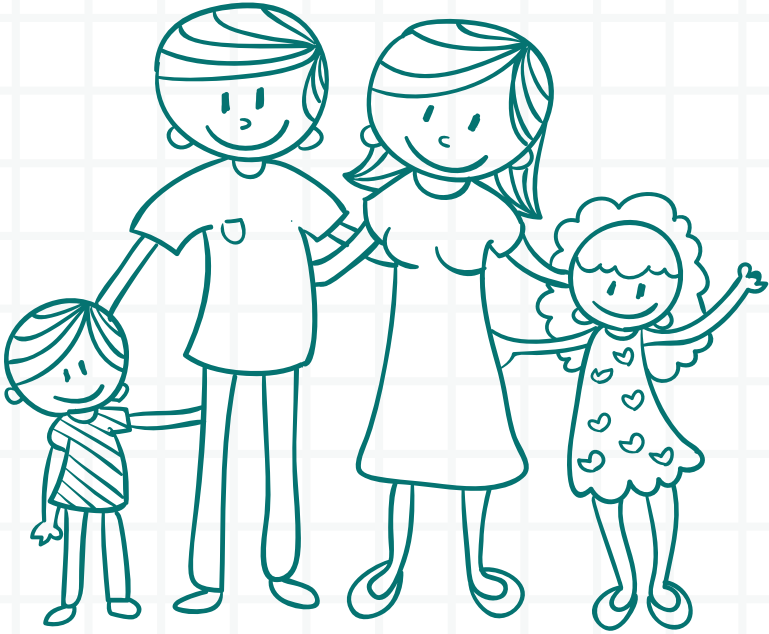


Information & Support For families of prisoners



Families Matter too

by Ian Barry

Who are we?

Who are we?

The South East Regional Family Support Network is a peer led organisation, committed to improving the situation of families affected by problem substance use of a relative. We are committed to developing, supporting and reinforcing the work of peer family support groups in Waterford, Wexford, Carlow, Kilkenny and South-Tipperary. By operating from strong community development principles the network actively promotes the inclusion, participation and empowerment of family members. The network represents the collective voice of families in raising awareness of associated problems both for substance users and their families and work for positive change in policy and practice.

www.serfamilysupportnetwork.org

U-Casadh is a social inclusion project and registered charity based on the border of Waterford and Kilkenny. Our mission is to be a catalyst for change in attitudes to crime, social exclusion, rehabilitation and justice.

www.ucasadh.ie



We believe families should not be judged or discriminated against because of having a loved one in prison. All families, parents and children affected by imprisonment or offending should have access to information, resources and services as soon as loved one is sent to prison or receives a community sentence. Contact between prisoners, offenders, and their families should be positively encouraged and duly recognised as a significant factor in reducing re-offending. Families should

be actively involved in the prisoner's progression through their sentence from induction through to release. Also in policy development. Children have the right to good quality contact with a parent in prison; and to be protected from discrimination and harm. They should also have their views taken into account and have advocates speak on their behalf families and children of people in prison need to be seen as families first and have their needs met accordingly. Children of prisoners are more likely to underachieve and fail to reach their potential than their peers and require specific services and support. (IPRT)

Foreword

Many of the family members we work with have experienced having a relative in prison as a consequence of problem substance use. In sharing their stories and experiences in peer family support groups they expressed their sadness, grief and isolation. Irish research has found that prisoners often claim that their families serve a sentence “as bad or worse than their own.” (IPRS).

Family members describe this sentence in terms of feeling isolated and confused, being left to deal with financial hardship, stigmatisation and problems in maintaining family relationships and family life. Many parents, grandparents and carers described the impact of separation for children from imprisoned parent as traumatic.

They had concerns about how to deal with children’s questions, what they should tell them and how to deal with their behavior.



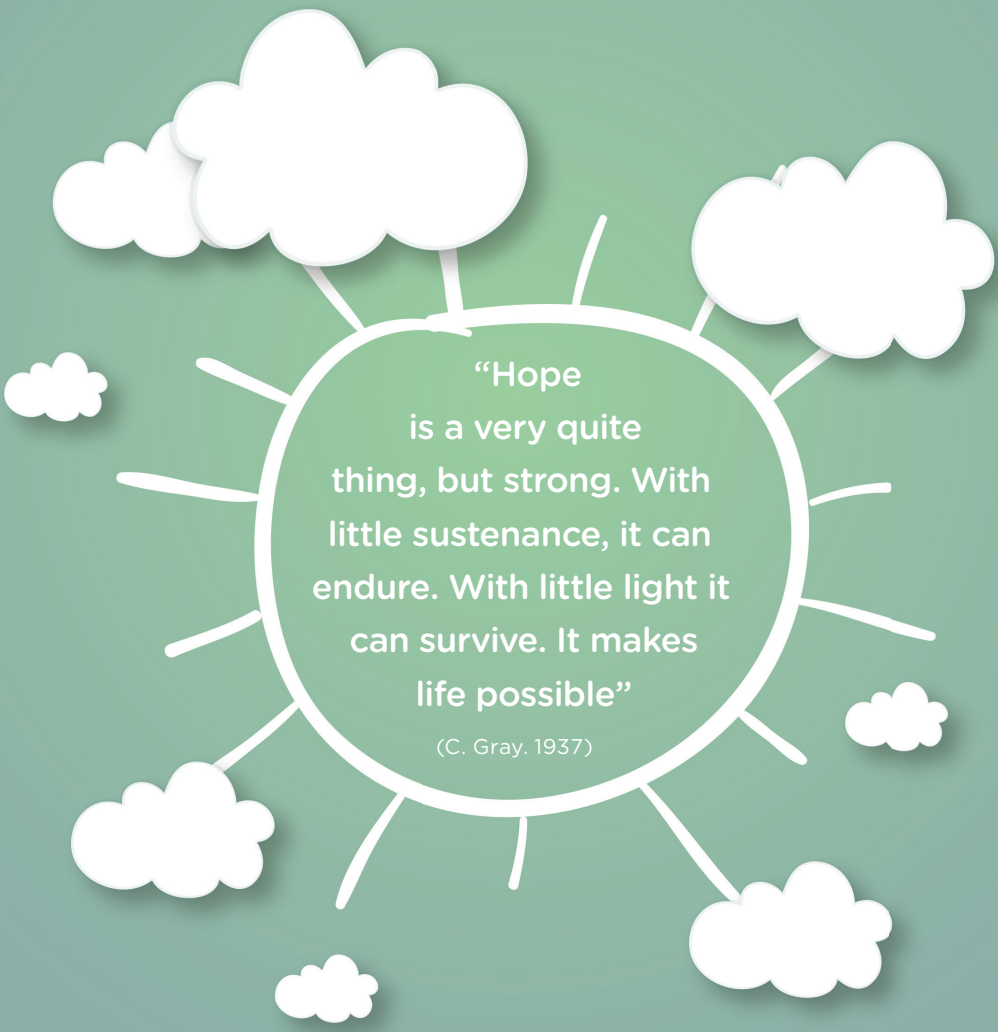
While anxious to maintain family life and stay in contact with their relative in prison they face many problems in how to access visits, what to expect and who could they turn to for support.

This publication aims to address some of the challenges faced by families of prisoners. It contains practical help and information to support families deal with family life outside of prison and staying in touch with a relative in prison.

It identifies the stress and strain experienced by families, how children are affected, how to tell children and offers tips from family members with similar experiences. It also answers many of the frequently asked questions about the prison system; visiting prison and what supports are available in and outside of the prison.

To family members of prisoners

All the individuals involved in the development of this booklet hope that in some way it helps ease your suffering and to know that you are not alone.

A central white sun with a thick outline and several straight rays of varying lengths. Surrounding the sun are several white, fluffy clouds of different sizes. The entire graphic is set against a solid teal background.

“Hope
is a very quite
thing, but strong. With
little sustenance, it can
endure. With little light it
can survive. It makes
life possible”

(C. Gray, 1937)

Who is this resource booklet for?

This publication is a practical resource for families and children of prisoners.
Professionals will find it a practical resource when supporting children
and families of prisoners.

Acknowledgments

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**Supported by family members who participated in the workshops
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The information in this booklet can be used for non-profit community groups to reproduce as long as the original meaning is retained and all the relevant organisations cited are referenced. All information stated in the booklet is correct at time of printing and subject to change without notice. December 2016.

Families: The invisible Victims of Crime

Grief & Loss

Many relatives of prisoners have said that the grief they felt when their loved one went to prison was similar to bereavement. While there is still contact, grieving the missing relative can be more difficult for prisoners' families due to the fact that:

- Neighbours, friends and family may not be very supportive and understanding, causing families to feel very isolated from their community and networks;
- There are no grieving rituals to help prisoners' families cope with their loss. Their pain is not regarded 'legitimate' in the same way;
- There is no finality. The loss seems to drag on indefinitely.

This lack of social support can result in families hiding their feelings from others and trying to 'soldier on', however this can lead to other problems, like long-term depression.

Guilt & Shame

Stereotypes of prisoners and wide-spread fear of crime and criminals can lead people to discriminate against the families of prisoners. As a result, they are often the 'invisible victims of crime'.

Some families will experience media attention, judgment and fear within the local community and even among family and friends. They may feel so ashamed of their relative that they isolate themselves from family, friends and community.

As the partner of a prisoner, people may be given a hard time for wanting to maintain a relationship with someone in prison. For children, their relationships with extended family members can be broken through no choice of their own. A parent with a child in prison is likely to feel extreme guilt about their own parenting, their relationship with their child and be searching for answers on how/why they seemingly failed their child.

