equality and the Irish Prison Service put in place early pre-emptive measures in response to the pandemic, in particular, through steps to safely reduce the prison population. As of end June 2020, there had been no confirmed case of COVID-19 among the prisoner population in Ireland. This is notable given the tragic impacts of COVID-19 we have seen in other residential settings in Ireland and in prisons overseas.

While we welcomed positive measures, IPRT remains concerned that the number of people in prison is too high and that cell-sharing has continued throughout the pandemic. We are also highly concerned at potential normalisation of restricted regimes and reduced out-of-cell time, and the implications for mental health and access to rehabilitation. **Restrictive measures designed to protect the health and bodily integrity of people in prison may come at the cost of psychological integrity.**

Since early March, IPRT has engaged directly with the Irish Prison Service, the Minister for Justice & Equality, the Department of Justice & Equality, Oberstown Children Detention Campus, the Probation Service and other stakeholders, including members of the Oireachtas. We also communicated on our issues of concern to the Inspector of Prisons, the Prison Visiting Committees and the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission.

IPRT made a submission on proposed measures to address COVID-19 in Irish prisons to key stakeholders in late March. This submission was solution-focused, drawing on international standards and recommendations. This document has been regularly updated to reflect emerging international literature and best practice. However, one of the overarching issues for IPRT in our work on COVID-19 has been the lack of published inspection reports, both during the period and in the years preceding the pandemic.

We have been engaging directly with community-based organisations working with people in prison and on release from prison on the current situation and needs, including Pathways, IASIO, PACE, Care After Prison and Cork Alliance Centre. We also signed two joint statements on COVID-19, led by Children's Rights Alliance and the Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL).

At an international level, we have been focused on knowledge sharing and best practice. IPRT co-hosted two webinars in association with the Zahid Mubarek Trust in the UK, one of which focused specifically on detention monitoring during COVID-19. Attendees included monitoring bodies, human rights lawyers, and academics. IPRT also presented to international human rights and criminal justice reform advocates at an International Network of Civil Liberties Organizations (INCLLO) public webinar on 'Civil society response to COVID-19 in prisons and jails' in May 2020.

We have maintained a strong presence in media and social media, and continuously updated the IPRT website, where we curated the most useful international guidance on COVID-19.

This has been a particularly challenging time for families of people in prison, as restrictions are placed on already limited communication with loved ones. IPRT continues to respond to prisoners and prisoner family members who are highly concerned about the current situation. We have also developed a survey for family members of people in prison, to capture their experiences of COVID-19 restrictions, which will be used to guide our work in the months ahead.

While many of the measures introduced in response to COVID-19 were proportionate to the risk posed, IPRT, led by international human rights guidance, believes that these restrictions should be in place for the shortest possible timeframe. IPRT has continued to request that the IPS consider accelerating reopening plans, subject to public health guidance on other residential settings.

The first phase of unwinding of restrictions is due commence in July. This includes the ending of cocooning in prisons and restarting family visits on a very limited basis from 20th July.

While the challenges are clear, COVID-19 has also brought some positive changes to the prison system – including video calls and the structured safe release of men and women serving short sentences for less serious offences; these are changes that we'll be working hard to retain.

IPRT's work on COVID-19 and its impact on the rights of men and women in prison, their families, and young people in detention is ongoing.

Priority 2: Humane Penal System

IPRT promotes a national penal system that is: humane as experienced by the people who are detained, protects and promotes human rights and equality, and strives to achieve international best practice in regimes, daily practices and overall culture.

Progress in the Penal System (PIPS)

IPRT's *Progress in the Penal System* report ('PIPS') remains the only annual benchmark of conditions and regimes experienced by people in prison in Ireland.

IPRT launched our third annual PIPS report in October 2019. The 2019 edition focused on accountability, and the clear need for strong internal and external oversight mechanisms to ensure meaningful progress in Ireland's penal system. The launch of PIPS 2019, as in previous years, garnered national media coverage and generated public debate.

The event was attended by key stakeholders across justice, health and the prison system. Director General of the Irish Prison Service Caron McCaffrey delivered the keynote address of the launch, in which she outlined her vision for the prison system, and the particular challenges of meeting the needs of people with severe mental health difficulties in prisons. Dr Gurchand Singh, Chief Information Officer of the Department of Justice and Kate Mitchell, Deputy Director of Mental Health Reform also responded to the report.

Engagement with all stakeholders during 2019/2020 around progress on previous editions of PIPS and on the value of the project was positive.

IPRT's Senior Research and Policy Projects Manager, Michelle Martyn continues to lead the research and delivery of the project, with the support and guidance of the PIPS Advisory Group: Prof Aislinn O'Donnell (Chair), Niall Walsh and external experts Prof Ian O'Donnell, and Dr Cormac Behan who joined the group in 2020. Our sincere thanks to David Perry BL for contributing his expertise to the Group for the first three years of the project.

