Dáil Standing Order 218(2)

An Coiste um Chuntais Phoiblí
Committee of Public Accounts

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Template

Instructions

Please complete this template <u>for each</u> *ex-post* review of expenditure completed since 2015. Please include hyperlinks to the reviews where possible and otherwise provide the reviews in soft copy.

Link to report: Review of the Programme of Work and Training in the Irish Prison Service
google.ie/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwiynbm3xJaEAxVgXEEAHX7pAZAQFnoECBgQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fassets.gov.ie%2F205493%2Fb0cabab7-17f9-4231-ad48-4827eee4c9f2.pdf&usg=AOvVaw1pdDB93xOO3oKhRlp-6M0M&opi=89978449

VFM Information

Title of ex-post review of expenditure	Review of the Programme of Work and Training in the Irish Prison Service	Type of review:	Spending Review
Accounting period(s) to which it relates:	Review is with reference to general trends rather than specific accounting period but encompasses expenditure on work training for the years 2016 – 2020.	Authored by:	Caroline Finn, Irish Prison Service
Related review(s) previously undertaken:	N/A	Started:	
Quantum of expenditure covered by review:	c. €24m /yr	Completed:	October 2021
% of total voted expenditure covered by review:	c. 6-7% of the IPS budget in years covered by review.	Expenditure type:	Current
Programme line(s):	Prisoner Services	Relevant subhead(s):	A.4.5 Gratuities (Prisoner Services) A.4.7 Work Training (Prisoner Services) A.1.(i) Salaries
% of total programme expenditure:		If the review is reflected in a Public Service Performance Report, please provide year and page number:	

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VFM details

Objectives:

The Irish Prison Service (IPS) has a mission to provide safe and secure custody, dignity of care and rehabilitation to people in their custody for safer communities. IPS places a strong emphasis on the provision of vocational training activities for prisoners. Work and vocational training forms a vital component of the rehabilitation of prisoners, with training activities aiming to give as much employment as possible in prison and providing opportunities to acquire skills that help secure employment on release. Indeed, it is widely agreed that employment, and particularly quality of employment, contributes to desistance from crime upon release. Work and training facilitates the internal delivery of essential services, vocational training and structured activity and is staffed and funded by IPS.

The key objectives of report were::
- to outline the model of work and training service delivery across the prison estate, detailing key inputs and outputs;

- to review the potential labour market relevance of the programme of training on offer to prisoners;

- to examine key stakeholder perspectives on the effectiveness and efficiency of work and training; and

- to examine the model of work training delivery in other jurisdictions.

The key recommendations are outlined below.

1. There are data gaps that hinder a comprehensive evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of Work and Training. **It is recommended that the Irish Prison Service put in place measures to ensure the systematic and centralised collation of Prisoner IDs for all persons engaged in work and training; work and training activities attended; duration of engagement; and accreditation detail, where relevant.** Furthermore, a standardised approach to data collection should be defined and communicated in order to ensure data is accurate and comparable across the prison estate. A follow-up review of the effectiveness and efficiency of Work and Training in Prisons should be commenced once the data gaps identified during this research have been addressed.

Findings

2. The **integration of Work and Training data with that currently captured on the Prisoner Education Management System (PEMS)** would serve to provide a complete view of prisoner engagement in accredited and/or structured activity while in custody.

3. Previous analysis of prisoner outcomes, based on linked administrative data, demonstrates the potential policy insights to be achieved through the inclusion of IPS data in the National Data Infrastructure (NDI). **IPS should explore options to leverage existing administrative data through the NDI led by the CSO. Furthermore, the inclusion of a Work and Training indicator in the Prison Re-Offending Series published by the CSO would make it possible to explore the potential impact of engagement in Work and Training on recidivism.**

4. International evidence and points to the value of aligning vocational training in prisons to labour market demand. **It is recommended that IPS leverage labour market intelligence to ensure the work and training programme in prisons is flexible and responsive to labour market need**, while also taking account of the educational and skills disadvantage and limited employment history often experienced by people in custody.

5. The operating framework underpinning Work and Training would need to support a shift toward creating a programme that is flexible and responsive to the labour market. There is **scope for greater integration and alignment of the Work and Training function delivered by IPS and the Prison Education Service delivered by ETBs to provide a programme of education and skills that is flexible and responsive to labour market demand**, and maximises progression opportunities for prison leavers. Furthermore, the recent engagements with SOLAS, as a provider of a range of Further Education and Training (FET) programmes that are responsive to skills demand, marks a positive step towards improved progression pathways for prisoners.

6. **There is a need for clarity and alignment on performance indicators, underpinned by a clear purpose and mission of Work and Training**. While accreditation is not the only measure of success, improved oversight of accreditation, as one tangible and key outcome of the Work and Training programme is required. Stakeholders also described incremental steps required to get people to a place where they can attain and retain employment that are not currently captured as key performance indicators. Existing tools, such as IASIO's Progression Readiness Indicator, could be leveraged to measure performance in the broader sense.

7. While acknowledging the security challenges to digital innovation within prisons, **there is a growing need to expand programmes around digital literacy and competence as core employability skills**. There is scope to co-ordinate delivery of IT skills between the Work and Training function and Education Centres, with a view to maximising the impact of these offerings for people in custody.

8. The stakeholder narrative identified the adverse impact of prison-wide resourcing issues on the delivery of Work and Training. In making the above recommendations, it is acknowledged that these core prison-wide resourcing issues need to be addressed for Work and Training to function efficiently and effectively.

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Actions taken:

1. Data Gaps

    To facilitate effective oversight of Work and Training, the Irish Prison Service is putting in place a Work Training Management System (WTMS). The system is in final testing stage and expected go live in early Q2 2024. The availability of this database will ensure the systematic collation of the following data:
    - Prisoner IDs of all persons engaged in work and training

    - Work Training activities attended

    - Duration of engagement

    - Accreditation detail, where relevant.

    The roll out of this system will include training for Officers and a guidance manual, together this will ensure data consistency.

2. The new WTMS will allow for the integration of prisoner data with data from the Prisoner Education Management System (PEMS). The WTMS(work training) and PEMS (Education) will record the education and training delivered in the prison system. Information from PEMS and WTMS, upon request, can be merged into a single printed report thus providing streamlined information. The data will merge together on the Prisoner Information Management System (PIMS). This will be available from Q2 2024.

3. The new WTMS (Q2 2024) will allow the collection of work and Training data. This can enable the inclusion of a Work and Training indicator in the Prison Re-Offending Series.

4. IPS leverage labour market intelligence to ensure the work and training programme in prisons is flexible and responsive to labour market need, while also taking account of the educational and skills disadvantage and limited employment history often experienced by people in custody. To this end a number of new accredited training programmes have been introduced in Catering, GYM, Industrial Cleaning and Laundry. The IPS is working with Solas (Mount Lucas) to train prisoners in NZEB retrofitting due to commence in Q1 2024. Discussions are ongoing with Solas to enable an apprenticeship programme for prisoners in Painting and Decorating and also in Catering.