"Our family felt terrible shame after my daughter was sent away, it caused terrible stress for the family. We live in a small community so the shame and guilt was awful for the rest of the family"

—Mother



"I can't even afford to buy my grandchildren presents, as I am always running back and forth to see my son"

—Mother

"The degrading feeling of shame when a prison officer takes your sons belongings and puts them to the side of the room. It makes you feel as if you're a level equal to that of the addict struggling to live"

—Mother

Tip

- It is important that the family give their friends and family a chance to support them. The support of a counsellor, social worker, or support group can also be invaluable.

Financial Loss

The imprisonment of a family member increases the economic insecurity of the family because of:

- The loss of the individual's wage/social welfare payment.
- The loss of the main carer for the children.
- Increased costs of maintaining family contact, such as providing goods and money for the prisoner, travelling to prisons that are some distance away, child minding costs, rent, mortgage.

There are several payments available for the partners of a prisoner and/or the carers of the children of prisoners. These are:

- Social Welfare Payment - SWA Scheme - Exceptional Needs Payments - Under the SWA scheme, a single payment may be made to help meet essential, once-off, exceptional expenditure, which a person could not reasonably be expected to meet out of their weekly income. Under this scheme visiting a relative in prison can be covered.
- One-Parent Family Payment (OFP) is a payment for men and women under 66 who are bringing children up without the support of a partner. To get this payment you must meet certain conditions and you must satisfy a means test. Please contact your local social welfare office for details.

Tip

- You can contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau for advice and support on what allowances or benefits are available to you as a wife of a prisoner, Carer, Guardian of prisoner's children.



Communication

Families will experience many barriers in maintaining contact with their loved one. These include:

- Travelling and accommodation costs. Many families may need to stay overnight near the prison due to the length of travel time and the time it takes to be 'processed' at the prison and get through to a visit.
- Phone calls can only be made by the prisoner; families are not permitted to call. Prison staff will phone the family first to ask if they will accept calls from the prisoner. Calls may be monitored and recorded and can be denied if the prisoner breaches prison rules.
- Letters are a highly valued form of communication for prisoners. Families and prisoners can write to one another as often as they like, however these can be inspected by the prison at any time.
- Visits at the prison are crowded and noisy, and there are limited activities for children.
- It is difficult to raise negative issues when one cannot be around to follow up how that person is feeling.

Tip

- It is advisable to obtain factual information about the process of imprisonment and what supports are available.

Tip

- Remember that there are a range of factors that are out of the individual prisoner's control that can prevent the person from contacting family members or friends.

"I'm left to cope with everything, money problems, the children, and his family, who cares about us"

—Partner

Stress

The parent or carer left to cope with the children is likely to experience a lot of stress. They are likely to feel lonely and isolated with nobody to turn to. They may feel overburdened with responsibility, anxious about money and worried about visiting the prison. It may be hard to focus on their own needs when they are so concerned about their relatives situation and feeling frustrated by their inability to assist them. It is vital that they give

their own health and wellbeing priority

"Having a loved one in prison creates its own concerns and worries"

—Mother





"Quite often the families get forgotten.
The wives will ring me and say, 'My
husband's getting looked after in there,
what about us?'"
—Support worker

Effects on Children

Every situation and family circumstances are different, but children's lives are affected by parental imprisonment and it can have a deep and lasting effect on them.

- All children face adversity and difficulties at some stage in their lives, however the elements that enable children to develop their resilience such as parent-child attachment and the self-esteem and role modelling of the parent; are interrupted when a parent goes to prison.
- Children can become unsure of what is going to happen next and can develop difficulties with trust, particularly with adults.
- Children may be ashamed and embarrassed and feel they are the only ones with a parent in prison
- They can feel under pressure to be loyal to the parent in prison and not want to talk about how it affects them
- Children may have feelings of anger, sadness, confusion and shame
- Children may under-perform or miss school due to disruption at home and family life

"If you lie to the children you are destroying their trust in you, When the other parent has already let them down.

—Mother

Children need to know that the imprisonment of a parent is not the same as abandonment; that they are still loved and that the parent has not been harmed.



Fostering the relationship and maintaining the bond between imprisoned parent and child has a basic role in reducing the impact of parental imprisonment and allowing the child to maintain their process of development.

"We thought it best to tell the kids that mammy is in Dublin getting help to be a good mammy"

—Carer



Talking to Children

One of the most difficult things to face is what to tell the children. It is important that children understand what is happening as early as possible, as they often hear things that they can't understand, or understand too well.

Tips

- The age of the child is the critical factor in deciding what to tell the child, how to say it.
- Prepare yourself and choose a time when you will not be interrupted, using simple language and explanations, letting them know you really want to understand what they are feeling and thinking.
- Reassure your child that it is not their fault and they are not the reason that their parent is in prison.
- Let them know that it is ok to talk about how they feel about their parent in prison.
- Remember that children need answers to questions like; 'why can't I see him?', 'where are you going?'
- Don't burden children with adult roles and responsibilities as it can affect how they cope in everyday situations including school.

Where to Start

A useful starting point in regard to what to tell a child, is to think about the age of the child, their individual needs and what the child already knows: which is certainly that Daddy or Mammy isn't home. For a child who is three or four they need enough information to satisfy their curiosity.

Older children require more information, by telling them yourself then you have some control over the quality of the information and some influence over its emotional impact. An example could be:

"Daddy's away in a place called prison he can't come home for a while, but you can visit/talk on the phone to him. He knows you still love him"



Support

If children have witnessed the arrest, they may need support to help them deal with the discovery that outside forces can remove their parent. Also, their home and community may suddenly feel unsafe for them. They will need explanations and support that:

- They are still loved and secure in their family;
- The other parent/carer will not be taken away;
- Garda are not bad (children need to understand who is available to protect them).

Tips

- It is a good idea for the parent in prison to write to their child to inform them that they are okay and reveal as much information as possible about what they do day to day;
- Seek supports from local family support services in your area.

Children are often told not to say anything about where their parent is as this is believed to protect them from being bullied.

Whilst it may do that sometimes, it also leaves children feeling very isolated and teaches them that talking about problems may result in a lack of support.

This effectively encourages children not to communicate in a way that promotes the expression of feelings or asking for support.

“Sometimes you think that they have forgotten about him, but then they come out and get really upset and really miss him”

—Mother



Early Years & School

School is very important for children. It offers them a routine and life outside the family where they can grow and develop. It is the place they take part in activities and allowed to just be children.

Children of prisoners when they are worried about what is happening in their family will be affected in school. If teachers & childcare professionals know what is happening in your child's life they can play a vital role in your child's development, they can identify children who are struggling to cope as they see them on a daily basis and notice any behavioural changes. They may also be the adults whom children and adolescents will disclose worries to in the first instance.

Tips

What Helps a Child

- Encourage the child to reveal what they are feeling, if you cannot do this yourself seek appropriate support from family or someone you trust. Never encourage a child to keep secrets.
- Maintaining some family routines and activities helps children to cope.
- Encouragement to take part in activities outside the home and develop a network of friends this helps strengthen their resilience.
- Professionals should encourage families to inform the school or centre of the family situation as children are more likely to be resilient when a supportive plan for the child and family can be developed.



What Might the Child Experience

After the initial experience of grief and separation most children will move through to a stage of acceptance about their current family situation. However for those children who feel traumatised by their experience they may exhibit some of the following behaviours:

- Physical symptoms: headaches, injuries or illnesses.
- Nightmares and fear of the dark.
- Regressive behaviours like bedwetting, thumb-sucking and clinging to their remaining custodial parent or caregiver.
- Withdrawing from participating in social relationships or in activities that used to absorb them.
- Retreating into denial and/or a fantasy world.
- Showing anger, aggression and hostility toward the adult in charge or toward authority figures.
- Increased disobedience and defiance at home or at school.
- Experience a decline in school work and social relationships at school or become truants.
- Begin to become involved in criminal or violent behaviours.

I feel bad if I cry or get upset when I am there because he's the one that's in there. I get to go home to our house with Mam and Dad
—Sister



Strategies for Supporting Children

- Adults involved with the child/family can ask if the child feels particularly comfortable with any of their teachers (or other professionals) and liaise with this person.
- Consider linking the child with local community organisations like Barnardos or Rainbows for support.
- Early interventions in educational support such as homework clubs are available in local community agencies.
- Be supportive about the issues but maintain the importance of school.
- Balance the child's need for their own support, with their need to feel 'normal' and not be seen as a 'problem'. While specialist supports may need to be accessed, ensure that there is also concerted effort in improving community connectedness and pro-social skills by linking children into sporting and recreational clubs and other mainstream community services.



Child & Family Agency

The Child and Family Agency is now the dedicated State agency responsible for improving wellbeing and outcomes for children.

The Agency operates under the Child and Family Agency Act 2013, a progressive piece of legislation with children at its heart, and families viewed as the foundation of a strong healthy community where children can flourish.

Partnership and co-operation in the delivery of seamless services to children and families are also central to the Act.

For more information see www.tusla.ie

“Take advantage of
offers of help”
—grandparent

“I wish I could ring him
when I have difficulties
with the children”
—Partner

The Child and Family Agency's services include a range of universal and targeted services. They include:

- Child protection and welfare services
- Educational Welfare Services
- Psychological Services
- Alternative care
- Family and Locally-based Community Supports
- Early Years Services
- Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence Services



Caregivers

In taking up the role of primary carer, carers may experience a range of difficulties at a time when they are least able to cope themselves.

These include such matters as dealing with court orders, child custody issues and child protection issues. These difficulties are often intensified as a result of being thrust into the role with-out a lot of choice.

Carers may find it difficult to leave the children with others, due to concerns for their emotional state or unstable behaviour; and they may need to leave employment to look after the children.