Drawing on our learnings from the first 3 years of the project, in 2020 and beyond, PIPS will be streamlined to be even more effective in holding the State to account and bringing about change, with a renewed focus on solutions. The impact of COVID-19 on the wider penal system, and learnings from the response, will inform the core focus in PIPS 2020.

The fourth annual PIPS report will be published in November 2020.

An interactive version of the report is available at pips.iprt.ie.

The PIPS project is supported by a donor-advised fund of the [Community Foundation for Ireland](https://www.communityfoundationireland.org/).

Accountability

Promoting robust inspection, monitoring and oversight of Ireland's prison system is at the centre of IPRT's work. Our work in this area takes place on both national and international levels.

In 2019, IPRT focused on engaging directly with the Minister for Justice on the need for strengthening of the Office of the Inspector of Prisons (OiP), supported by our consistent media work. IPRT believes that the Office must be adequately resourced in order to meet its important remit, including publishing inspection reports, deaths in custody reports and undertaking regular thematic reviews. We welcome that the OiP budget was significantly increased for 2020, while we continue our advocacy work on the strengthening of the legislation underpinning the OiP.

At an international level, IPRT provided a detailed submission on issues of concern within the Irish prison system to the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT), as well as briefing the Committee directly at a meeting in September 2019 in advance of their inspection of a number of Irish prisons and other places of detention. We expect the Committee's report along with the Government response to be published in autumn 2020. This report will be the first published independent inspection report of a closed prison in Ireland in over 5 years, with the most recent at present being the last CPT report, published in 2015. The CPT report will be both a crucial insight into current prison conditions and a key lever to drive reform.

In advance of Ireland's third periodic hearing under the UN Convention against Torture, we made a submission to List of Issues (LoIPR) process in January 2020

While we acknowledged progress made by Ireland since the UN Committee's 2017 Concluding Observations, we detailed a considerable list of concerning matters that merit scrutiny from the Committee. Many of these concerns were reflected in the Committee's LoIPR, published in May 2020.

Our campaign to ratify the OPCAT continued, with a commitment to ratify and implement OPCAT within 18 months of the formation of the Government secured in the PFG. Although the State has given various commitments to ratify the OPCAT in the past, never has a specific timeframe been put on its ratification and implementation. This is promising, but our work continues.

Know Your Rights – Your Rights as a Prisoner

In 2012, IPRT and ICCL published a booklet which aimed to help prisoners understand the rights they have while in prison. Eight years on from its publication, prisoners and their family members continue to contact us to secure a copy of the booklet to help them to better understand their rights during a challenging transition. In spring 2020, IPRT finalised the updated version of 'Know Your Rights – Your Rights as a Prisoner' booklet. Due to the pandemic, the publication of the booklet has been delayed to late 2020, when it will be made available in a variety of formats.

Connected with our work on '*Making Rights Real for People with Disabilities in Prison*', a new section on the rights of people with disabilities in the prison system will also be included. The booklet is written in everyday language and is informative and easy to use. A print edition will be made available in prisons, and an online version accessible to families, friends, and service providers outside prison.

FOCUS ON: Making Rights Real for People with Disabilities in Prison

Prisoners' rights are guaranteed by numerous international and European treaties and Irish legislation. Despite this, international research demonstrates that prisoners with disabilities are often discriminated against and still encounter inaccessible spaces and a lack of support within prison.

A significant data and research deficit exists on the experiences of people with disabilities in prison in Ireland. In September 2018, IPRT was awarded a research grant under the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission's Human Rights and Equality Grant Scheme in order to work towards bridging the knowledge gap and to advance the implementation of the Public Sector Duty across the prison system.

The research project, commissioned by IPRT from the Centre for Disability Law and Policy (NUIG), aims to raise awareness of intersectional discrimination and human rights breaches of people with disabilities in prison. The research was led by Professor Eilíonóir Flynn (NUIG), and a number of disability organisations and rights-holders gave freely of their time and expertise to sit on the Advisory Group for the project. Their contributions provided invaluable insights into the research design, methods and findings. The Advisory Board was made up of individuals from Recovery Experts by Experience; Voice of People who are Blind and Visually Impaired (VVI); the Irish Deaf Society; the National Platform of Self Advocates; and Independent Living Movement Ireland.

In January 2020, IPRT launched *Making Rights Real for People with Disabilities in Prison* to a full house, with key stakeholders from both the disability and criminal justice sector in attendance, including people with experience of the issues, whose contribution was invaluable to the discussion.

The *Making Rights Real* report presents the findings of a small-scale exploratory study, with the objective of examining the rights, needs and experiences of prisoners with disabilities. Research comprised an international literature review, legislative analysis, stakeholder interviews, and interviews with people in prison.