    The IPS also needs to ensure those not seeking accredited training can engage in occupational training, to this end a number of "Men's shed" have been introduced as flexible space for numerous activities. The Training Unit, through their Men's Shed, has refurbished 250 bikes for the Good Bike Project in 2023 and these bicycles are then provided to refugees in need and has also repainted daffodil benches for the Irish Cancer Society.

5. The Irish Prison Service is a member of the Prison Education Taskforce which aims to ensure greater alignment between prison education and the tertiary education system to support prisoners in benefitting from education and training opportunities while in custody to support their rehabilitation and access to employment post-release. The Taskforce is jointly chaired by the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science and the Minister of State with responsibility for Law Reform in the Department of Justice.

    Building Bridges is a joint IPS and SOLAS led project under Future FET: Transforming Learning that seeks to expand and improve outcomes for learners who engage with education and training while in custody or through transition from custody, and to raise

awareness of available pathways and options in FET. The first FET Information session was hosted on the 30th November 2023, in the Progression Unit in Mountjoy Prison. Further FET Information Sessions are being scheduled during Q2 2024 across a number of prisons.

6. The IPS continues to seek indicators that can inform and complement the tools currently in place. New training courses have been introduced with shorter, flexible and modern training being provided including Barbering training and FAI coaching. The IPS is working with IASIO to attain follow up information on prisoner progression to inform continual improvements in care. The new WTMS will also assist in this regard of capturing data.

7. The Irish Prison Service is progressing a digital transformation programme in 2024 to ensure a joined up approach to the use of technology in Prisons including the use of further technology in education in 2024.

8. Prison-wide resourcing issues continue to impact daily on the availability of WTO's for the delivery of Work and Training.

Value for Money Process

In common with other Departments, the previous Value for Money process has been replaced by the Spending Review Process initiated by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform since 2017. The last formal value for money report was completed and published in 2018 and related to the Prisons Vote. It was a cross sectoral Value for Money and Policy Review Report in relation to the escort of prisoners http://justice.ie/en/JELR/VFMPR%20Prisoner%20Escorts%202018.pdf/Files/VFMPR%20Prisoner%20Escorts%202018.pdf

As the Committee will be aware, the Spending Reviews are carried out in conjunction with the annual estimates process. The Justice Sector has been fully engaged in this process since its commencement and has produced a number of reviews and contributed to others carried out by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform during this period.
In total, there have been 11 such reviews carried out across the Vote Group **(Appendix 1)** with two specific reviews relating to the Justice Vote (Vote 24) and one relating to the IPS (Vote 21),

The reviews carried out by this Department relating to the Justice vote refer specifically to *Criminal Legal Aid (2018)*
https://assets.gov.ie/7320/b26e8d13fb42468fb66a40aed88fe875.pdf and in 2019 in relation to *Direct Provision: Overview of Current Accommodation Expenditure* https://assets.gov.ie/25626/c666dab7df0849c59695e19b926b6204.pdf. The Irish Prison Service report refers to Work and Training opportunities (2021), Review of the Programme of Work and Training in the Irish Prison Service.

In all cases, these reviews were selected based on the increasing level of expenditure in the specific areas. It should be noted, that responsibility for the Direct Provision function transferred to the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth in October 2020.

A template is attached reflecting the spending review in relation to Criminal Legal Aid **(Appendix 2).** A similar template is also provided in relation to a C&AG report in 2016 in relation to Development of ICT Systems by the Department of Justice, which also reflected VFM considerations in the recommendations implemented **(Appendix 3)**.

1. Do you have a systematic/cyclical approach to choosing areas/programmes/expenditure to review? If so, please describe the approach in detail.

The areas selected for the Spending Review Process are done on a consultative basis across the six votes in the Justice Vote Group including discussion and agreement with the Department of Public Expenditure. The larger spending votes and in turn the larger spending areas within the Votes in question have been the subject of most focus since this process was introduced in 2017.

2. How and why you choose particular areas/programmes/expenditure to review?

The focus to date has been on larger areas of expenditure including areas where expenditure has tended to increase from year to year.

3. Do you have a schedule of planned reviews? If so, covering what period, and at what level is it signed off?

A number of areas are considered for review and following input at senior level in the particular votes, this Department and DPER the particular area (s) is/ are selected each year.

4. The governance arrangements pertaining to the implementation of the recommendations arising from the reviews.

The implementation of any recommendations is considered as part of the annual estimates process and responsibility for implementation is ultimately the responsibility of the relevant Vote.

5. For each of the reviews for the accounting period under examination by the Committee and the preceding two years:
a) details of implementation to date,
b) timelines for implementation.

See completed template attached at Appendix 2 in relation to Criminal Legal Aid, which is specific to the Justice Vote (Vote 24), material relating to Vote 21 is included.

6. What specific effects have the implementation of the recommendations or conclusions of each review undertaken in the last seven years had in terms of the allocation of funding within the Vote(s)?

The Spending Review reports are a key component of the Estimates process. The selected reviews have tended to focus on the larger areas of expenditure and hence have provided reassurance and specific analysis as to the budgetary requirements for the areas in question.

The process has also reinforced the value of readily available data and has reinforced the need for the Department to enhance its data capture and research and analytics capability in recent years.

7. In accordance with section 19 of the Comptroller and Auditor General Act 1993, any other evidence you might wish to provide as to:

"(b) the economy and efficiency of the Department in the use of its resources,

(c) the systems, procedures and practices employed by the Department for the purpose of evaluating the effectiveness of its operations".

8. Any other information that you, in your capacity as Accounting Officer, might wish to add to assist the Committee in forming a view as to whether you can demonstrate VFM in the context of Standing Order 218(2)

Answers to questions 7 and 8 combined:

The Department has strong financial and administrative management processes in place with budgets devolved to different offices and units. There is regular reporting and monitoring of expenditure to ensure it remains within budget and that outputs are being delivered. There are financial authorization limits in place for the payment of supplier invoices with appropriate segregation of duties.

The processes outlined below support effective management in the Department:

- Business plans are in place for the Department and all business units with measurable objectives that are monitored periodically.
- There are regular reviews by senior management of periodic and annual financial reports which indicate financial performance against forecasts
- The Department's Financial Management Committee meet with senior financial managers from the Justice sector on a monthly basis to report and monitor how budgets are being managed.
- A Funds Administration Unit provides administration and oversight of grants to Non-Governmental bodies and ensures that deliverables are monitored.
- The Department has agreements in place with its aegis bodies, there are dedicated teams in place to monitor going compliance.
- Senior management meets periodically to discuss the deliverables and compliance.
- A risk management system operates within the Department
- There are systems aimed at ensuring the security of the ICT systems
- There are appropriate capital investment control guidelines and formal project management disciplines in operation.

In addition as accounting officer, I am supported by an internal audit function with appropriately trained personnel, which operates in accordance with a written charter. The annual internal audit plans are approved by the Audit Committee.

The annual work programme of the Internal Audit includes a review of certain areas of expenditure under the Public Spending Code which includes a value for money perspective. The work verifies that there are a range of business processes in place that supports the delivery of value from capital and current expenditure projects in the Department. These include the following processes:

- An appropriate business case in place to justify the investment.
- An effective sanctioning/approval process in place to scrutinise proposals.
- Effective management of capital projects at an operational and organisational level. E.g. project boards
- Procurement in line with the Office of Government Procurement guidelines.
- Effective monitoring and reporting systems in place to report on financial and deliverables.
- Post project reviews carried out to enhance learning.