Grandparent Caregivers

For a grandparent, taking on a parenting role at a later stage in life can involve losses to their freedom, financial security, and adult friendships. Fatigue, mental distress, and physical health problems are commonly reported by grandparent carer. Carers are encouraged to:

- Make an effort to maintain regular contact between the parent and child;
- Keep routines with the children but understand that maintaining the relationship with the incarcerated parent might require some flexibility;
- Book pre-school aged children regularly into childcare or school;
- Have outings with the children that are enjoyable;
- If you are concerned for the protection or welfare of your grandchildren seek support from Tusla services in your area.
- Organise their time to have more time for themselves and their friendships;

Seek support/information in the community for yourself & organisations such as: www.treoir.ie low call 1890 252064



Care Arrangements for children

When primary caregiver is incarcerated



Child Welfare will only become involved in care arrangements if there are no identified carers for the child and/or there are identified risk and safety issues for the child with the remaining parent/caregiver.

Children may be unwilling, angry and resentful if they need to be placed outside their family home, and a child who is fostered is experiencing further instability in addition to the changes and loss of their primary carer.

“It’s a huge change for families, especially in the case of grandparents taking on the parental role. It is very tough from every aspect. I feel I am not able to live my life as I wish to, and feel under pressure to try to be a good role model to my grandchildren. I understand and fully appreciate it is not the fault of the children, but sometimes it can be a very challenging and stressful situation”

—Grandparent



Family Relationships

Family Relationships

Due to their isolation, prisoners often have limited perceptions of the realities facing their families who are continuing to act as a constant source of support for the prisoner while hiding their own difficulties. Partners often experience pressure to visit on a weekly basis which may not be possible given financial, time and emotional factors.

They may be experiencing suspicion from the offender about activities in their life and jealousy about their freedom. Partners may also feel stressed about financially supporting the prisoner; however their basic needs are catered for. It is important that families take care of their own and their children's needs first.

Tips

- Reassure your relative in prison that the relationship is important to you
- Talk to your relative about your limitations and arrange a realistic visiting / support plan together.
- If you have concern about your relative you can contact the Prison Chaplin: Prison contact details are available in the prison section.



Family Relationships

Family Relationships

Parents frequently experience strong and conflicting emotions about their child's situation which include:

- Anger that their child could have committed a crime.
- Worry about their child's health and safety in prison, no matter how old the offender is or how bad the offence was.
- Guilt that they have negative feelings towards their child or if they do not want to support them by putting up bail or taking them back home when they are released.
- Blame that they are responsible for their child ending up in prison.
- Isolation and alienation from friends or extended family who reject the offender and condemn the parents' continued feelings of loyalty or concern for them.
- Relief that their child is safe if they were using drugs or alcohol, or endangering themselves or others.

"He didn't want contact with anyone other than family which meant that we were bearing the load of visiting alone."

—Mother

Tips

- Parents should try to separate what their child did from how they feel about them as a person. They can disapprove of their behaviour, but still love them;
- Consider what you are prepared to provide and how difficult this is to achieve;
- Seek help for yourself



Family Relationships

Siblings & Caregivers

Siblings are often a neglected group who require their own attention and need for information. While they are experiencing a similar range of emotions as the parent, they are not always as well informed and may be suffering a lack of attention due to the changes in the family and the increased levels of stress.

Their confusion and worry about what is happening to their sibling, their loneliness and their unacknowledged grief can lead to negative change in behavior. However, they can also be a vital source of support to parents and other children.

Tips

- Ensure that the sibling receives the information that they need;
- Ensure that siblings are involved in family discussion and prison visiting plans
- Parents / carers must make time for the sibling too;
- Ask if they would like to be referred for individual counselling/support.



Family Relationships



Carer of Offender's Children

The relationship between carers and imprisoned parents can be strained due to difficulties such as shared decision-making about children and pressure to visit. These issues may result in carers not bringing children to visit their parent in prison.

Tip

- Carers who do not get along with the imprisoned individual may ask another family member or trusted family friend, who knows the children well, to take them to visit their parent.

They've been arrested

Common responses people have when a relative is arrested are that they:

- May find it hard to believe that the person they know could have committed a crime;
- Might be angry at the Gardaí or even their loved one for breaking the law;
- May feel ashamed and/or worried that people will judge them;
- May have fear and confusion about what is happening to their loved one.

"The family's house had just been raided by the Gardaí to arrest their son. They had no idea where he had been taken. It was very stressful for them"

—Local support worker

Tips

- Contact a solicitor for assistance.
- Contact the local Gardaí Station centre for information on the arrest of the family member.

The arrest of a family member can be shocking and confusing as arrests are often unexpected and public. They may be carried out with force, which is even more distressing if children are present.

In an American study, many children who had witnessed their mothers' arrests had suffered classic symptoms of post-traumatic stress syndrome (Bernstein, N. All Alone in the World: Children of Incarcerated Parents, 2005). Some families may be used to contact with An Gardaí and not notice the impact on the children or themselves



Criminal Justice System

What is Bail & Remand?

Bail means that the individual is allowed to remain in the community until they need to appear in court. Impacts on the family during this time include:

- Feeling under pressure to put up bail money;
- Gardaí may call at the family home to ensure bail conditions are adhered to;
- Routines can be interfered with to meet the bail conditions;
- Feelings of responsibility to ensure their family member meets the conditions of bail.

Remand prisoners are held in custody prior to and during their trial. They may not have applied for bail or may have been refused it if the charge is serious. Some are unable to pay bail or don't meet the conditions set out in the bail bond.

- **Men are held at Cloverhill Prison, Dublin and Cork Prison.**
- **Women are held at the Dochas Centre in the MountJoy Campus, Dublin and Limerick Women's Prison.**

For information on programs to support people on bail contact the services page for support in your area.

What are the Courts like?

Courts can be intimidating and are very public places. The language used during trial can be hard to understand and frustrating. Families may hear things they disagree with or that upset them, and unless they are a witness, they will not be able to have their say during the trial.

It helps to be aware of the codes of conduct before the trial begins. For example: The public can go into any court unless the case is being held 'in camera', which means in private. This is to protect the privacy of the people in the court.

There are four main courts in Ireland: the District Court, the Circuit Court, the High Court and the Supreme Court. Other courts in operation are the Special Criminal Court and the Court of Appeal.



Criminal Justice System

The District Court

The District Court is a court of local and limited jurisdiction. This means it is restricted as to which cases it can decide in both civil and criminal matters. A criminal case will be heard in the District Court area where:

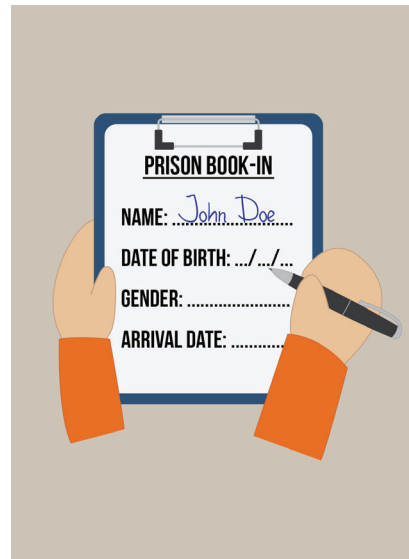
- The offence was committed.
- The defendant resides or carries on business.
- The defendant was arrested.

If the case is not dealt with by the District Court, the accused is sent forward to the Circuit Court for sentence. At the Circuit Court, he/she may withdraw his/her plea of “guilty” and alter it to “not guilty”, in which case a trial takes place.

The Circuit Court

The Circuit Court has jurisdiction in more serious civil and criminal matters.

In criminal matters, the Circuit Court Judge sits with a jury of twelve. A verdict need not be unanimous in a case where there are not fewer than eleven jurors if ten of them agree on a verdict after considering the case for a reasonable time (not less than two hours). You can appeal the outcome of a case heard in the Circuit Court to the High Court.



Criminal Justice System

The High Court

The High Court is presided over by a President of the High Court. It also has jurisdiction over civil and criminal matters.

For example, the most serious criminal offenses, such as murder, are dealt with by the High Court. When the High Court is hearing criminal matters it is known as the Central Criminal Court. In criminal matters, the High Court Judge sits with a jury of twelve. However, a verdict need not be unanimous in a case where there are at least eleven jurors if ten of them agree on a verdict after a reasonable time has passed (not less than two hours).

A person refused bail in the District Court can apply to the High Court for bail. A person granted bail in the District Court can apply to the High Court to vary the conditions of bail. A person charged with murder can only apply to the High Court for bail.

The Court of Appeal

The Court of Appeal hear appeals for indictable offences tried in the Circuit Court, the Central Criminal Court, and the Special Criminal Court. The court could hear appeals by a defendant against conviction, sentence or both.