The report addresses the experiences of prisoners with all forms of disability, including physical, intellectual, sensory and psychosocial; and the significant difficulties they face navigating prison services. The research found that isolation in cells, limited availability of accessibility aids, lack of appropriate information on prison services, and limited opportunities to communicate with peers and family members are just some of the barriers and human rights issues facing prisoners with disabilities in the Irish prison system.

Based on the research findings, IPRT made 16 recommendations for addressing barriers facing prisoners with disabilities in Ireland, including: implementation of the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty across the prison system; provision of accessible information on rights, regimes and complaint systems in prison; ensuring non-discrimination and equal access to services and programmes; and the introduction of human rights-based disability assessments.

We firmly believe that the recommendations in this report should be a starting point. They should be expanded with the direct involvement of organisations for people with disabilities, as well as prisoners and former prisoners with disabilities, who are often best placed to determine the changes required.

As well as a research report, this project also encompassed a training brief for those working with people with disabilities in detention. Our intention is that this will help ensure that a rights-based approach in working with people with disabilities is embedded in practices in the Irish prison system, supporting compliance with the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty.

This project was supported by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, under the Human Rights and Equality Grants Scheme 2018.

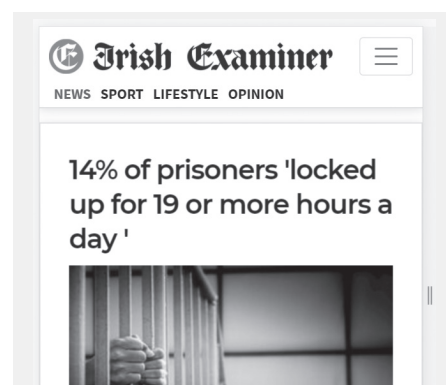
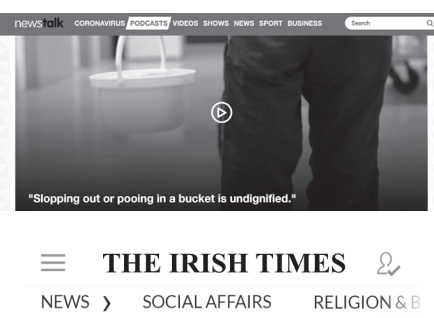
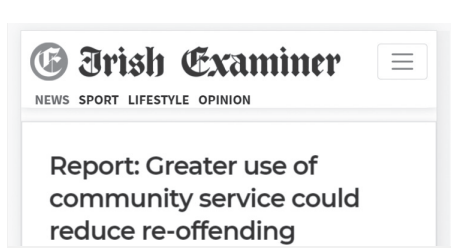
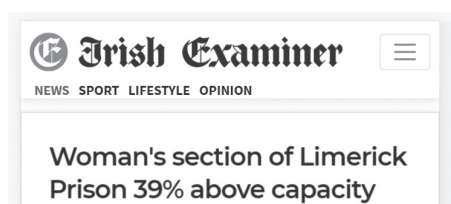
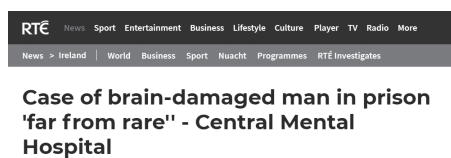


Coimisiún na hÉireann um Chearta an Duine agus Comhionannas
Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission

IPRT Media Coverage

We continue to hold a strong media and public affairs profile, stimulating active and informed debate on penal reform issues.

Some of the headlines from 2019 and 2020 are featured below.



A Year in Images



1 Fiona Ní Chinnéide, invited speakers and society members at a UCC Law Society Conference, October 2019



2 Kevin Gregory, Seamus Taylor and Fiona Ní Chinnéide at the IPRT AGM, September 2019. Photo: Derek Speirs



3 Fiona Ní Chinnéide chairing a Mental Health Reform conference on trauma, February 2020. Photo: Kenneth O'Halloran



4 Marian Quinn CEO of CDI, and Fiona Ní Chinnéide at the launch of CDI's 'Prisoners Returning Home', December 2019



5 Minister David Stanton TD at IPRT's 'Developing Youth Justice' seminar, November 2019. Photo: Derek Speirs



6 Speakers at IPRT's 'Developing Youth Justice' seminar, November 2019. Photo: Derek Speirs



7 Patricia Gilheaney, Inspector of Prisons, speaking at the launch of Making Rights Real, January 2020. Photo: Derek Speirs



8 Launch of Making Rights Real for People with Disabilities in Prison, January 2020. Photo: Derek Speirs



12 Robbie Sinnott, VVI, speaking at the launch of Making Rights Real, January 2020. Photo: Derek Speirs



10 Prof. Sir Malcolm Evans, Chair of the UN SPT, at IPRT's 'Human Rights and Detention in the time of COVID-19' seminar, April 2020