The work supports the implementation of good practice in the Department and compliance with the Public Spending Code.

Appendix 1: Spending reviews 2017 onwards relating to the Justice Group

Year	Heading	Vote	Summary	Author
2017	Challenges to Investment in Policing: A Public Expenditure Perspective	20	This paper is the first of a series of Department of Public Expenditure and Reform papers on policing. It analyses recent trends in expenditure, the current trajectory of investment in policing, presents the current progress of Garda reform and explores alternatives to the current model of resource allocation.	DPER / IGEES
2017	Courts Service Reform	22	This report considers the rationale, sustainability, impact and efficiency of selected Court Service reforms. It also assesses plans for further reforms.	CS
2018	Policing Civilianisation in Ireland: Lessons from International Practice	20	This paper examines civilianisation currently, and historically, in An Garda Síochána with a particular emphasis on learning from international examples of civilianisation and informing the Irish approach to the issue.	DPER / IGEES
2018	Review of Overtime Expenditure in An Garda Síochána	20	This paper reviews overtime expenditure in An Garda Síochána. It examines the efficiency of overtime spending and the effectiveness of control measures in An Garda Síochána. In addition to outlining recent trends in expenditure, the paper examines the role of overtime expenditure in policing services across other jurisdictions.	DPER / IGEES
2018	Review of Criminal Legal Aid	24	This paper assesses the Criminal Legal Aid programme in Ireland and how it compares internationally. While the review does not aim to provide a conclusive view of every aspect of the Criminal Legal Aid programme, it does suggest possible amendments that could improve the system.	IGEES & Justice and Equality
2019	Towards a Framework for Multi-Annual Budgeting: Considerations for An Garda Síochána	20	This paper assesses the potential application of multi annual budgeting in An Garda Síochána. Set against the background of the ongoing policing reform programme, this paper addresses the criteria required for successful implementation of multi annual budgeting.	DPER / IGEES
2019	Direct Provision: Overview of Current Accommodation Expenditure	Transfer of functions - Department of Children, Equality, Disability,	This paper assesses direct provision in the context of current accommodation expenditure while also providing an international comparison of similar provision systems.	IGEES & Justice and Equality

Year	Heading	Vote	Summary	Author
		Integration and Youth		
2020	Toward Digitally-Enabled Court Services: Review of Investment in Courtroom Technology and the Creation of a Centralised Jury Summons Unit	22	The paper describes spending on courtroom technology from 2015 to 2019 and then examines the creation of a Jury Summons Office last year. The paper outlines the rationale behind the initiatives, highlighting some of the potential efficiencies associated with the use of modern technology and the productivity gains that can be achieved.	IGEES & Courts Service
2020	Designing Performance Metrics in Policing	20	This paper highlights good practice identified in the literature review and employed in other jurisdictions regarding the selection of suitable performance indicators to measure performance.	DPER / IGEES
2021	Progressing the Development of the Costed Policing Plan and Multi-Annual Budgeting	20	This paper aims to progress and inform a number of finance function related priority actions within the Garda Reform plan "A Policing Service for our Future". It builds upon the work undertaken in Spending Reviews published on similar themes in recent years and is the first jointly authored Spending Review developed in the Justice Sector in collaboration between the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, An Garda Síochána and the Department of Justice.	DPER / IGEES , DJ and AGS
2021	Review of the Programme of Work and Training in the Irish Prison Service	21	This paper outlines the model of work and training service delivery across the Irish Prison Service estate, detailing key inputs and outputs, and reviews its labour market relevance. It also examines key stakeholder perspectives on the effectiveness and efficiency of work and training and examines the model of delivery in other jurisdictions	IGEES & IPS

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Template

Instructions

Please complete this template <u>for each</u> *ex-post* review of expenditure completed since 2015. Please include hyperlinks to the reviews where possible and otherwise provide the reviews in soft copy.

Link to report: Criminal Legal Aid: Overview of current system and potential lessons from an international comparison

https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/7320/b26e8d13fb42468fb66a40aed88fe875.pdf#page=null

VFM Information

Title of ex-post review of expenditure	Criminal Legal Aid: Overview of current system and potential lessons from an international comparison	Type of review:	Spending Review
Accounting period(s) to which it relates:	Review is with reference to general trends rather than specific accounting period but encompasses expenditure for the years 2007 – 2017.	Authored by:	Dept. Justice and Equality and the Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service (IGEES) Unit
Related review(s) previously undertaken:		Started:	
Quantum of expenditure covered by review:	c. €54m/yr	Completed:	July 2018
% of total voted expenditure covered by review:	2-3% of the overall criminal justice system	Expenditure type:	Current
Programme line(s):	Criminal Legal Aid - relating to cases coming before the District Court, the Circuit Court and the higher courts	Relevant subhead(s):	B.12. Legal Aid - Criminal
% of total programme expenditure:	100%	If the review is reflected in a Public Service Performance Report, please provide year and page number:	

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VFM details

Objectives:

The Department of Justice administers the criminal legal aid scheme and expenditure on the scheme forms a significant part of the non-pay expenditure of the justice vote. It is difficult to predict accurately expenditure on the scheme each year.

The IGEES unit of the Department carried out this spending review of Criminal Legal Aid ('CLA'). The overall objective was to assess the programme in terms of how it compares internationally and to identify recommendations and areas for further consideration that could improve the system. The review looked at the role of CLA in the criminal justice system, including in relation to demands on the programme that may result due to activity in other parts of the system. However, the review did not aim to provide a conclusive view of every aspect of the CLA programme, which should be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis. Some operational aspects of the programme were outside the scope of the review and no consideration was given to the supply side of criminal legal aid.

Findings

The Review made a list of **7** possible high-level recommendations and areas for further consideration which are set out below:

1. Accurate and timely data is fundamental to the assessment of impacts in the Criminal Justice system and this is also true for the CLA system. An ability to track individual CLA certificates as they move through the criminal justice system would be beneficial.

2. Other areas need to be monitored on an ongoing basis include the fee structure and the incentives of this fee structure to ensure a fair, effective and efficient criminal justice system.

3. It is important to consider that many of the benefits in other aspects of the justice system will likely have knock on positive impacts on the CLA system. For example, consideration of further 'alternatives to prosecution' may reduce demand on the courts/CLA and may speed up the length of trials for a more efficient system

4. Any new legislation should be monitored (by reference to the Regulatory Impact Assessment) so that impacts can be examined at an early stage of implementation.

5. The new proposed draft legislation has a number of areas where change will occur. It is that the impact of any of these proposed changes be monitored at the earliest opportunity.

6. This review has mentioned the smaller CLA schemes but has not gone into the level of detail necessary to look at the efficiency and effectiveness of these schemes. A separate review of these schemes may be beneficial.

7. Consideration should be given to a formal early warning system, which can be an effective tool to analyse future budgetary pressures. This system may be based on detailed analysis of the types of crimes that account for the largest share of trials and cases that involve the introduction of new laws that will be tested in the courts.