The Special Criminal Court

The Special Criminal Court is only used for a limited number of cases. This court sits with three judges and no jury. The rules of evidence that apply in proceedings before the Special Criminal Court are the same as those applicable to trials in the Central Criminal Court

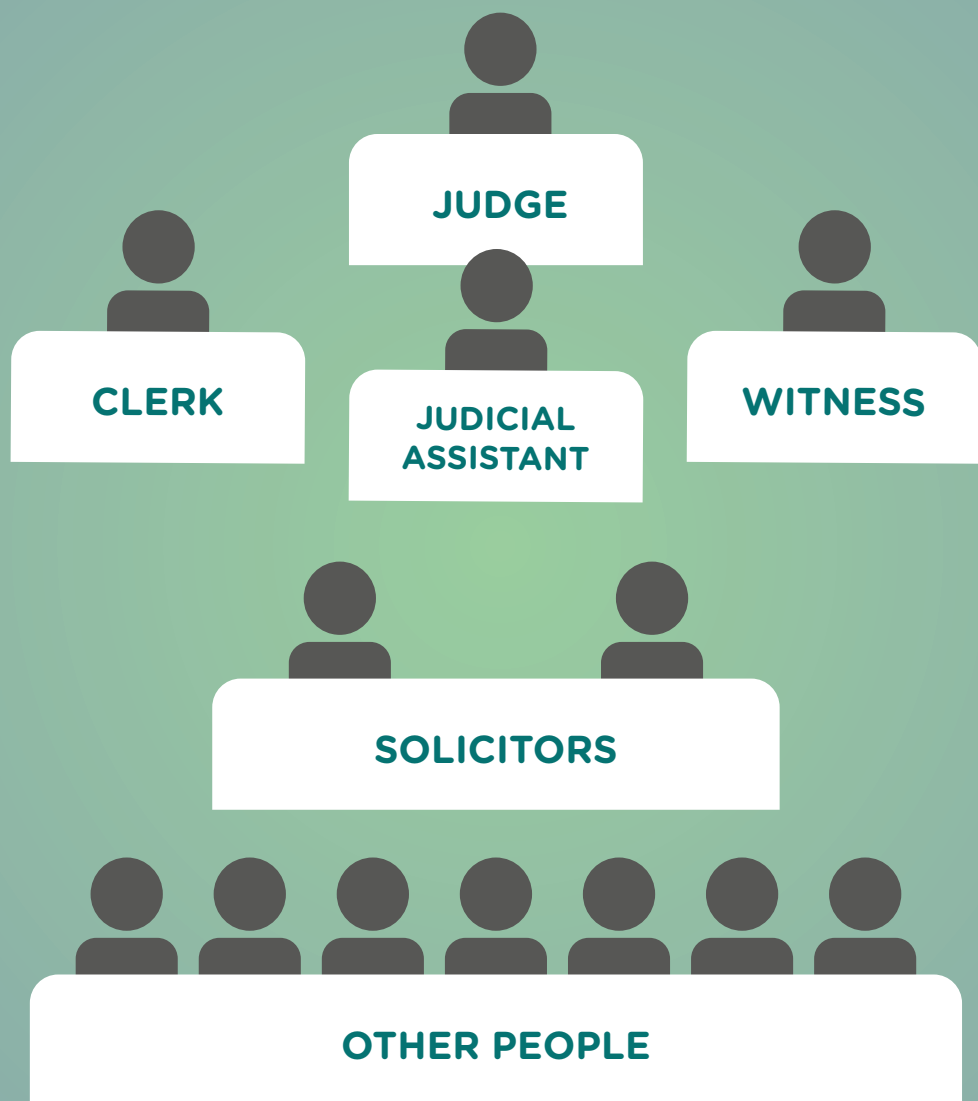


The Special Criminal Court

The Supreme Court is the highest court in the system and is the court of appeal for any cases which originated in the High Court and cases from both the District and Circuit Courts. It sits in the Four Courts in Dublin. The Court normally consists of three judges; this is when there are procedural appeals or cases not involving major legal questions for the Court.



Who's who in the Courtroom



Tip: A Guide to Court Support Services is also available on www.courts.ie

Criminal Justice System

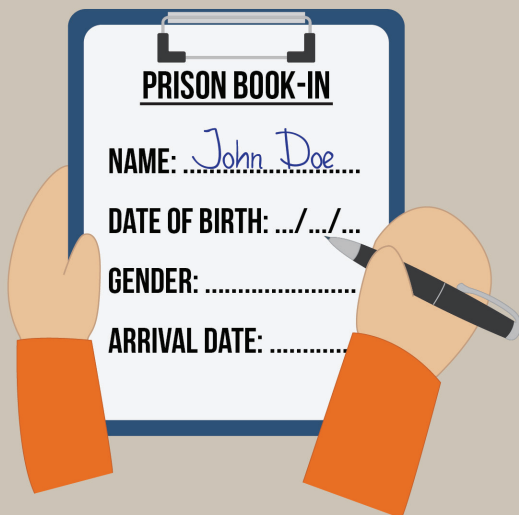
Sentencing

If the person is given a prison sentence there may be no opportunity to say goodbye as they will immediately be escorted by court officers and taken into custody.

However, depending on the circumstances, you may be able to see the individual before they are transferred to prison. Be prepared for the possibility of sudden separation so you could pack a bag with clothes and essentials.

"I had no idea that he would just disappear. We didn't pack a bag for him and we didn't get to say goodbye"

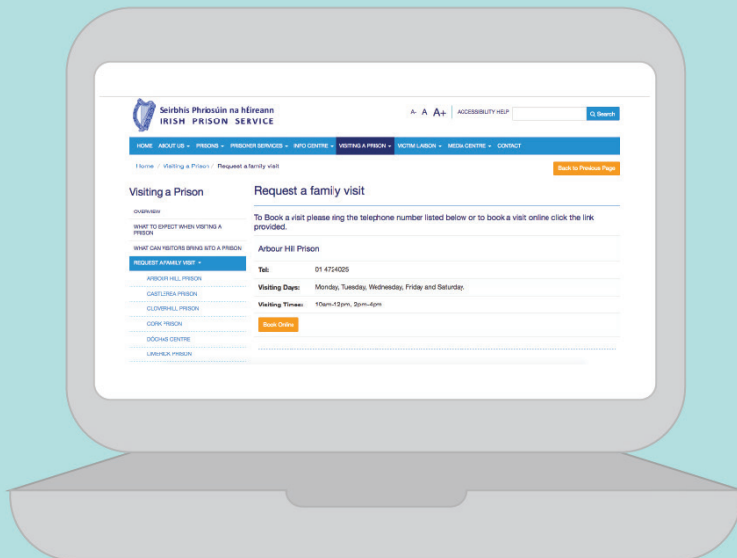
—Partner



Irish Prisons

There are 14 institutions in the Irish Prison System consisting of 11 traditional “closed” institutions, two open centres, which operate with minimal internal and perimeter security, and one “semi-open” facility with traditional perimeter security but minimal internal security (the Training Unit).

The majority of female prisoners are accommodated in the purpose built “Dóchas Centre” with the remainder accommodated in Limerick Prison. The Mountjoy Prison Campus consists of: Mountjoy Prison, Dóchas Centre, St. Patrick’s Institute and the Training Unit.



Prison Information

MOUNTJOY PRISON

located on the North Circular Road, Dublin 7. It is a closed, medium security prison for adult males. It is the main committal prison for Dublin City and County.

To visit an individual in Mountjoy Prison contact:

T: **01 8858955 / 01 8858954**

Visiting times:

Monday to Saturday

(excluding Tuesday)

10.15am-11pm and 2.15pm-3pm



DOCHAS CENTRE

A closed medium security prison for females aged 18 years & over. It is the committal prison for females committed on remand or sentenced from all Courts outside of Munster area.

To visit an individual in Dochas Prison contact:



T: **01 8858954 / 01 8858955**

Visiting times:

Monday (Professional Visits Only)

Wednesday to Sunday

10am-12pm and 2pm-4pm

ST. PATRICK'S INSTITUTE

A closed, medium security place of detention for 17 year old males held on remand or for trial.

To visit an individual in St. Patrick's Institute contact:

T: **01 8858994**

Visiting times:

Monday to Thursday

10am-12pm only.

Friday and Saturday

10am-12pm and 2pm-4pm.



TRAINING UNIT

A semi-open low security prison for males aged 18 years and over. It has a strong emphasis on work and training.

To visit an individual in the Training Unit contact:

T: **01 8858982**

Visiting times:

Tuesday and Wednesday

2.15pm-3.45pm.

Saturday and Sunday 10am-11.30am and 2.15pm-4.45pm



Prison Information

CLOVERHILL PRISON

A closed, medium security prison for adult males, which primarily caters for remand prisoners committed from the Leinster area.

To visit an individual in Cloverhill contact:

T: **01 6304880**

E: **oclovbookedvisits@irishprisons.ie**

Visiting times:

**Monday, Wednesday, Friday & Saturday
10am-12pm and 2pm-4pm**

Thursday 2.30pm-4pm

Selected family visits are available on Sundays by application to the Governor.

WHEATFIELD PRISON

A closed, medium security place of detention for adult males and for sentenced 17 year old juveniles.

To visit an individual in Wheatfield contact:

Tel: **01 6209401**

Visiting times:

Monday to Saturday

10-11.45am and 2.15pm-3.15pm.



MIDLANDS PRISON

A closed, medium security prison for adult males. It is the committal prison for counties Carlow, Kildare, Kilkenny, Laois, Offaly Meath, Westmeath, Wexford and Wicklow.

To visit an individual in Midlands Prison contact:

T: **057 8672155**

Visiting times:

Monday to Saturday

(excluding Tuesday)

10am-12pm and 2pm-4pm

LIMERICK PRISON

located on Mulgrave Street, Limerick. It is a closed, medium security prison for adult males and females. It is the committal prison for males for counties Clare, Limerick and Tipperary and for females for all six Munster counties.

To visit an individual in Limerick Prison contact:

Tel: **061 204787**

Visiting times:

Monday and Thursday

2pm-4pm



Prison Information

CASTLEREA PRISON

located in Harristown, Castlereagh, Co. Roscommon. It is a closed, medium security prison for adult males. It is the committal prison for remand and sentenced prisoners in Connaught and also takes committals from counties Cavan, Donegal and Longford.

Visit an individual in Castlereagh contact:
T: **094 9625213**
E: **castbkdvists@irishprisons.ie**

Visiting times:
Tues, Wed, Thur, Sat 10am-12pm & 2pm-4pm. Fri 2pm-4pm
Selected family visits available on Sundays.