11 Prof. Gautam Gulati MD, Aine Flynn and Maria Ni Fhlatharta at the launch of Making Rights Real, January 2020. Photo: Derek Speirs



12 Vivian Geiran (former Director of the Probation Service) and IPRT's Seamus Taylor at the launch of PIPS 2019, October 2019. Photo: Derek Speirs



13 Kate Mitchell, MHR; Dr Gurchand Singh, DoJ; Caron McCaffrey, IPS; and IPRT Board and staff members at the launch of PIPS 2019, October 2019. Photo: Derek Speirs



14 Dr Gurchand Singh, Department of Justice, at the launch of PIPS 2019, October 2019. Photo: Derek Speirs

Priority 3: Our Organisation

Ensure IPRT is a sustainable, well-resourced, respected and collaborative stakeholder in penal policy in Ireland.

Strategy & Governance

IPRT is committed to transparency and accountability around how we work, achieving the highest standards of governance and compliance.

Strategy

IPRT has made concrete progress on its *Strategic Plan 2017-2021*, with a small number of strategic objectives remaining to be achieved within the lifetime of the *Strategy*. IPRT plans to undertake an external evaluation in 2020, towards informing the development of our next *Strategic Plan 2022-26*. All members, whose input continues to guide our work, will be invited to contribute to the process.

The objectives contained in the new strategy, as with the current strategy, will be an extension of our organisational goals, targeted at specific areas and activities where IPRT can make a meaningful and lasting impact.

To ensure that we are consistently making progress on our strategic priorities, operational plans for each year are developed and kept under regular review to ensure maximum effectiveness. Due to limited resources, we are constantly exploring strategic opportunities for our small team to make a big impact.

Governance

As an organisation that seeks to hold the State to account, it is crucial that IPRT itself maintains the highest levels of governance and accountability.

IPRT is registered with the Companies Registration Office (CRO Number 21844), the Charities Regulatory Authority (RCN 20029562) and as a Registered Charity with the Revenue Commissioners (CHY Number 11091) and meets all requirements to file returns to the Register of Lobbying.

Ongoing reviews of governance and accountability structures are important to us. In 2014, IPRT achieved full compliance with the 'Governance Code - a Code of Practice for Good Governance of Community, Voluntary and Charitable Organisations' in Ireland. During 2020, the Board of IPRT has completed the process of ensuring compliance with the new Charities Regulator Governance Code, and will formally declare its compliance with the Code in November 2020. With the change in Lorraine Whitty's role to Membership and Governance Officer, policies are now more regularly updated, approved, and implemented.

Data protection, transparency and accountability are important to us. We continue to ensure ongoing compliance with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Board of Directors

Our Board members bring a broad range of skills and sector knowledge to the work of IPRT, such as: social policy, advocacy, research, strategic planning, legal expertise, finance, education, youth justice, community health, and drugs policy.

At the AGM in September 2019, David Perry BL, Dr Suzi Lyons, and Prof Aislinn O'Donnell retired from the Board and stood for re-election as permitted by the Memoranda and Articles.

Staff and Volunteers

Across the 2019/2020 period, Fíona Ní Chinnéide continued to lead the IPRT staff team in the role of Executive Director, with Michelle Martyn continuing in the role of Senior Research and Policy Projects Manager.

Pamela Drumgoole returned to IPRT in the new role of Communications Officer in late March 2020, having previously served as Campaigns Officer in IPRT from June 2017 to July 2019. Lorraine Whitty's role changed from Membership and Administration Officer to Membership and Governance Officer, to reflect the expansion in her role and increasing governance-focused work.

Eoin Delap's contract with IPRT ended in December 2019, but he made a lasting impact on IPRT's financial sustainability during his time on the team. Lyn Fallon, Orlaith Rice and Sarah Curristan also played an essential role on the IPRT staff team across the course of the year.

IPRT was greatly supported by an incredible group of volunteers during the period. Mairéad Deevy BL joined us for August 2019, with Rebecca Connolly joining from July to December 2019 and Orlaith Rice from September 2019 to January 2020. Annmarie Maher worked with us as part of a Maynooth University placement from February to May 2020. We were joined, even through our period of remote working, by Eloise Thompson-Tubridy and Doireann O'Brien from February to June 2020.

IPRT Office

IPRT ensures that robust levels of organisational systems, structures and practices are in operation to ensure a sustainable organisation and a high-quality place of work for staff. During the period, IPRT staff took part in a variety of training and development opportunities in areas such as: communications, COVID-19 and the workplace, the Charities Governance Code, health and safety, employment law, and more.