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This could then be to anticipate possible 'shocks' to criminal legal aid expenditure at an early stage. Significant effort already goes into monitoring and assessing the most expensive criminal legal aid cases by the Department of Justice and Equality.

The progress against these seven recommendations is overseen by the Department. Significant developments include the work to update and modernise the law relating to criminal legal aid and to implement key recommendations including those contained in this report as well as further recommendations identified by the Department's Internal Audit Unit relating to governance, control and accountability in respect of criminal legal aid. This work is at an advanced stage. A Criminal Legal Aid Oversight Committee, made up of key stakeholders, is responsible to for driving the reforms, monitoring and assessing impacts of reforms and to advise and oversee legislative amendments.

Access to accurate and timely data is critical to managing and overseeing expenditure on criminal legal aid. While the Department and the Courts Service produce information relating to expenditure and the number of certificates granted in the District Court, further work to improve the quality of data is being developed through a number of channels including: a subgroup of the Criminal Justice Strategic Committee, a separate project to provide for the automation of criminal legal aid payments, the modernisation programme for the Courts Service as well as the work being done to develop the new legislation. The use of a unique identifier is also being explored. A mapping process following the criminal legal aid certificate is completed for the District Courts and is being developed for the higher courts.

Actions taken:

As part of the reform of criminal legal aid which will take place in parallel with the development of the new legislation, a major review of the structure of the fees will also take place in order to make it fair, efficient, transparent, auditable and value for money. This review has begun and will be completed by end 2024.

There has been a 58% increase in criminal legal aid certificates since 2015. Much of this can be attributed to the increase in the number of prosecutions and trials (outside of 2020/2021 which were impacted by Covid). As part of the Covid response, the use of video link between the prisons and the Courts saw a reduction in expenditure. Other reforms have also been introduced which may have impacts for criminal legal aid such as the introduction in 2022 of preliminary trial hearings designed to increase the efficiency of the trial process in sensitive and complex cases and to avoid unnecessary delay. The potential for these type of reforms to reduce the length of trials will be reviewed over time to identify impacts for criminal legal aid.

As noted, legislative reforms to overhaul the criminal legal aid system are at an advanced stage. The General Scheme of the Bill was published in July 2023 and the Pre-legislative Scrutiny was completed in December 2023. The new legislation is designed to update and modernise the law in this area and to implement key recommendations arising from this review and the separate Audit review. Work has commenced to introduce other reforms such as automation of payments of legal aid and a review of fees is also to commence shortly. All of these reforms will be measured against the approved impact assessment as well as expenditure and efficiency targets.

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The Internal Audit Unit of the Department has completed a programme of audits for the smaller criminal legal aid schemes, namely the Garda Station Scheme, the Legal Aid Custody Issues Scheme and the CAB Scheme. An audit of the main legal aid scheme will take place in the first quarter of 2024.

Anticipating expenditure on criminal legal aid is difficult as was identified in the Spending Review. Criminal Legal Aid is a supply and demand led scheme and it is difficult to anticipate and manage the expenditure. With the increase in the country's population there has been a consequent increase in the number of cases being brought to trial. This is reflected in the year on year increase in the expenditure on criminal legal aid. Procedures such as fee claims having to be submitted within two years of the completion of a case are being introduced which will eliminate some of the very overdue and unanticipated claims and to better forecast expenditure. Criminal legal aid is a vital element of the criminal justice system. The focus for the future is maximizing the efficiency of the expenditure through reforms that reduce length of cases, while ensuring those without means to do so, have access to an adequate defense.

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Appendix 3: ICT systems

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Template

Instructions

Please complete this template <u>for each</u> *ex-post* review of expenditure completed since 2015. Please include hyperlinks to the reviews where possible and otherwise provide the reviews in soft copy.

Link to report: Development of ICT Systems by the Department of Justice and Equality

chapter13-development-of-ict-systems-by-the-department-of-justice-and-equality.pdf (audit.gov.ie)

VFM Information

Title of ex-post review of expenditure	Development of ICT Systems by the Department of Justice and Equality	Type of review:	Report on the Accounts of the Public Services
Accounting period(s) to which it relates:	The review covers the time frame from 2012 to 2016, looking at ICT projects undertaken by the Department on behalf of agencies including: • a case management system and ancillary developments for the Insolvency Service of Ireland • a reporting and registration system and ancillary developments for the Charities Regulatory Authority and • an on-line licence renewal system for the Private Security Authority.	Authored by:	Comptroller and Auditor General
Related review(s) previously undertaken:		Started:	
Quantum of expenditure covered by review:	€4.639m in total for the 3 projects, as at March 2017	Completed:	2017
% of total voted expenditure covered by review:		Expenditure type:	Current
Programme line(s):	ICT Please note this report was previously discussed by the PAC on the 25th April 2018. The updates attached refer to the position as of 2nd Feb 2024.	Relevant subhead(s):	A,12 Insolvency Service of Ireland A.10 Charities Regulatory Authority B.16 Private Security Authority
% of total programme expenditure:		If the review is reflected in a Public Service Performance	

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Appendix 3: ICT systems

		Report, please provide year and page number:	

VFM details

Objectives:	The Department of Justice provides information and communication technology (ICT) support services for many functional areas and agencies within its Vote group. The Change, Technology and Innovation (CTI) Division provides ICT support on shared services basis to over 3,000 users in more than 70 locations across the group.

The objective of the chapter on the development of ICT systems by the Department was to review the planning and oversight on three ICT projects undertaken by the Department on behalf of the Insolvency Service of Ireland, the Charities Regulatory Authority and the Private Security Authority, which amounted to €4.6 million. The C&AG identified a number of shortcomings in project governance in relation to planning and oversight on this project. |
| *Findings* | The 2017 audit of the development of ICT systems by the department made 3 recommendations:

- **Recommendation 13.1** All ICT projects should require a business case that is properly assessed and that has been agreed between the Department and the end user. The business case should set out the business requirements, the expected benefits, the project methodology, the proposed delivery approach, project costs and evaluation of options, as appropriate.

- **Recommendation 13.2** All ICT projects should have detailed budgets, with estimated costs for each stage of development. Regular comparisons of budgeted expenditure against actual spend should be undertaken and presented to the relevant project oversight group, together with clear explanations of material variances.

- **Recommendation 13.3** The Department should review its governance approach to planning and managing complex ICT development projects to ensure the system developed is fit for purpose and achieves value for money. |
| *Actions taken:* | - **Recommendation 13.1** All ICT projects should require a business case that is properly assessed and that has been agreed between the Department and the end user. The business case should set out the business requirements, the expected benefits, the project methodology, the proposed delivery approach, project costs and evaluation of options, as appropriate.

As noted in the Accounting Officer's response in the published report, the recommendation is accepted. The terms of reference of the ICT Governance Group have been strengthened and a new project business case approval workflow system |

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Appendix 3: ICT systems

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introduced. All business cases going to the Governance Group now must follow this standard comprehensive template. A Technical Subgroup with appropriate expertise (and including an external member) meets on a monthly basis and performs a robust assessment and vetting of business cases for ICT expenditure prior to their consideration by the full Governance Group. Automated project tracking is in the process of being implemented to reduce the risk of deviation from approved cases without it being brought to the Governance Group for approval.