SHELTON ABBEY

located in Arklow, Co. Wicklow. It is an open, low security prison for males aged 19 years and over who are regarded as requiring lower levels of security.

To visit an individual in Shelton Abbey contact:
T: **04 0242300**

Visiting times:
Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holiday Mondays - 11am-3.30pm

Special visits may be booked for midweek by application to the Governor.

LOUGHAN HOUSE

Open Centre is located in Blacklion, Co. Cavan. It is an open, low security prison for males aged 18 years and over who are regarded as requiring lower levels of security.

To visit an individual in Loughan House contact:

T: **071 9836000**

Visiting times:
Monday to Sunday 10am-5pm

ARBOUR HILL PRISON

Located in Arbour Hill, Dublin 7. It is a closed medium security prison for adult males. The prisoner profile is largely made up of long term sentenced prisoners.

To visit an individual in Arbour Hill Prison contact:

T: **01 472 4025**

Visiting times:
Mon, Tue, Wed, Fri and Sat 10am-12pm and 2pm-4pm

Legal visits can be arranged during or outside of these hours.



Prison Information

PORTLAOISE PRISON

A closed high security prison for adult males. It is the committal prison for those sent to custody from the Special Criminal Court and prisoners accommodated here include those linked with subversive crime.

To visit an individual in Portlaoise contact:

T: **057 8681326**

Visiting times are split differently between the **E Block & C&A blocks**.

— E Block:

Monday to Saturday
10am-12pm & 2pm-4pm
Sunday 10-12

— C & A Blocks:

Monday to Saturday
(excluding Tuesday)
10am-12pm & 2pm-4pm

— Enhanced inmates:

Sunday 2-4

CORK PRISON

located on Rathmore Road in Cork City. It is a closed, medium security prison for adult males. It is the committal prison for counties Cork, Kerry and Waterford.

To visit an individual in Cork Prison contact:

T: **021 2387103 / 021 2387134**

Visiting times:

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday
2pm-4pm & 5.30pm-7pm

Thursday evening from:
5.30pm-7pm

Saturdays:
10am-12pm & 2pm-4pm

Enhanced Prisoners:

Sundays 10am-12pm & 2pm-4pm
(limited places)



Supports in Prison

Chaplaincy Service

The Chaplaincy Service are available 24 hours a day and offer a one-to-one support and arranges bereavement support groups, counselling and courses in consultation with other services.

The Chaplaincy Service is independent and professional, while working as part of the prison multi-disciplinary team reporting to the Governor. Chaplains are respectful of and seek to meet the needs of prisoners from all belief systems and co-operate with visiting pastors representing all faiths.

to assist participants in achieving a drug free status. Drug Free Units have been established in all closed prisons. There are an aggregate total of 596 spaces in these Units. Methadone substitution treatment is available in 10 of the 14 prisons. Not provided in Shelton Abbey, Loughan House, Training Unit, and Castlereagh.

Drug Treatment

The Irish Prison Service provides a multidimensional drug rehabilitation programmes for prisoners. Prisoners have access to a range of medical and rehabilitative services, such as methadone treatment, psychosocial services, and 'work and training' options which assist in addressing their substance misuse.

The Medical Unit in Mountjoy Prison has 36 spaces for Drug Treatment. There are 8 week courses which run within the Unit accommodating 9 prisoners and is provided by prison staff and the community/voluntary sector. The aim of the programme is

Individuals with a History of Drug Use

Offenders entering prison give a history of drug use those who test positive for illegal substances are offered a medical assistance for detoxification. No use of legal or illegal is allowed, unless you have a valid prescription from a doctor, a psychiatrist or dentist. A prisoner might have to give a hair, urine or saliva sample for the purpose of detecting the presence or use of alcohol or any controlled drug or any medicinal product other than one prescribed by a prison doctor, psychiatrist or dentist. A prisoner might also be randomly searched after a visit, even if you are not a known drug user. This is because prisoners could be put under pressure to bring drugs into the prison for other prisoners.



Supports in Prison

Individuals with a History of Drug Use

Family members find it very difficult to know how to respond in these situations; they fear for their relatives' safety, they don't know who to tell or who to ask for support.

"My son continued his drug use in prison and I was told to pay up what he owed for the drugs before his time was up"

—Mother

Tips:

- Talk the situation through with someone you trust and consider your options
- A new confidential phone line has been launched by the Irish Prison Service to combat the illegal trafficking of drugs and weapons into prisons: **1800855717**
- Peer family support groups can help if you talk things through and get the information you need.



Supports in Prison

Treatment Centres

Prisoners can be referred to treatment centres on Temporary Release. If a prisoner is released into a treatment service on Temporary Release and doesn't adhere to conditions of release then the treatment service is required to contact prison service

Prisoner Healthcare

The prison healthcare service provides prisoners with access to the same range and quality of healthcare services as that available under the Medical Card scheme in the community. Prisoners are referred to relevant services and paced on the public waiting list.


Communication with Families

There are family liaison officers in place in some prisons. The Irish Prison Service has a strategic commitment to strengthen family supports to facilitate on-going contact with prisoners while in custody and their reintegration post release, with appropriate supports and programmes.

"You have to put the prison stuff aside and work on rebuilding the relationship and the trust. The rest will work itself in."

—Mother

A Families and Imprisonment Group has been established by the Irish Prison Service to identify and meet the needs of children and families affected by imprisonment. Current initiatives include physical improvements to visiting areas, Staff training, Parenting courses for prisoners and their partners (Family Links) and community partnerships.

Family members can request a Governor visit and this is usually the parents/partner of the prisoner if they have any concerns about the individual. Organisations such as Treo Portlaoige  U-Casadh based in Waterford can provide a link for prisoners and their families.



Supports in Prison

Prisoner Healthcare

A range of healthcare services are provided which include:

- Primary Care
- Pharmacy Service
- Mental Health Services
- Drug Treatment Services
- Dental Services
- Other Services, e.g. optician, chiropody

If you have concerns regarding a prisoner's welfare, you can contact the Prison Governor, Chief, Probation Officer or the prison Chaplaincy.

Mental Health Services

Individuals in custody in nine prisons have access to the Samaritans through the Listeners scheme and this service will commence being introduced to all closed prisons during 2016.

The IPS is now developing a standard mental health awareness programme for all those in custody, to be delivered as part of the Red Cross programme in all prisons.

There are also a number of multi-disciplinary groups that provide information and support in the area of mental health to prisoners.

Psychology Service

The core work of the Psychology Service is to address the mental health and offence-related needs of those in prison.

The focus on offence-related work (which has its aim to address those factors that put offenders at risk of recidivism) has increased in recent years.

It provides mental health services to prisoners (coping with imprisonment, depression, anxiety etc.) and helps offenders address factors that put them at risk of re-offending (anger, substance abuse, sexual and violent offending for example).



Supports in Prison

Work and Vocational Training

A wide range of training workshops operate within the institutions, e.g. printing, computers, Braille, woodwork, metalwork, construction, craft and horticulture. In addition, essential services for the prisons i.e. catering, laundry services and industrial cleaning are provided through work training.

- There are 126 workshops across the prison estate.
- The work and training area has an authorised staffing allocation of approximately 378.
- In excess of 900 prisoners participate in work training activities daily.
- Courses are externally accredited by City & Guilds, the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI), ECDL and other certifying bodies.

Prisoners who take part in work or education are paid a weekly amount that varies according to the job or course they are attending. Prisoner who do not take part in work or education are paid a small basic rate.

Integrated Sentence Management

The Irish Prison Service Integrated Sentence Management (ISM) process is a prisoner-centred, multi-disciplinary approach to working with prisoners with provision for initial assessment, goal-setting for engagement with a range of prison-based services, and periodic review to measure progress.

Under ISM, a newly committed prisoner with a sentence of one year or greater is assessed by an ISM Co-ordinator. A personal plan for the prisoner to complete during his/her time in prison is then drawn up.

The plan is reviewed regularly between the ISM Co-ordinator and the prisoner, with written reports feeding in from the relevant services and agencies.

Approximately one year prior to release, the ISM Co-ordinator meets the prisoner to establish his/her needs on release and a plan is put in place to assist his/her re-integration into the community.



Irish Association for the Social Integration of Offenders (IASIO)

IASIO is a national community based organisation for adult offenders in the criminal justice system with a specific focus on alternatives to both offending and re-imprisonment. They provide a range of core services based in all of Ireland's prisons and in the community. Their core services include:

- **The Linkage Service**

The aim of Linkage is to help ex-offenders access appropriate training, education, and employment with the ultimate objective of desistance from crime and full integration into the community. The Linkage service is only available to those who are under the supervision of the Probation Service.

- **The Prison GATE Service**

This service aims to promote a pathway to change by providing training, education and employment placement services to prisoners in the Mountjoy Campus, Wheatfield, Castlereagh and Midlands Campus. There are 6 Training and Employment Officers (TEO) assigned to the GATE service to facilitate those in prison to help them develop a plan for release with a focus on training, education or employment and to identify and overcome barriers that may stand in their way.

- **The Resettlement Service**

Assists prisoners both before and after release.

The Service aims to help identify their resettlement needs and any supports you may require, for example, accommodation, medical card, social welfare payments etc. The Resettlement Service also helps them develop release and post-release plans that offer the best chance of success on release from prison. The Service operates through one-to-one meetings between the prisoner and the Resettlement Coordinator. The Service also works with the Probation Service, Counsellors, Medical Team and Teachers in order to provide the prisoner with the best opportunities for a successful re-integration. For more information see www.iasio.ie



Supports in Prison

The Probation Service

The Probation Service is an Agency within the Department of Justice and Law Reform. Their probation officers work with offenders across the country, as well as in prisons and detention centres.