Many of the office-related improvements during this period related to necessary adjustments to allow the IPRT team to work remotely during COVID-19 restrictions. Due to contingency planning far in advance of the restricted measures on movement announced on 27th March, IPRT was fully prepared to commence working from home and the team transitioned smoothly to remote working from 13th March. As of end June 2020, we are undertaking advance planning to facilitate a structured transition back to the office, as and when public health advice allows.

Finance

IPRT is committed to ensuring that the organisation's finances are managed to the highest standard, and in line with established accounting practices.

Since 2015, IPRT has produced FRS 102 SORP compliant accounts. The FRS 102 requirements relating to the trustees' annual report, fund accounting, the format of the statement of financial activities and additional disclosures are aimed at providing a high level of accountability and transparency to donors, funders, financial supporters, and other stakeholders. The 2018 accounts, prepared by Best Practice Accountant – Chartered Accountants (Mary-Louise O'Loughlin ACA) were approved at the IPRT AGM in September 2019 and submitted to the Companies Registration Office. The 2019 accounts are for approval at the IPRT AGM in September 2020.

An independent audit is conducted each year by the auditors who bring to the attention of the Board any matters of concern. The auditors found the 2019 financial statements to give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of IPRT and of its resources, and have been properly prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2014. IPRT's previous auditors, Anne Brady McQuillans DFK, merged with Crowleys DFK in January 2020 and now operate as Crowleys DFK, who are authorised by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland. The auditors are also invited each year to the AGM of the IPRT.

The Finance Committee of the IPRT Board consults in advance of each Board meeting, and updated management accounts are disseminated to the whole Board at each meeting.

While the staff team worked remotely due to COVID-19 restrictions, it was necessary to amend some financial procedures to be carried out electronically without disruption, until further notice. The amendments were approved by the Board on 18 May 2020. Detailed information on our strict financial management processes, as well as copies of IPRT Financial Policies and Procedures, is available on request.

Fundraising and Sustainability

IPRT is deeply grateful to our funders for their belief and support in both the issue of penal reform and in IPRT's approach; their contributions have enabled us to undertake the work described in this report. IPRT's continuing independence is recognised by all funders as essential to the integrity of our work.

Sustainability

With all of our key grants concluding in 2019, sustained work was undertaken throughout the year to consolidate funding sources for existing work and develop new revenue streams. To support and steer this work, the Funding & Sustainability Subcommittee met in advance of IPRT Board meetings throughout 2019.

In 2018 and 2019, the Development Manager worked closely with the Executive Director to devise and deliver a multi-tiered business development strategy for the organisation to generate and diversify income streams during 2019 and beyond. As a result of this work, IPRT's core funding has now been secured up to end 2022, but work on developing new revenue streams is continuing.

Fundraising

Over this period, we continued to strengthen our fundraising activities through: our Friends of IPRT network; researching and drafting applications for project and research funding to grant-making bodies and foundations; and through membership renewals and membership drives at events (pre-pandemic!).

Our Funders

IPRT is in receipt of multi-annual funding from a number of diverse sources.

As reported last year, in May 2019, IPRT was awarded Pobal funding under the Scheme to Support National Organisations (SSNO) in the Community and Voluntary Sector for 2019-2022; and in July 2019, IPRT secured a multiannual grant from the Department of Justice and Equality for a further three years.

This combined funding represents an annual core grant of approximately €220,000 per annum and covers the core costs of the organisation, including core staff and office costs. The renewal of these multiannual funding streams demonstrates the continued value of IPRT's work. Alongside our other funding streams, this affords us the position to work on longer-term projects to continue to achieve real systemic change in the penal system in Ireland.

The Community Foundation for Ireland continues to be a close partner in IPRT's work. The Foundation, through its own generous commitments and donor-advised funds, has helped us to realise ambitious initiatives that are transforming our penal system – including the ground-breaking *Progress in the Penal System (PIPS)* project, and IPRT's successful work promoting accountability in the penal system. In 2019, the Community Foundation for Ireland facilitated IPRT in securing a renewed multi-annual donor-advised grant for a Senior Research and Policy Manager and the flagship '*Progress in the Penal System*' (PIPS) project of €200,751 to run 2020-2022.

Taken together with funding for our new Penal Policy & Law Programme (see below), this secures in-house research, policy, legal and public affairs expertise for three years, guaranteeing that IPRT is in a position to directly engage with upcoming policy processes and opportunities.

Project Funding

Many of our research projects are funded by grant-giving organisations with an interest in particular areas. Fundraising from these sources is essential to allow IPRT to carry out important research projects in line with organisational strategic objectives.

In 2020, we received new 3-year funding through the Community Foundation for Ireland and from the Mercy Congregation Solidarity Committee for a project targeted at lasting legal and policy reform, with social justice and equality at its centre. This will allow us to bring the expertise of a Legal and Public Affairs Manager to the staff team in late 2020. We look forward to sharing the successes of this project in our next Annual Review.