However, it is important to note in this context that the detailed requirements and design need to be clear and fully understood by all stakeholders. This was not the situation in the case of the Insolvency Service of Ireland developments as the legislation was in draft and the precise operating model of the business was not known at the early stages of this development.

- **Recommendation 13.2** All ICT projects should have detailed budgets, with estimated costs for each stage of development. Regular comparisons of budgeted expenditure against actual spend should be undertaken and presented to the relevant project oversight group, together with clear explanations of material variances.

As noted in the Accounting Officer's response in the published report, the recommendation is accepted. The modified project approval and tracking systems recently developed encompass an improved project reporting capability and each project sponsor is responsible for updating their project status on the system on a monthly basis. These updates will flag any deviation from the approved business case in areas of cost or timescales and any projects showing an 'amber' or' red' status will be reviewed at each Governance Group meeting. Only in very urgent and exceptional circumstances will a project be initiated without detailed budgetary planning where the priority of the system is deemed critical, as was the case with the Insolvency Service of Ireland project.

- **Recommendation 13.3** The Department should review its governance approach to planning and managing complex ICT development projects to ensure the system developed is fit for purpose and achieves value for money.

As noted in the Accounting Officer's response in the published report, the recommendation is accepted. As already set out above, the Department, through what was the ICT Governance Group updated its governance approach to planning and managing complex ICT projects. The revised approach was influenced by the lessons learned from previous projects including the Insolvency Service of Ireland and the Charities Regulatory Authority projects. A greater emphasis is placed on the management of individual projects once they are approved. Each project sponsor was accountable for the delivery of their project and project boards are required to oversee projects of significant scale. Each project manager was required to submit a monthly status report for review by the Group and projects exhibiting a status of 'amber' or 'red' further investigated. To address longer term project reviews, the Group also established a post implementation review process, through which completed projects were required to attend at the Group meetings and present on project outcomes, achievement of deliverables and lessons learned.

Dáil Standing Order 218(2)

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Update

Following the Department's Transformation Programme, the P3 (Projects, Programmes and Portfolio) Oversight Committee was established in 2020, recognising the importance and value of delivering projects effectively and with appropriate governance and oversight. The committee meets quarterly. The Committee is chaired by a member of the Department's Management Board and contains representatives from CTI Division, the Corporate Pillar and the Governance Functions. It also includes external representatives from two other Government Departments. P3 is supported by a Financial and Technical Review group. The Financial and Technical Review Group considers whether technical solutions proposed are aligned to the overall ICT Strategy and architecture. It also validates funding availability for projects and ensures appropriate assurance over certain ICT expenditure (including non-project expenditure). This group's recommendations are considered by the Committee in its decision making.

The Department's Project Management Office (PMO) was established to serve as a central hub for project support, ensuring that projects are executed effectively and aligned with business objectives. The PMO closely supports the P3 committee in its work. P3 supports projects in every area of the Department of Justice, and its agencies where the Secretary General is the Accounting Officer (excluding the Irish Prison Service). This structure provides assurance to the Secretary General in that capacity that projects are being managed and overseen effectively, that the department is operating in line with relevant DPENDR guidance and is achieving value for money in relation to ICT and project expenditure.

This process supports business areas and agencies to deliver projects that will provide important benefits to them and their stakeholders, while also helping to promote a culture of innovation within the Department. It decides on the best use of public funding given limited resources and strives for quality in the delivery of services to our customers.

A full project lifecycle process has been implemented across all the portfolio of projects within the Department and its agencies. This begins with the initiate phase which generates innovative ideas to solve a problem and fully understand the business challenge. This ensures a well-researched, robust business case is developed. The business case addresses the business challenge being faced, the strategic objective of the project, scope of the project, identified risks, compliance with data protection, alternative options, benefits and disbenefits, and finally, costs and funding. Proposed business cases are assessed by their alignment to the Department's strategic focus and business risk mitigation. Other project benefits which are considered include the public and internal experience, financial efficiency and operational importance.

Once the business case has been finalised, and signed off by a business owner and sponsor, it is sent to the P3 committee for review and a decision on how the project will progress. Decisions on new project proposals are based on:

- The information provided in the project Business Case;
- the Financial and Technical Review Group's recommendations;
- Alignment with the Department's strategic objectives, Justice Plan and other central government priorities and frameworks.

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The P3 Committee also:

- Makes recommendations to the Management Board on the prioritisation of projects considering available resources.
- Keeps existing projects under review to ensure they are delivering expected outcomes within the agreed budget, time and scope.
- Oversees and ensures the development and maturity of the Department's Project Management Office.

Where a project is approved, during the initiate stage of the project management process the activities include establishing the project team, identifying the deliverables for the project and validating the expected budget. The project board is established, and this board ensures the project costs are justified and the project provides value for money. During this stage, the budget is approved. If expected costs exceed those stated in the costs section of the business case, approval to proceed will be needed by the Project Board/P3 Committee.

Throughout the project, the project manager will monitor the benefits, risks, actions, issues and decisions made throughout the project. As the project moves from initiate to plan stage of the project management lifecycle, a plan is identified to ensure management of scope creep. Project budget and expenditure is tracked weekly. Project managers issue a weekly status report on all in-flight projects to the project management office. This report focuses on the time, benefits, scope and cost of the project and can assure or alert stakeholders of the current state of the project. P3 is updated quarterly on the overall status of all projects in flight.

A change request is completed when there are any changes to cost, scope, time or benefits/quality of a project from the original agreed baseline (business case). This change request process ensures that all those involved with the project understand what the change is, why it is happening, what it will mean for them and how it will impact the project overall. Dependent on the size of change, a decision will be made by the project manager, project board or P3 level to formally approve (or not) the request. A "PMO Portal" SharePoint site is accessible to all staff. This portal contains a Department-specific handbook, as well as tools, templates and guidance for project managers and business stakeholders on project management and governance.

In line with Circular 14/2021, Arrangements for Oversight of Digital and ICT-related initiatives in the Civil and Public Service, approval to proceed with work on digital projects approved by P3, is also requested from the Digital Governance Oversight Unit in DPER (DGOU). The PMO meet quarterly with DGOU to provide assurance that digital and ICT related initiatives are appropriately aligned with all relevant government policies and the strategies that support them; and that appropriate governance arrangements are in place. Additionally, this Circular provides for an internal or external Peer Review Group to be established for projects exceeding certain costs. The Department fully complies with this provision.

Committee of Public Accounts

**2022 Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General
and Appropriation Accounts Vote 24: Justice**

and various matters as requested by the Committee

Briefing Material February 2024

Vote 24: Justice

1. Vote Summary:

The Justice Vote was one of six votes in the Justice Group of Votes in 2022. The other Votes were An Garda Síochána, Prisons, Courts Service, Data Protection Commission and the Policing Authority.