They do this by helping offenders to lead better lives, free from crime and the harm it does. Their work in custody includes advising and assisting prisoners with issues which have led to their offending behaviour, in order to help them avoid reoffending; and helping them cope with the impact of imprisonment.

The Probation Service has a number of early release programmes an individual may avail of due to positive behaviour. They include the Community Return Scheme and the Community Support Scheme.

Community Return Scheme

The Programme targets well behaved prisoners serving sentences of between 1 and 8 years imprisonment who are making genuine efforts to desist from reoffending.

Prisoners serving sentences of less than one year are ineligible for Community Return and may instead be considered for release under the Community Support Scheme.

Persons serving sentences of over 8 years generally fall within the Parole Board process.

This Scheme is aimed at prisoners serving a sentence of between 3-12 months.

The aim of the Community Support Scheme is to increase support for prisoners post and pre-release from prison with the aim of breaking the cycle of reoffending.



Supports in Prison

Protection

If, for some reason, an individual does not feel safe in the general prison population, they can ask to be put 'on protection' which means that you can be separated from other prisoners.

If the Governor becomes aware that they are at risk of harm, they will make a decision, based on the information available, whether to put them on protection or not.

"I was relieved when he went to prison the last time. I knew that he was safe- he had a roof over his head and food to eat"

—Mother

St Vincent de Paul Visitor Centres

The Prison Visitor Centre's Committee is collaboration between the Society of St. Vincent De Paul and the Dublin Quakers (Society of Friends) Services Committee.

Providing a basic hospitality service in Cloverhill Remand Prison, Mountjoy Prison, Dóchas Centre and Wheatfield Prison.

The Visitor Centres provide a hospitality service they operate a free tea, coffee and snack bar service to visitors before and after their visit.

They also provide fully equipped play areas which are staffed by qualified childcare workers and children can avail of play and arts and crafts activities before and after their visit.

They also offer parenting advice and support, family support and an information and advocacy service to all those affected by the imprisonment of a loved one.

Library Services

A library is available in each prison.



Visiting Prison

Visiting Prison

Prison visits do matter. Children, families and prisoners want to see each other despite the hardships and families feel that it humanises the prison experience for their loved one. Maintaining consistent contact helps the family to cope with separation and usually plays an important role in the family's ability to reunify post release. Seeing other families in the same situation can also be helpful.

There are a range of visit types:

- Contact visits
- Non – contact visits
- Family visits
- Professional visits

For more detailed information visit www.irishprisons.ie

Every time the visits would end my heart would break. I'd look at my brother as much as possible and tell him I loved him. I thought that when I'd walk away I would never see him again. I would pray the guards would be kind to him and he wouldn't die"

—Sibling

Visiting times and conditions vary between prisons;

The Irish Prison Service operates a booked visits system. Any person entering a prison to visit must make an appointment in advance providing specific personal details in order to gain admittance to the prison.

These include the visitor name, address, date of birth, prisoner being visited, relationship of prisoner to visitor and date of visit.

Photographic identification will be required from the visitor on arrival and will be used to confirm the date of birth given when booking their visit. All details are recorded on the electronic system. See pages 17 & 18 for booking information.

All visitors will be directed to the prison reception in the visiting centre in the first instance. Visitor centres provide tea/coffee, toilet facilities, a play area for children and a television.



Visiting Prison

How many visitors are allowed?

Up to 3 adults are permitted to visit. There is no limit on the number of children permitted however, consideration must be given to safety and security regarding numbers.

2
VISITS LEFT
THIS WEEK



Visiting Prison

Are children allowed to visit?

Children are allowed to visit but some constraints may be in place with regard to numbers due to constraints of space and seating arrangements. The Irish Prison Service encourages a flexible approach to ensure that all children who wish to visit their parent in prison can do so. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Security Screening Area

All visitors including children and babies will be searched. They are patted down by staff using the hand held wand or by random pat down. Visitors must pass through the security screening area before being granted access to the prison. Airport style x-ray security scanners and metal detectors are used to screen all bags and personal belongings.

Operation of Drug Dogs

Visitors (including children) will be asked to stand in line with other visitors while the drug detection dog will be walked on a leash along the line of visitors. Those caught with drugs can be brought immediately to a Garda station and may be charged with an offence. Visitors who refuse to be searched are refused a visit.

Tips

- There may be long delays to get into the prison so arrive early for your visit.
- Be aware of any metal in your clothing as you may have to go back to lockers and remove the item and then return to waiting line.

It's a shock when you go for the first visit. You have to go through that metal detector. You need to prepare yourself.

—Father



Visiting Prison



Visiting Prison

Barring of Visitors

The Governor is entitled to refuse a visit to a prisoner by a person or persons if he or she believes it to be necessary in order to:

1. Prevent the entry into the prison of controlled drugs or other prohibited articles or substances,
2. Prevent a conspiracy to commit a criminal offence, or (3) otherwise maintain good order and safe and secure custody.



Visiting Prison

Barring of Visitors

Screened Visits:

Some of the prisons (such as Cloverhill and St. Patrick's) have only "screened visits facilities" which means that there will be a glass window between you and your visitor. Others prisons can provide "open visits".

There is no automatic right to an open visit and the Governor may insist on screened visits on occasions for security reasons.

Reasons why screened visits may be applied include previous attempts to retrieve contraband, evidence of drug misuse, previous attempts by the visitor to pass contraband and / or positive indications on the visitor by the drug dogs.

These triggers could reasonably lead the Governor to believe there would be a risk in relation to contraband if an open visit was to take place.

What can you bring into prison?

To safeguard prison security and for the safety of staff, prisoners and visitors there are very few items which can be brought into a prison. A visitor may bring cash to be lodged to the prisoners account (up to a maximum of €100.00).

Visitors may also bring clothes, footwear, mail, photographs, books and magazines. Visitors may leave these items with the prison staff who will issue the visitor with a receipt. All packages are subject to security search and may be sniffed by the drug detection dog.

Visitors may not bring in items such as cigarettes or food or any other type of contraband. Contraband is anything that is not allowed in the prison such as drugs, weapons, unauthorised medicines, unauthorised money, mobile phones, cameras or sound recording devices.



Visiting Prison

Mobile Phones

Section 36 of the Prisons Act 2007, which was brought into operation on 1 May, 2007, makes it an offence for prisoners to have unauthorised possession of or use of mobile telecommunication devices.

What can I take into a visiting room?

Visitors are not permitted to bring any items into the visiting room which they may wish to pass to the prisoner. As previously stated any permitted items may be given to a staff member who will issue the visitors with a receipt.

Visitors are only permitted to bring their identification. All other personal property such as money, bags, keys, phones must be left/kept in their cars or in the lockers that are available in the visitor centres.

Tip

- It is best not to discuss any of your relative's or family details with others in visiting room, as this may get back to your relative or get misinterpreted and may cause problems for you or your relative.



Should a child visit Prison?

Families and caregivers often grapple with this issue thinking that seeing parents in prison is too upsetting and could be unsafe.

- The decision to visit should be case by case based on the individual children and the family relationship, the length of incarceration and regular monitoring of the experience. It may include variations of phone and direct contact and variations on the regularity of contact.
- Regular contact may give children some routine in their communications, building a sense of security and predictability, which can reduce the negative effects of parental separation. Visits may help to replace their fears and fantasies with a more realistic understanding of their parent's circumstances and reassures children that their parent is safe and seeing other families and children of prisoners helps children know that they are not alone.
- Regular visits may allow imprisoned parents to maintain a parenting role, keep in touch with each stage as their child grows up, and gives them a sense of being needed and valued outside prison. This can increase their motivation to get out and stay out of prison and can make family reunification easier when the prisoner is eventually released.



Children Visiting Prison

Should a child visit Prison?

Tips

- Call ahead to make sure the individual is not on punishment as you may not be able to visit them.

If a child is not visiting their parent, it may be because:

- The parent does not want their child to see them “like this” or to be exposed to the prison environment;
- The parent / carer doesn’t have the time or resources to travel to the prison;
- There is a history of violence in the parental relationship;
- There is a breakdown between the parent / carer and the incarcerated parent;
- There may be legal reasons why the child cannot visit their parent.

How to prepare children for visits?

There are many hardships involved in bringing children to prison, including travelling long distances, limited toys and play equipment, rigid security procedures, long waiting times for visits, lack of privacy, crowded and restrictive visiting centres that prevent children from making noise and running around.

In most parent/carer’s experience, prison visits are stressful and exhausting, especially with small children.

“The social worker helped us plan the visits and consider what to tell the children. You have to think what’s best for them. I had to put aside how I felt”

—Grandparent



Children Visiting Prison

How to prepare children for visits?

Tips

Suggestions for the parent/carer of what to tell the children:

- How long it takes to get to the prison, what the prison officers will be wearing;
- What their parent will be wearing and any changes to their appearance since the child last saw them;
- Security and search procedures (include the possibility of the ‘Sniffer Dogs’);
- The need to do what the prison officers ask of them;
- The difference between contact and non-contact visits. Don’t promise a contact visit; it may not happen.
- What the visitors centre looks like;
- How long the visit will last;
- What behaviour is okay, what is inappropriate and why.
- It is good idea for the adult to visit the prison first in order to find out what prison visits are like. It is helpful to give children factual information about what to expect during prison visits. When the visiting experience matches children’s expectations, they will be less worried
- Professionals could encourage the imprisoned individual write a letter to the children explaining what the visit will be like and telling them they are looking forward to seeing them;
- Professionals could ask the imprisoned parent be informed about the child’s current activities so that they can ask the children relevant questions



Ex-Prisoners

On release, ex-prisoners may have become unfamiliar with such things as how much items cost, or how to get around on public transport.