In 2020, we have also received funding from the Katharine Howard Foundation and the St. Stephen's Green Trust for a 3-year initiative which aims to reduce harm for children and families affected by imprisonment. We are grateful to all our funders for supporting our work, and assisting us in securing lasting reform.

Friends and Members of IPRT

IPRT's Members are integral to our organisation and make an important contribution to our work. We wish to acknowledge and thank them for their part in our achievements last year. Their belief in and commitment to penal reform is a driving force for our organisation.

Across all fronts, our membership has increased on previous years. This speaks to both the reach of our work and growing support for penal reform.

Thank you to the Friends of IPRT, a dedicated group of supporters who have placed a high value on IPRT's mission. IPRT Friends are asked to contribute €250 or more, with many pledging to give over three years.

Financial Statement

Supplementary information relating to the financial statements.
Schedule 2: charitable activities and other expenses.

		2019(€)	2018(€)
For the year ended 31 December 2019	Income		
	Department of Justice & Equality	102,579	102,579
	Pobal	89,812	89,625
	Membership	1,660	2,180
	Donations	9,554	12,669
	Projects	114,179	123,392
	Miscellaneous	200	185
	Total incoming resources	€317,984	€330,630
		2019(€)	2018(€)
	Expenditure		
	Wages and salaries	206,678	226,044
	Social security costs	22,206	24,284
	Staff pension costs	5,607	894
	Staff training	318	2,648
	Human resources	2,666	3,475
	Rent and utilities	7,908	7,907
	Insurance	1,534	1,383
	Office equipment	55	2,044
	Cleaning	696	694
	Repairs and maintenance	576	-
	Stationery	1,256	1,366
	Postage	613	1,598
	Courier	36	31
	GDPR implementation and training	246	988
	Marketing and advertising	-	541
	Website and social media	3,185	2,497

	2019(€)	2018(€)
Expenditure		
Prisoner engagement and building alliances	1,767	996
Events	-	706
Telephone and broadband	2,099	2,959
Computer hardware and software	622	936
IT support	2,395	1,500
Human rights in prisons expenses (CFI)	11,377	12,191
Making Rights Real for those with Disabilities in	18,689	90
Detention expenses (IHREC)		
Solitary confinement expenses (IHREC)	-	(90)
Care and Criminalisation expenses (CFI)	5,389	8,005
Impact expenses (CFI)	43,937	24,896
Publications and reports	45	13
Staff travel	1,209	1,084
Other staff expenses	858	993
Meetings	413	438
Volunteer and intern expenses	483	1,102
Board expenses	45	-
Legal and professional	250	-
Accountancy	5,518	5,432
Audit fees	3,739	3,764
Bank charges	219	230
General expenses	349	18
Membership and subscriptions	1,150	862
Surpluses/deficits on disposal of tangibles	-	310
Depreciation	2,076	1,678
Total	€356,209	€344,507

Communications

We use our professional media and communications expertise in the pursuance of each of our strategic goals.

While IPRT informs political debate on crime and punishment through direct engagement, research and advocacy, we continue to inform public debate through our breath of communications of activities. IPRT raises awareness and provides information through maintaining the IPRT website as a research centre on penal policy topics; maintaining a social media presence and regular production of an ebulletin; and engaging extensively with media on these issues.

Media

IPRT responds to media queries and relevant news items, proactively seeks media coverage on important issues, and provides an alternative voice in public discussion of crime and penal policy. We have a strong presence in the media, with our research and campaigns normally covered in the media reasonably and fairly.

IPRT sustained its strong media profile during 2019 and 2020. Media engagement included interviews on RTÉ's Six One and Nine News; Radio 1 News, Drivetime and Morning Ireland; Newstalk FM's Breakfast Show, The Hard Shoulder, Lunchtime Live and Newstalk News; Today FM's The Last Word; along with regional radio stations ranging from Waterford to Castlebar, Cork to Donegal. IPRT comment appeared in The Irish Times, Irish Examiner, Irish Independent, and The Times (Ireland edition), along with regular inclusion in online news outlets TheJournal.ie and Irish Legal News.

- Online articles: 70+
- Radio interviews: 20+
- Print publications: 30+
- TV appearances: 3
- Press releases: 13

Website and Online Presence

IPRT's online presence is an invaluable resource acting as an archive of over 25 years of IPRT research and providing a hub of relevant research and emerging policy developments, which serves as a central source of information and updates on penal reform for media, policy-makers, researchers, and other key stakeholders.

To mark IPRT's 25th birthday, we unveiled IPRT's new website and branding at our AGM in September 2019. Since then, our website has gone from strength to strength, with engagement improving across a wide range of metrics.