The Justice Vote accounts for c. 16% of gross expenditure in the overall vote group. The expenditure breakdown for the Justice Vote in 2022 was comprised of 40% in pay and pensions related expenditure, 4.5 % in capital and the remainder of 55.5 % in non-pay current expenditure.

There were 3,149 fulltime equivalent employees paid from the Vote at the end of 2022 and the equivalent figure at the end of 2023 was 3,534.

2. Structure of the Justice Vote:

Following structural changes in 2019, the Vote is structured under two programmes: criminal justice and civil justice. The estimate and outturn for 2022 are set out in **Appendix A** and for ease of comparison the outturns for 2021 and 2023 are also included in this expenditure report.

3.   Value for Money update:

No new value for money reviews have been completed in the past eight months. The two reports submitted for the meeting on 25 May 2023 have been updated to capture developments in the interim. .

4.   Topics of particular Interest:

(i)   The International Protection Office:

Application numbers

Ireland, has seen an increase in applicants for International Protection from a broad range of countries since the resumption of international travel, which was interrupted during the pandemic.

Alongside the unprecedented numbers of people fleeing war in Ukraine, there has been a simultaneous increase in the number of people seeking International Protection from other parts of the world. The number of international protection applications in 2022 was 13,651,

and in 2023 was 13,277, which represents a 177% increase in 2023 on the number received in 2019 (pre-Covid).

The European Migration Network in the ESRI noted in its report on 2022 that this increase was likely attributable to the end of Covid restrictions, increasing instability, conditions and regional conflicts in countries of origin, a minor deflection from the United Kingdom, and long-term social network effects. The strength of Ireland's economy with, in effect, full employment, and being an English-speaking country are also viewed as significant factors.

Nationalities with most IP Applications by year			
2022*		2023*	
Georgia	2,710	Nigeria	2,084
Algeria	1,766	Algeria	1,462
Somalia	1,568	Afghanistan	1,105
Nigeria	1,108	Somalia	1,098
Zimbabwe	973	Georgia	1,065
Afghanistan	846	Zimbabwe	774
South Africa	450	Pakistan	624
Ukraine	422	South Africa	492
Botswana	370	Bangladesh	445
Egypt	339	Botswana	343
Other	3,099	Other	3,785
Total	**13,651**	**Total**	**13,277**

IP Applications		
	2022*	2023*
Adult		
Female	3,291	3,393
Male	7,935	6,983
Minor		
Female	1,137	1,364
Male	1,276	1,526
Non-Specified		
Adult	8	10
Minor	0	1
Total	**13,647**	**13,277**

Total Decisions Made - IPO	
2019 (pre-Covid)	3,434
2022	4,988
2023*	9,000

These figures are correct at time of issue, however, statistics may change due to data cleansing.

International Protection Modernisation Programme
In July 2023, the Minister published an outline of the international protection modernisation programme 2023/2024.

The modernisation programme is implementing measures to improve efficiencies and throughput as well as improving the application, interview and decision-making process for applicants and these are having a significant impact on processing times.

The Minister introduced an accelerated procedure for international protection applicants from designated safe countries of origin in November 2022. These applicants now typically receive a **first instance decision in less than three months**, which is a significant reduction from a norm of 22 to 26 months in early 2022.

Reforms to the international protection process will continue in 2024 with an additional €34m allocated in Budget 2024.

As part of the modernisation programme, one of the priority areas of focus for the IPO is to recruit both civil servants and panel members, to increase case processing. The International Protection Office now has over 400 staff, an increase of 95% over 2022. The number of panel members has also been increased during 2023 to 184 at end November, an increase of 229% on the 56 active panel members overall in 2021 and a 142% increase on the 76 panel members active at the end of November 2022.

Over the course of the last year, the IPO has tripled the number of monthly determinations to over 1,000 in November, and plans to deliver at least 14,000 decisions in 2024, a further increase of almost 5,000 cases.

The International Protection Appeals Tribunal's (IPAT) operational capacity is also currently being significantly expanded to meet the increased caseload with an increased allocation of €4m in 2024. Additional resources are being deployed through increasing the number of independent Tribunal members as well as ongoing recruitment of administrative staff.

Overall, the Department continues to work to minimise the timeframe for receiving a decision on an international protection application, giving quicker status to those who are granted protection so they can build their lives here, while also ensuring faster decision making for those who are deemed to be not entitled to international protection.

Waiting times for Decisions
Median processing time for first instance decisions on international protection applications has reduced from 18 months in 2022 to 15 months in 2023. The median processing times for appeals is also down from 15 months at the start of 2022 to 5 months in 2023.

92% of cases decided in 2022 were processed in three years or less and 62% of cases decided in 2022 were processed in two years or less. Typically, where an application remains in processing for a longer period, this is due to reasons outside the control of the Department, including judicial review. Arrangements are in place to resolve such longstanding cases where possible and to ensure that decision making remains fair and robust in each case.

Accelerated procedure / Safe Countries of Origin
Under section 72 of the International Protection Act 2015, the Minister for Justice may make an order designating a country a safe country of origin. A country may only be designated as a safe country of origin where the Minister is satisfied that, on the basis of the legal situation, the application of the law within a democratic system, and the general political circumstances, it can be shown that there is:
- generally and consistently no persecution;
- no torture or inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment; and
- no threat by reason of indiscriminate violence in situations of international or internal armed conflict.

In making the assessment, it must be taken into account, among other things, the extent to which protection is provided against persecution or mistreatment by:
- the relevant laws and regulations of the country and the manner in which they are applied;
- the observance of the rights and freedoms laid down in specified European and International Conventions;
- respect for the principle of non-refoulement in accordance with the Geneva Convention;
- provision for a system of effective remedies against violation of those rights and freedoms.

The assessment must be based on a range of sources of information, including from other EU Member States, the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA), the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the Council of Europe and other international organisations as appropriate.

The Department draws from the relevant published reports of a range of bodies in this regard, which provide information on the state of play in the country under review. If an applicant for international protection is from a country designated as a safe country of origin, their application will still receive a full consideration on its merits by the International Protection Office.

The International Protection Act 2015 (Safe Country of Origin) Order 2018 now designates 10 countries as safe countries of origin for the purposes of processing applications for international protection made by nationals of those countries under the Act.

The Minister signed an order in November 2022 to commence the fast processing of applications from safe countries of origin. The following countries were designated as safe countries of origin with effect from 16 April 2018:

- Albania;
- Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- Georgia;
- Kosovo;
- North Macedonia (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia);
- Montenegro;
- Serbia; and
- South Africa.

Botswana and Algeria were added to the list of safe countries of origin on 30 January 2024.

Labour Market Access

International protection applicants can apply for labour market access after 6 months and permissions are valid for 12 months.

Any applicant who has not received a first instance decision within 6 months of making their international protection application may apply for access to employment or self-employment, providing that they have co-operated with the international protection process.

In 2022, 9,133 applications were received for either first or renewal permission, with 6,386 granted in that year. In 2023, 9,497 applications were received with 10,155 permissions granted.

When a person is granted refugee status, they no longer need a Labour Market Access permission. At this point they are given a Stamp 4 immigration permission which allows them to work.