They may experience severe mood swings, become emotionally unpredictable and may also struggle with the fact that they actually have to depend on their partner to explain how to do some things, like use new technology.

Children

Some children may be very resentful of the parent's return home, especially if things have been going reasonably well in their absence. They may become competitive and not accept their authority and be protective of the other parent.

Tips

- It is best if family members do not take their relative's negative reactions personally and to develop skills in using assertive language to protect themselves;
- If the Governor makes a quick decision to release the prisoner, it is unlikely that the prison will have time to process any payments. The family will be not only be adjusting to the sudden return of their family member, but also coping with the extra financial burden. You can contact your local community welfare officer with a view to apply for an exceptional needs payment to ease the financial strain on the family
- Children learn to adjust to the change when a parent goes to prison and then have to adjust to further changes around the times of home leave and release. The longer the parent has been in prison, the greater the changes will be.



Children

- If the child was very young when mum or dad went away, s/he may have no memory of that parent at home and it may be like having a stranger join the household.
- Younger children may feel insecure, being overly clingy or ignoring / withdrawing from the returned parent, and will need reassurance that the parent is not going to leave again .
- Even if links have been maintained by regular visits, children who have become used to relating to only one parent may be very unwilling to relate to this parent and see them as an intruder. They may also strongly resent the time their parents spend together and feel they are competing for their attention, time and affection.

Caregivers

- Difficulties can occur when a person returns from prison and wishes to resume a parenting role. Carers and grandparents may find it difficult to let go of the role, especially if they have different ideas from the ex-prisoner about how to parent. A close emotional bond is formed between the children and the carer, and both may find it painful to have this relationship suddenly disrupted.

Tips

- It is a good idea to discuss care arrangements in visits leading up to release, so that carers, children and parents have a chance to talk about their wants and expectations;
- Encourage communication between family members or carers as early as possible. Let them know that it is normal to have a mixture of feelings, both good and bad. Expressing these concerns can mean less likelihood of the children 'acting out'
- It is important that the feelings are acknowledged and discussed openly between parents and children if the situation is to improve;



Release

Preparing for Release

Because of the limitations placed on prison relationships, both prisoners and their families can have quite un-realistic expectations about what the relationship will be like after prison. Prison relationships can sometimes seem 'OK' because there is so little real contact.

The offender may have made promises to change however, if there are long-standing matters that are unresolved, it is important to be realistic. The family may not be included in any pre-release planning conducted by the support worker with the prisoner within the prison.



Tips

- Discuss with your family the arrangements for release and feelings about it, set realistic boundaries and expectations and consider living arrangements;
- Be aware that the release date may change and relative may arrive unexpectedly on your doorstep;
- Get support, either separately or together, from family, friends and professionals. There may be community organisations that offer a range of supports for individuals serving a sentence in prison;
- Be informed of the prisons pre-release arrangements, date, conditions and referral to other services;
- Have communication about the release between family members or carers as early as possible, discuss expectations and plans for release;
- Sort through unresolved issues before their relative is released, or as soon as they can post release;
- Be prepared for the possibility that everyone will have difficulties adjusting to the change;
- Consider that pre-existing issues in the relationship will not have gone away by themselves;
- Prior to release discuss with your relative in prison about their expectations and plans and those of the family;
- Try to negotiate these expectations of each other and the roles each will take on;
- Explain how to allow for each family member's privacy and personal space;
- Professions to encourage and support family members to discuss and negotiate release plans;
- Professionals encourage the parent/carers to talk to the children about what might happen;



Financial Support Available to Individuals on Release

Every prisoner is entitled to one weeks DSP payment on release, usually Supplementary Welfare Allowance while they wait to sign on for their Jobseekers payment. If an individual is released without a payment they have the entitlement to present themselves on the day of their release at their local Community Welfare Office to apply for this one week's supplementary payment.

There is also a 'Prisoners Hardship Fund' also however the Governor will only approve a payment to a prisoner from this fund if the individual is in extreme difficulty on release i.e. homeless, no family support for example.

The Act does not apply to any conviction for a sexual offence or an offence which was tried in the Central Criminal Court. The 7 years is from the date the custodial or non-custodial sentence became operative and you must have complied with the sentence or order imposed.

Spent Convictions

Under the Criminal Justice (Spent Convictions and Certain Disclosures) Act 2016, which came into effect on 29 April 2016, a range of minor offences will become spent after 7 years.

This means that an adult convicted of an offence covered by the Act does not have to disclose the conviction after 7 years, except in certain circumstances. The convictions which may be regarded as spent after 7 years are set out in Section 5 of the Act. They are:

- All convictions in the District Court for motoring offences except for convictions for dangerous driving which are limited to a single conviction
- All convictions in the District Court for minor public order offences
- A single conviction (other than a motoring or public order offence) in the District or Circuit Court which resulted in a term of imprisonment of 12 months or less (or a fine)



WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?



Offenders \ Ex-offenders

Reintegration Projects

The organisations listed below receive funding from the Probation Service. They provide services designed to reduce offending, address anti-social behaviour and facilitate rehabilitation.

U-Casadh

U-Casadh is based in Waterford City and provides a support service for ex-offenders and other marginalised people, along with their families, enabling their full participation in community and economic life.

They deliver focused support in a nurturing environment, helping participants to develop personal and professional skills. U-Casadh provides services to people both inside and outside of prison in order to develop their personalised release plan.

The approach is then structured in four stages: stabilisation, training and education, employment and enterprise, and alumni support. U-Casadh focuses on providing occupation with purpose, encouraging entrepreneurship as well as sourcing employment in supportive businesses.

Treo Portlairge



Treo's aim is to reduce criminal activity among the people in its target group of 16 to 23 year olds and is based in Waterford City and Dungarvan. Treo offers to each of its participant's educational, social, and vocational support while challenging their offending attitudes and behavior.



Treo has an outreach service, a broad range of accredited education and training programmes, personal development supports, physical activities, sober recreation, counselling, jail in-reach & community reintegration, special family programmes, advocacy and guidance in accessing statutory responses & progression routes.



The Cornmarket Project

The Cornmarket Project is an inter-agency community based treatment and rehabilitation project under the auspices of Wexford Local Development. The project enables offenders and substance misusers to move back into a stable and productive lifestyle.

The project operates from premises based in Wexford Town, New Ross, Enniscorthy and Gorey and throughout the rest of the county through the provision of an outreach service. The Project has the following treatment and rehabilitation programmes available:

- Outreach and Brief Intervention Programme
- Drop-In and Open Access Programme
- Motivational Counselling
- Behaviour Change Group Programme
- Training and Rehabilitation Special Category CE Schemes
- Family Support Programme



Community Support

Bedford Row Family Project

Bedford Row Family Project is a family support project in Limerick that reaches out to families who are affected by imprisonment. They recognise that children who grow up in such families may be angry, fearful or anxious, and may need protection from potentially harmful effects of imprisonment and addiction. Their ultimate goal is to 'break the cycle' of involvement in crime and imprisonment in families. The majority of their work is done in close collaboration with the Governor and Officers in Limerick Prison.

- Hospitality Centre outside Limerick Prison - (the springboard for many families' involvement in the support offered by our Project) it offers refreshments and a listening ear to adults, and play materials to children waiting to visit their loved ones in prison, while their visiting arrangements are being processed.
- Bedford Row In-reach Service - it operates in Limerick prison to support both vulnerable men and men in prison and also offers support on release from custody to both prisoners and their families.

Its premises in Lower Bedford Row Limerick is also used as a neutral venue for various types of prison visits, if the Prison determines that the prisoner is suitable for same. T: 061 315332



**“Though no-one can go back and
make a brand new start, anyone
can start from now and make a
brand new ending”**

—Carl Bard

Special Drugs CE Rehabilitation Scheme

This scheme provides a rehabilitation training and development opportunity for individuals recovering from substance misuse and referred to a place on CE. The CE rehabilitation schemes are delivered with a specific focus on opportunities for training and development for participants working towards recovery and re-integration into active community and working life.

The path to recovery on CE reflects the personal journey of each participant and often requires additional interventions provided by local addiction recovery and support services. You can make inquiries about these schemes in your area as referrals are made by substance Misuse, probation and community services.



Impact of Drug Use

Offender's Drug Use

- Families who have experienced drug and alcohol issues may feel differently about imprisonment. They may:
- Be used to feeling isolated or disengaged from their family member.
- Have already experienced not knowing where their parent is (for children).
- Have already had contact with the Gardai, court and community orders
- Have experienced an absence or inconsistency of rules (as children).
- Feel a sense of stability and security during the family member's incarceration.
- Feel concerned about their family member receiving drug and alcohol support or treatment for mental health issues while in prison
- Feel nervous about the family member's release and possible return to substance abuse
- May have been involved in or supporting a care plan as part of a relative's substance use treatment before they went to prison.

"It took my son 3 months to receive any drug and alcohol treatment while he was in prison because of the waiting lists"

—Mother



Impact of Drug Use

Drug treatment in prison

If your relative was in treatment or on methadone programme at the time of going to prison then that treatment should continue in prison. Offenders entering prison give a history of drug use and those who test positive for illegal substances are offered a medical assistance for detoxification by prison health care staff.

They also have access to medical and rehabilitative services, such as methadone treatment, psychosocial services, and 'work and training' options which assist in addressing their substance misuse. Drug Free Units have been established in all closed prisons.

Tips

- Reach out for help & support. By sharing with others in similar situations in a safe space or with counsellors, then you will feel more supported when it comes to making tough decisions or dealing with difficult situations.
- You could contact the drug treatment service/GP and ask them to contact the prison to ensure the drug treatment continues.
- Family members can access support in their own right at substance misuse services.
- Be informed about drug use, associated behaviour and various treatment options.
- If your relative enters a treatment centre consider your involvement in your relative's recovery plan and discuss this with your relative and treatment services.
- Overdose after a period of absence from drugs can be a real possibility for some, discuss harm reduction and overdose prevention measures such as Naloxone with your relative and treatment services.