Social media serves as one of our main communications channels with both our supporters and the wider public. Excluding retweets, IPRT tweeted 410 times over the period. To make sure you're the first to hear our reactions to the issues of the day and to see recent developments from around the world, be sure to join us on social media.

iprt.ie
twitter.com/iprt
facebook.com/irishpenalreformtrust
instagram.com/irishpenalreformtrust

Media Releases

IPRT has established a reputation for contributing to reactive discussions on crime and punishment in Ireland as they arise. As well as this, IPRT is proactive in putting items on the agenda of media through our traditional media work. Key releases from over this period include:

- *Publication of report into covert surveillance in prisons (26 July 2020)*
- *Over-reliance on prison as punishment will undermine ability of service to meet its goals (19 September 2020)*
- *Prison recidivism rates must be reduced through improved post-release supports (24 September 2020)*
- *Progress in Ireland's prison system hindered by lack of effective independent oversight (25 October 2019)*
- *IPRT welcomes Supreme Court findings in relation to constitutional protections of rights in detention (15 November)*
- *Distinct approach needed for young adults in the criminal justice system (21 November 2019)*
- *IPRT welcomes findings of Bail Supervision Scheme evaluation (21 December 2019)*
- *IPRT publishes report examining rights for people with disabilities in prison (15 January 2020)*
- *Accelerated action must be taken to reduce prisoner numbers in order to uphold minimum human rights and keep people safe – IPRT (15 April 2020)*
- *Justice Recidivism Report findings underscore need for continued commitment by government to evidence-led criminal justice policy (27 May 2020)*
- *Extension of successful Bail Supervision Scheme which keeps children out of detention shows value of evidence-led initiatives (8 June 2020)*
- *Dramatic increase in prison committals points to policy failures that must be addressed (15 June 2020)*
- *IPRT welcomes plans to recommence physical visits to prisons (23 June 2020)*

Research and Policy

Our research and publications form the basis of evidence-informed policy recommendations, and contribute to IPRT's reputation for expertise. Our published research and policy papers are available at: www.iprt.ie/research-centre

All of IPRT's advocacy work is informed by our comprehensive research. Owing to this, IPRT manages several research projects at any one time. These projects are usually funded by a variety of sources, including the Community Foundation for Ireland and the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, amongst others. At times, IPRT will commission research that meets a specific organisational objective.

We regularly make written and oral submissions to consultation processes on penal policy but also on linked issues such as human rights, women's rights, the rights of minorities groups and crime policy issues, where they relate to our core objectives. We actively monitor Ireland's international treaty obligations and leverage these to ensure adequate compliance with international human rights standards.

Policy Submissions

- *IPRT Submission to the Department of Justice on the Draft Youth Justice Strategy 2020-2026 (June 2020)*
- *Irish Prisons and COVID-19: Proposed Measures (March & April 2020)*

Oireachtas Submissions

- *IPRT Presentation to the Joint Committee on Spent Convictions (July 2019)*
- *IPRT Submission to the Joint Committee on Key Issues affecting the Traveller Community (August 2019)*

Submissions to International Monitoring Bodies

- *IPRT Submission to the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) (Sept 2019)*
- *Submission to ENAR Ireland on UN CERD Civil Society Alternative Report Consultation (October, 2019)*
- *IPRT Submission to the UN Committee against Torture: Information for List of Issues (January 2020)*

Research Reports

- *Progress in the Penal System: A framework for penal reform 2019 (October 2019)*
- *Making Rights Real for People with Disabilities (January 2020)*

Alliances and Engagements

Our vision for the penal system cannot be achieved alone. We continue to build strategic links and alliances with others to strengthen overall capacity for change.

We increase our impact through working in partnership and in alliance with other organisations to achieve common policy goals. To demonstrate our support for common human rights issues, in 2019/2020 IPRT was an active organisational member of Mental Health Reform, Children's Rights Alliance, the Association of Criminal Justice Research and Development, the Irish Council for Civil Liberties and the National Women's Council of Ireland.

Constructive Engagement

Over this period IPRT has maintained longstanding relationships with stakeholders, as well as developing new alliances in order to support specific shared goals. IPRT engaged directly with the following stakeholders (among many others):

Civil society

Children's Rights Alliance; Prevention and Early Intervention Network; Mental Health Reform; EPIC (Empowering People in Care); PACE; Solas Project; Saol Project; Cork Life Centre; Travellers in Prison Initiative; Irish Association for the Social Integration of Offenders; Pathways Centre; Cork Alliance Centre; Bedford Row Family Project; Irish Council for Civil Liberties; Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice; National Women's Council of Ireland; Care After Prison; Extern; Public Interest Law Alliance; Irish Deaf Society; Immigrant Council of Ireland; Irish Refugee Council; NASC, the Irish Immigrant Support Centre; SpunOut; Dublin Rape Crisis Centre; One in Four; Childhood Development Initiative; CityWide; and Alternatives to Violence Project.