EU Migration and Asylum Pact

The challenges presented by migration and asylum cannot be effectively addressed by a State acting alone in an increasingly globalised and interdependent world. Recognising this the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum seeks to establish a more coherent approach across the EU to migration, asylum, integration and border management recognising that the overall effectiveness depends on progress on all fronts.

Taken together the measures aim to provide swift, sustainable and fair procedures for the management of migration and asylum in the EU. They also aim to create greater convergence in standards and processes to reduce secondary movement across Europe.

This common response also incorporates the EU's partnerships with third countries to address the root causes of irregular migration, combat migrant smuggling, assist refugees residing in third countries, and to support an effective returns policy and well-managed legal migration.

Immigration Data 2023

In 2023 over 166,000 visa applications were received, up 22% on 2022 with 158,000 decisions made and 86% approved. The top nationalities are India, China, Nigeria, Turkiye and Pakistan.

A total of 300,775 immigration permissions issued nationally, of which 197,003 were renewals (an increase of 40%) and 103,772 were first time applicants (17% increase).

Processing rates of citizenship applications increased by 40% in 2023 against pre-pandemic figures. Citizenship ceremonies now take place every quarter and more than 20,000 applications were processed in 2023.

Family members of citizens of the EU, the EEA or Switzerland may apply for EU Treaty Rights and these volumes have also increased from 4,670 in 2020 to approx. 7,000 in 2023.

Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission (GSOC)

The Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission (GSOC) is an independent statutory body established under the Garda Síochána Act 2005.

The Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland found that the existing complaints regime was unsatisfactory from the perspective of Garda members, complainants and GSOC itself and recommended a comprehensive overhaul.

The Policing, Security and Community Safety Act 2024 provides for comprehensive reform of the current system. The reforms cover the independence, organisation and governance of GSOC. They expand its remit and overhaul its processes and procedures. The reforms ensure that all complaints other than minor service level complaints will be investigated by the reformed body itself. The reforms will greatly strengthen independent oversight and enhance transparency, they are provided to improve efficiency and importantly, reduce the time taken to resolve complaints.

The current three person commission is being replaced with a two person office holder / deputy office holder model, providing the body with a clear and publicly identifiable head and more streamlined governance arrangements.

To further reinforce its independence, the Office is being given greater financial independence through its own Vote and by creating a new Chief Executive Officer position to take on the accounting officer function, and to ensure that the Ombudsman will be free to focus on investigation and oversight work. Open competitions for both roles are currently being run by the Public Appointments Service.

The Department engages regularly both formally and informally with GSOC to provide support and oversight. An oversight agreement is in place which sets out the broad governance and administrative accountability framework within which GSOC operates, and defines the key statutory and administrative roles, responsibilities and commitments that underpin the governance relationship while upholding GSOC's independence.

Resourcing 2016-2024:

Budget 2024 saw GSOC allocated €19.6m in total, comprising €13.9m Pay and €5.69m Non-Pay, an increase of €3m (17%). The allocations from 2016 to 2024 are set out below.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Allocation in €m	9.6	9.6	10.1	10.7	11.1	11.3	13.4	16.7	19.6
Outturn	8.4	8.8	9.9	10.7	11.1	11.6	13.5	16.25	-

Appendix A - Justice Vote

Appendix A - Justice Vote			
	2021	**2022**	**2023**
	Outturn	**Outturn**	**Provisional**
	€000	**€000**	**€000**
ADMINISTRATION			
(i) Salaries, Wages and Allowances	74,356	84,908	97,747
(ii) Travel and Subsistence	513	1,052	980
(iii) Training and development and incidental expenses	17,572	17,295	17,566
(iv) Postal and telecommunications services	2,615	3,951	8,167
v. Office equipment and external IT services	16,132	20,389	35,153
vi. Office premises expenses	4,501	4,288	5,867
vii. Consultancy services and value for money and policy reviews	336	126	115
(viii) Research	637	1,485	621
(viii) Financial Shared Services	6,693	6,805	7,395
(ix) Justice & Policing Transformation Programme	4,227	4,856	4,710
Total Administration	**127,582**	**145,155**	**178,319**
Programme A – Criminal Justice Pillar			
A.1 Administration - Pay	28,978	32,820	37,239
A.2. Administration- non Pay	17,608	19,641	26,561
A.3 Office of the Inspector of Prisons	1,349	1,289	1,462
A.4 Garda Ombudsman Commission	11,583	13,449	16,250
A.5 Office of the Garda Inspectorate	1,010	1,118	1,239
A.6. Criminal Assets Bureau	10,111	9,830	10,785
A.7. Probation Service - Salaries, Wages and Allowances	23,308	24,330	26,432
A.8. Probation Service - Operating Expenses	4,141	4,305	4,983

A.9. Probation Service - Services to Offenders	17,529	17,503	18,531
A.10. Community Service Order Scheme			
A.10. Community Service Order Scheme	2,527	2,524	2,731
A.11. Youth Justice Interventions	15,110	22,817	24,068
A.12. Victims of Crime including Sexual Crimes and Domestic Abuse	3,744	5,421	6,058
A.13. Mental Health (Criminal Law) Review Board	289	265	293
A.14. Compensation for Personal Injuries Criminally Inflicted	2,301	6,319	7,527
A.15. Legal Aid - Criminal	73,466	76,653	89,205
A.16. Legal Aid Custody Issues	6,031	4,716	6,281
A.17. Parole Board	589	1,470	2,161
A.18. Crime Prevention Measures	1,049	1,071	1,263
A.19. Private Security Authority	3,744	4,012	4,280
A.20. Domestic, Sexual & Gender Based Violence (DSGBV) - Non Agency	2,700	4,109	6,183
A.21. Forensic Science Ireland	72,384	56,920	28,048
A.22. State Pathology	1,119	1,499	1,788
A.23. Commissions and Special Inquiries	6,658	10,096	4,673
A.24. Social Disadvantage Measures - Dormant Account Funded	8,789	9,125	9,441
A.25. Community Safety Innovation Fund	0	1,623	2,864
A.26. Domestic, Sexual & Gender Based Violence (DSGBV) - Agency	0	0	153
A.27. Irish Passenger Information Unit (IPIU)	0	0	169
A.28. Appellate Bodies (Criminal Justice)	0	0	10
A.29. Office of the Independent Examiner	0	0	0
A.30. National Office of Community Safety	0	0	0
TOTAL PROGRAMME A	316,117	332,925	340,675