Impact of Drug Use

Community Drug Support

Substance Misuse Services provide a free drug and alcohol service across the South East Region.

The Substance Misuse Service works with adults and young people who want help to deal with a drug or alcohol problem and who want to build a healthier, happier life for themselves.

They also support friends, families and carers. To help maintain recovery they offer the following on-going support:

- Keyworking 
- Counselling.
- Outreach Service.
- Rehabilitation Support.
- Connection to Community Groups.
- Family & Carer Groups to Support Your Loved Ones.
- Links with Local Training, Education & Employment Initiatives.

Please see the services page from contact details in your area.



— Carlow

Homeless Services

Carlow County Council
Athy Road Carlow
Co. Carlow
T: 059 917 0300

St. Vincent de Paul

Monastery Hostel
Old Dublin Road,
Carlow
T: 059 913 5229
E: svpmonasteryhostel@eircom.net

Tenancy Sustainment & Resettlement Service

Monastery Hostel,
Old Dublin Road,
Carlow
T: 059 914 0322
E: mcoburn@carlowcoco.ie

Addiction Services Substance Misuse Service

Kickham Street
Co. Kilkenny
T: 056 778 4638
T: 189 046 4600

Tusla Child & Family Agency

Tel: 059 913 6570

St. Francis Farm

Drug-Free Residential
Rehabilitation
Carlow
T: 059 915 1369
E: info.SFFrehab@mqi.ie
— SFF Detox Unit
T: 087 960 3905
E: info.SFFdetox@mqi.ie

Mental Health Services

Carlow Mental Health
Association
T: 085 818 1353
E: carlowmentalhealth@hotmail.com

St Dymphna's Hospital

T: 0599136300
— Shine Mental Health
T: 1890 621 631

Peer Family Support

Carlow Family Support Group
Askea Parish Centre
T: 085 787 2730

Tullow Family Support Group

T: 085 139 1701

Carlow Institute of Further Education

T: 059 913 1187
E: cife.info@kilkennycarlowetb.ie

Carlow ETB

T: 059 913 554
E: calcadmin@eircom.net

Services

Training/Education

Carlow Adult Educational Guidance
& Information Service

T: 059 913 3123

E: info@carlowadultguidance.ie

Local Enterprise Office

T: 059 912 9783

E: enterprise@carlowcoco.ie

Skillnet

T: 056 775 276

E: info@kilkennychamber.ie

Carlow ETB

T: 059 913 554

E: calcadmin@eircom.net

Making Connections

T: 059 913 8700

T: 086 805 33133

— Tipperary (South)

Homeless Services

Tipperary County Council

T: 076 10650

E: customerservices@tipperarycoco.ie

Cuan Saor Refuge

Clonmel

T: 052 612 7557

E: admin@cuansaor.org

South East Simon Community

Clonmel.

T: 052 617 2742

E: info@southeastsimon.ie

Addiction Services

Substance Misuse Service

Grounds of South Tipperary Hospital
Clonmel

T: 052 617 7900

Aiséirí Cahir

T: 053 0527441166

E: info@aiseiri.ie

Mental Health Services

Stan - Promoting Mental Health

T: 052 618 7081 / 087 948 3061

Peer Family Support

Cashel

T: 087 618 8075

Tusla

Child and Family Agency

Clonmel

T: 052 617 7303

Training/Education

National Learning Network

Clonmel

T: 052 618 1555

E: clonmel@nln.ie

Tipperary ETB

Clonmel,

T: 052 613 4105

E: adultguidance@tipperaryetb.ie

**Adult Education Centre
Clonmel**
T: 052 76755
E: adulted@tipperaryetb.ie

Intreo Centre Clonmel
T: 052 617 0220

Skillnet
T: 052 612 6500

— Kilkenny

**Homeless Services
Kilkenny County Council**
T: 056 779 4900
E: housing@kilkennycoco.ie

**The Good Shepard Centre
Church Lane**
T: 056 772 2566
E: manager@thegoodshepherdcentre.kilkenny.ie

Amber Women's Refuge
Tel: 056 777 1404
Email: kwry@eircom.net

Family Services
Family Support Network
Kilkenny City & County
T: 056 772 3860
M: 086 315 2246

Focus Ireland Kilkenny
Tel: 056 779 4565
Ferrybank
Tel: 051 897 900

**Addiction Services
Substance Misuse Service**
Kickham Street
Co. Kilkenny
T: 056 778 4638
T: 1890 46 4600

Aiséirí Aislínn
Ballyragget
Co. Kilkenny
T: 056 883 3777
E: info@aiseiri.ie

**Mental Health Services
Department of Psychiatry**
St. Luke's Hospital,
T: 056 778 5000

Shine Discovery
T: 1890621631

Grow
T: 056 776 1624

Tusla Child and Family Agency
T: 059 913 6570

Training/Education
Intreo Centre
T: 056 771 5100

Kilkenny Employment for Youth

T: 056 776 2774

E: key1@eircom.net

Skillnet

T: 056 775 2767

E: info@kilkennychamber.ie

Kilkenny ETB

T: 056 776 3149

E: wordaid@kkadulted.ie

Making Connections

T: 056 775 1988

Re-integration Service U-Casadh

T: 051 830 479

E: admin@ucasadh.ie

— Waterford

Homeless Services

Waterford City Council

T: 051 849 869

Waterford County Council

Dungarvan

T: 058 22000

Focus Ireland

Dungarvan

T: 058 43570

Oasis House Women's Refuge

Tel: 051 370 367

E: oasishouse2@eircom.net

Emergency Line: 1890 264 364

Tintean Women's Housing

Hennessy's Road

Waterford

T: 051 844 076

E: tinteanhousing@outlook.com

South East Simon Community

Unit 33, Johnstown Business Park,

Waterford City

T: 051 872 693

E: info@southeastsimon.ie

Addiction Services

Substance Misuse Service

St. Otteran's Hospital

Waterford

T: 051 848 658

Aiséirí Céim Eile

Waterford

T: 051 370 007

E: info@aiseiri.ie

Mental Health Services

ACCEPT

T: 051 842 790

Brook House

T: 051 842 789

Shine Discovery

T: 051 852 528

E: shinediscovery@shineonline.ie

Peer Family Support

Family Support Network

T: 051 312 010

E: info@sersfn.org

Cityside

— Ferrybank

T: 086 856 1641

Cityside

— John's Park

— Kilcohan

— Farran Park,

— Dunmore Rd

T: 051 876 468

M: 087 639 4065

Cityside

— Ballybeg

— Larchville

— Lisduggan

T: 051 351 100

M: 087 602 4061

Cityside

— Tramore

— Stradbally

— Kilmacthomas

T: 051 338 723

M: 086 852 7173

Dungarvan

T: 058 48946

M: 087 9676439

Intreo Centre

T: 051 356 000

Child & Family Support

Tusla Child and Family Agency

Waterford

T: 051 842 827

Dungarvan

T: 058 20906

Barnardos

T: 051 844 140

Training/Education

National Learning Network

T: 051 359 220

E: waterford@nln.ie

Job Sampling Initiative

T: 051 371 830

E: info@wap.ie

Waterford ETB

T: 051 301 500

E: infotraining@wwetb.ie

Skillnet

T: 051 872 639

Making Connections

T: 085 744 4780

T: 086 820 1077

Re-integration Services

Treo Portlairge 

T: 051 373 740

E: projectleader@treoportlairge.ie

U-Casadh

T: 051 830 479

E: admin@ucasadh.ie

— Wexford

Wexford County Council

T: 053 919 6274

St. Vincent de Paul

Thomas Street,
Wexford.

T: 053 912 1440

E: ozanamwex@eircom.net

Wexford Women's Refuge

T: 053 912 1876

E: wexrefuge@eircom.net

Addiction Services

Substance Misuse Service
St. John's Hospital
Enniscorthy
Co. Wexford

T: 053 935 9825

Aiséiri Roxborough

T: 053 914 1818

E: info@aiseiri.ie

Mental Health Services

Summerhill Community Mental
Health Wexford Town.

T: 053 912 3899

Maryville Community Mental Health

Grounds of St John's Hospital,
Enniscorthy

T: 053 923 3252

Tara House Community Mental Health

Gorey

T: 053 948 8900

GROW

T: 1890 474 474

Peer Family Support

Gorey Family Support Group

T: 053 912 1691

M: 087 935 1774

New Ross Family Support Group

T: 087 935 1754

Enniscorthy Family Support Group

T: 087 935 1754

Tusla Child and Family Agency

Wexford Town

T: 053 9123522 ext 201

— Gorey

T: 053 943 0100

Training/Education

Intreo

T: 053 916 5400

Wexford ETB

T: 051 30 1500

E: infotraining@wwetb.ie

Re-integration Service

Cornmarket Project

T: 053 914 4931

M: 089 486 2738

How we achieved this

How we achieved this

— 1

Three support workshops were facilitated by the SER Family Support Network where family members shared their experience and identified their strengths & needs in relation to imprisonment of a relative.


— 2

A small working group then undertook a process of research that sourced information and resources materials to match the needs identified. This was presented at a further workshop where family members provided feedback, clarification and posed further questions.

— 3

Members of working group met with family members individually to provide their personal experience.

— 4

Individuals and group interviews were held with a range of local workers to capture as broad an input as possible. These included: Bedford Row Family Project, Treo Portlairge  the Irish Penal Reform Trust.

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www.serfamilysupportnetwork.org
www.ucasadh.ie