Statutory

Office of Inspector of Prisons; Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission; Ombudsman for Ireland; Ombudsman for Children; Northern Ireland Prisoner Ombudsman; Mental Health Commission; Inspector of Mental Health Services; HIQA; and the Charities Regulator.

State

Irish Prison Service; The Probation Service; Irish Youth Justice Service; Department of Justice and Equality; Department of Health (Women's Health Taskforce); Department of Children and Youth Affairs; and Oberstown Children Detention Campus.

Legislature

Minister for Children and Youth Affairs; Minister for Justice and Equality; Joint Committee on Justice and Equality; TDs and Senators.

Academia

Maynooth University; University College Cork; Dublin Institute of Technology; Trinity College Dublin (PRILA); NUIG (Centre for Disability Law and Policy).

International

UN Committee against Torture; European Committee for the Prevention of Torture; Zahid Mubarek Trust; Howard League for Penal Reform; and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Presentations

During the period, IPRT delivered presentations to key groups and diverse audiences, ranging from policy stakeholders to students. Highlights included: presentations to Recruit Prison Officers on our work, key current issues, and the importance of accountability and penal reform for the prison system; a presentation to UCC Law Society on the detention of people with serious mental illnesses in prison in Ireland; chairing of a Mental Health Reform conference on trauma; and a presentation during the UCC North South Criminology Conference.

Due to COVID-19, the presentation landscape was much different this year. In the face of restrictions due to public health advice, many of our regular and planned presentations were postponed. However, IPRT was able to deliver some of our presentations online. This included a presentation to INCLO (International Network of Civil Liberties Organisations) members on the work of civil society on COVID-19 in Ireland, and hosting a breakout group at a COPE (Children of Prisoners in Europe) seminar.

Events usually provide an excellent platform for building awareness both among the immediate target group, but also among the wider public. Our events provide an accessible means for stakeholders to engage with our work and for the staff team to engage with supporters. While it wasn't possible for us to hold any physical events beyond January 2020, we look forward to welcoming our supporters to launches and seminars when it is safe to do so.

Consultations

IPRT staff attended many stakeholder events over the course of the year, using every launch, lecture and roundtable as an opportunity to further the penal reform agenda and to gather knowledge about broader issues in the criminal and social justice landscape to inform our work.

This included participation at a stakeholder consultation on the then-upcoming *Youth Justice Strategy* by the Department of Justice, as well as participation at a stakeholder consultation on the development of the first ever Strategy for the Criminal Justice System. IPRT was invited by the Inspector of Prisons and Maynooth University School of Law to a workshop at which the findings of the cocooning in prison project were discussed, in advance of its publication. IPRT was also consulted on the new Office of the Inspector of Prisons Inspections Framework. We were consulted on HIQA's Draft National Standards for Children's Social Services and on a Know Your Rights for children in conflict with the law, led by the Children's Rights Alliance.

IPRT continued to participate on the steering committee of the Travellers in Prison Initiative in 2019/2020.

Prisoners and Prisoners' Families

Through our qualitative interviews for research, our annual prisoner members' survey, responding to queries, and conducting occasional prison visits IPRT regularly engages with people in prison and their families. This informs our strategic priorities and provides impetus for further action, investigation or research.

A significant gap continues to exist in terms of individual advocacy services for prisoners and their families. Although we are not service providers, we regularly receive queries regarding legal or administrative concerns about the prison system.

Despite the introduction of a spent convictions mechanism in 2016, IPRT continues to receive a vast number of queries by phone and email related to people with previous convictions. This highlights both the continued lack of official information available, and also the number of people affected. Although callers usually have concerns about the limitations of the current spent convictions legislation in relation to accessing certain college courses, insurance, and travelling, the majority of callers have concerns about the potential impact of disclosure of old convictions to future/current employers.

Further queries raised by prisoners and their families in 2019 and 2020 include: the complaints system for prisoners in Irish prisons; access to temporary release and open prisons; potential claims relating to stopping out; access to healthcare; access to education and services; supports (both financial and psychological) for children and families of prisoners; parole; access to rehabilitation/drug treatment; and access to supports and accommodation on release. Many of these issues were further compounded by COVID-19 restrictions. COVID-19 also brought new queries, including: issues with the operation of video calls; access to temporary release for humanitarian reasons; and remand.

The key issues raised by people currently in prison, by way of the Annual Prisoner Member Survey, will be presented at the 2020 AGM. Taking on board feedback from the membership at the 2019 AGM, IPRT made changes to the language used in the survey, with more multiple-choice options. However, due to restrictions, the wide dissemination of the survey to people in prison through alternative means could not be advanced in 2020. Alternative avenues will be actively explored for the 2021 survey.

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