Programme B - Civil Justice Pillar			
B.1. Administration - Pay	49,819	56,888	65,490
B.2. Administration - Non-Pay - Current	31,177	35,806	49,029
B.3. Central Authorities	40	90	50
B.4. Legal Services Regulatory Authority	1,000	1,000	1,000
B.5. Property Services Regulatory Authority	2,994	3,282	3,400
B.6. Insolvency Service Ireland	7,340	6,586	7,451
B.7. Gambling Regulatory Authority	0	161	1,632
B.8. Judicial Appointments Commission	0	0	79
B.9 Judicial Council	379	833	1,046
B.10. Coroner Service	6,904	7,712	12,661
B.11. Legal Aid Board	44,575	45,212	54,065
B.12. Free Legal Advice Centres	294	294	294
B.13. Immigration & International Protection Programmes	2,524	7,419	9,797
B.14. International Protection Appeals Tribunal	3,369	3,255	3,805
B.15. Irish Film Classification Office	496	377	582
B.16. Appellate Bodies (Civil Justice)	0	0	58
TOTAL PROGRAMME B	**150,911**	**168,915**	**210,441**
C. Appropriations in Aid			
1. Film Classification Fees	822	941	806
2. EU Receipts	21,000	1	0
3. Immigration Registration Fees	35,547	60,686	74,386
4. Visa Fees	3,019	7,913	10,221
5. Dormant Accounts Receipts	8,734	9,061	9,201
6. Private Security Authority Fees	2,565	3,424	3,287
7. Nationality & Citizenship Certificates Fees	9,983	13,215	14,371
8. Legal Services Regulatory Authority - Levy	1,050	0	1,200
9. Property Services Regulatory Authority Fees	2,250	2,210	2,290

10. Insolvency Service Ireland Fees	499	699	151
11. Additional Superannuation Contribution	4,416	4,747	5,250
12. Miscellaneous	628	588	515
Total A-in-A	**90,513**	**103,485**	**121,679**
NET TOTAL	**376,515**	**398,355**	**429,436**

Committee of Public Accounts

Appropriation Accounts 2022 - Vote 21: Prisons

February 2024

Vote 21: Prisons

1. Vote Summary

The Irish Prison Service Vote was one of six votes in the Justice Group of Votes in 2022. The other votes were An Garda Síochána, Department of Justice, Courts Service, the Policing Authority and the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner.

The Prisons Vote accounts for almost 13% of gross expenditure in the overall vote group. The expenditure breakdown for the Prisons Vote in 2022 was comprised of 69% in pay related expenditure, 8% in capital and the remainder of 22% in non-pay current expenditure.

There were 3,493 fulltime equivalent employees paid from the Vote at the end of December 2022. The current serving staff number is 3,600 of which 3,368 are Prison Grade Staff.

2. Structure of the Prisons Vote

Programme Budgeting

The Prisons Vote is comprised of thirteen subheads which are accounted for under one programme- *Programme A – Administration and Provision of Safe, Secure, Humane and Rehabilitative Custody for People who are sent to Prison.*

The detailed breakdown of the subheads and related expenditure is set out at Appendix A.

The aim of the Prisons expenditure programme is to provide safe and secure custody, dignity of care and rehabilitation to prisoners for safer communities. The following indicators provide a context for the work carried out by the Irish Prison Service;

Programme A		*2020*	*2021*	*2022*
1-	Number of Committals	6,340	6,133	7,043
2-	Average number of Prisoners in Custody	3,824	3,794	4,122
3-	Number of Bed Nights	1,396,716	1,385,759	1,505,560
4-	Average number of Prisoners on Temporary Release	341	321	287
5-	Number of Prisoners who participated in the Community Return scheme	287	218	176
6-	Number of prisoners who participated in Community Support	280	321	363
7-	Number of Prisoners by Incentivised Regimes banding (31 December):			
	Enhanced	1,918	1,950	2,133
	Standard	1,470	1,483	1,679
	Basic	237	213	294
9	Number of prisoners who attended addiction counselling services	1,948	1,930	2,126
10	No. of referrals to IPS Psychology Service *	1,329	1,854	2,259

3. Capital Expenditure - Redevelopment of Limerick prison

The main focus of Capital Expenditure for the period from 2019 to 2022 has been in respect of the redevelopment of Limerick Prison. A major construction project commenced in March 2019 and the project is now fully complete with all facilities fully operational. The project ends the practise of "slopping out" for the male prison population in Limerick and has also resulted in a much more appropriate, modern, rehabilitative environment for female prisoners. The COVID pandemic impacted the project in terms of timelines and on cost but notwithstanding this, the project has been delivered within its sanctioned budget which was assigned in 2018.

Scope of Works:

- New large prison block for male prisoners - providing 102 modern cells with in-cell sanitation, and ancillary services for staff and prisoners such as prisoner workshops, recreational rooms and yard, staff locker rooms, staff mess, administration support offices, new prison laundry and kitchen.

- New female prison - based on a therapeutic model was a key element underpinning the design of the new facility. The facility provides 51 rooms of accommodation and infrastructure for all associated services such as family visits area, reception, medical area, dining area, work and training facilities, educational facilities, video link, staff administration area with training classrooms and support offices
- New entrance, visits and reception
- New kitchen, laundry and delivery/waste facilities
- New offices provided for a range of support services and staff
- New offices provided for the Probation Services
- Provision of ancillary services such as recreation/canteens/workshops/education infrastructure and facilities etc.
- All related site clearance, utility services, ICT infrastructure and systems
- All associated fit out and fixtures and equipment
- All associated heating, ventilation, fire safety, security and mechanical and electrical systems and infrastructure.

Points to Note:

Contract commencement date: January 2019

Mobilisation: March 2019

Operational:
- **Male Block –** December 2022 /January 2023
- **Female Prison –** July 2023

3

The project included the construction of offices on behalf of the Probation Service in partnership with the OPW. Funding for those offices was provided by OPW and the Probation Service - total cost = €3.7M (funded by OPW €3.4M and Probation Services €0.3M).

Sanctioned Total Budget by DPER in 2018 = €71.5M

Final Costs 2023 including all retention monies/fees etc = €70.1M

Budget performance = Savings of €1.4M

Appendix A

	2021	2022	2022	2023
	Outturn	Final Estimate Provision[1]	Outturn[2]	Provisional Outturn
	€'000	€'000	€'000	€'000
Administration				
i. Salaries, Wages and Allowances	271,455	290,023	289,622	309,238
ii. Travel and Subsistence	1,645	2,455	2,272	2,887
iii. Training and development and incidental expenses	4,020	4,785	4,084	5,507
iv. Postal and Telecommunications services	1,670	1,631	1,600	2,059
v. Office Equipment and External IT Services	11,313	9,790	11,467	14,873
Total Administration	**290,103**	**308,684**	**309,045**	**334,564**
A.3. Buildings and Equipment	54,419	56,705	52,293	55,040
A.4. Prisoner Services	32,801	34,194	34,838	40,029
A.5. Operational Services	4,726	6,785	6,623	7,839
A.6. Educational Services	914	1,265	1,433	1,450
A.7. Compensation	9,152	9,848	8,129	4,700
A.8. Social Disadvantage Measures (Dormant Accounts Funded)	274	226	270	279
Total Gross Expenditure	**392,389**	**417,707**	**412,631**	**443,901**
Deduct:				
B. Appropriations-in-aid	10,568	10,409	11,142	11,653
Net Expenditure	**381,821**	**407,298**	**401,489**	**432,248**

Notes

[1] The 2022 Final Estimate includes a supplementary estimate of €11.971 million.

[2] The 2022 outturn includes a supplementary estimate of €11.971 million.

[3] The 2022 Outturn for A.3 Buildings and Equipment includes a deferred surrender of capital for €3.601m.

[4] The 2023 Provisional Outturn for A.3 Buildings and Equipment includes a deferred surrender of capital for €3.205m.