An Phríomh-Oifig Staidrimh

Central Statistics Office

Standard Report on Methods and Quality for Prison Re-offending Estimates 2018

Standard Report
on
Methods and Quality (v1)

for
<Prison re-offending estimates>

This documentation applies to the reporting period:

<2018>

Last edited: <12/05/2021)>

CENTRAL STATISTICS OFFICE

Skehard Road, Cork

021 4535000

www.cso.ie

Table of Contents

The explanatory information can be deleted when the data is input into each section

1 Overview

- Measuring prison re-offending helps policy makers measure and understand how to reduce crime
- Prison release data is provided to the CSO for each reference year. This data is used with PULSE data from the Garda to establish re-offences
- The population of interest is all prisoners / fined individuals who are released by the IPS each year
- The principle statistics published is the rate of re-offending for the released prisoners each year

2 General Information

2.1 Statistical Category

Process

2.2 Area of Activity

Social Analysis

2.3 Organisational Unit Responsible, Persons to Contact

Social Statistics Assistant Director General: Richard McMahon
Social Analysis: Senior Statistician: Keith McSweeney
Crime and criminal justice: Statistician: Felix Coleman

2.4 Objectives and Purpose; History

Measuring prison re-offending is designed to show the extent to which a released prisoner re-offends after receiving their custodial sanction from the irish justice system. The published statistics are used by many different parts of the justice system in policy formulation related to crime and crime prevention. More recently important methodological updates have refined the estimates to measure custodial re-offending and fine sentence re-offending separately (from 2011 onwards).

2.5 Periodicity

- Annual (T-2 years)

2.6 Client

  Department of Justice, Irish Prison Service (IPS). The Irish probation service, Public

2.7 Users

  Department of Justice, Irish Prison Service (IPS). The Irish probation service, Public

2.8 Legal basis

- Irish statistics act (1993)

3 Statistical Concepts, Methods

3.1 Subject of the Statistics

- Prison re-offending
- Prison / release / custody / offences

3.2 Units of Observation/Collection Units/Units of Presentation

- Persons released each year
- Number of releases each year

The units differ when a person can receive more than one release in a year

3.3 Data Sources

Irish prison service (IPS) release data
Garda PULSE data

3.4 Reporting Unit/Respondents

N/A

3.5 Type of Survey/Process

Process

3.6 Characteristics of the Sample/Process

3.6.1 Population and Sampling Frame

The number of released prisoners each year

3.6.2 Sampling Design

No sample is used for the principle statistics

3.7 Survey Technique/Data Transfer

Secure datasets containing information on prison releases and offences is transferred to the CSO each year

3.8 Questionnaire (including explanations)

No questionnaire is currently used to compile prison re-offending statistics by the CSO.

3.9 Participation in the Survey

No participation is currently required to compile the statistics on reoffending

3.10 Characteristics of the Survey/Process and its Results

Prison release data is matched to Garda PULSE data for each released prisoner. The prisoner is then identified as a re-offender if a valid incident from Garda data is present. The characteristics of the prisoner (Age / gender / offence type) is then used to describe the reoffending population. Data matching software is used to merge the two data sources and identify links to enable re-offending indicators

3.11 Classifications used

- Age
- Sex
- Offence type
- Re-offence type
- County of address

3.12 Regional Breakdown of Results

- County

4 Production of the Statistics, Data Processing, Quality Assurance

4.1 Data Capture

- Excel
- Colectica Designer / Repository
- SAS
- Secure data transfer software

4.2 Coding

- None

4.3 Data Editing

- Extensive data mining techniques are used to establish a valid dataset of prison re-offending. This includes
  - Deriving variables related to release date / prison term / 3 year and 1 year re-offending indicators
- SAS / Exorbyte / Excel

4.4 Imputation (for Non-Response or Incomplete Data Sets)

- Missing data is included in published outputs as missing when significant

4.5 Grossing and Weighting

Grossing is note currently used in prison re-offending statistics

4.6 Computation of Outputs, Estimation Methods Used

Statistical outputs were compiled from the population of prison releases using SAS.

4.7 Other Quality Assurance Techniques Used

Extensive consistency checks between variables provided by the IPS and PULSE were used to validate the consistency of variables provided. In addition, the variables of fundamental value were validated with the IPS for quality

5 Quality
5.1 Relevance

Interdepartmental group on a fairer and safer Ireland

5.2 Accuracy and Reliability

5.2.1. Sampling Effect & representivity

Sampling error is not used for prison re-offending statistics. Bias is present as not all re-offending is captured by the legal process

5.2.2. Non-Sampling Effects

5.2.2.1 Quality of the Data Sources used (other than survey register)

Considerable challenges arise in documenting the quality of prison release data and PULSE data. At present it is not possible to systematically store quality measurement of variables provided regularly by the IPS and PULSE

5.2.2.2 Register Coverage

N/A

5.2.2.3 Non-response (Unit and Item)

N/A

5.2.2.4 Measurement Errors

Measurement error was identified when fine sentence re-offending was separated from **prison** re-offending estimates. Data on Fine sentences provided by the IPS in the release datasets was included with prison release and re-offending estimates. Most individuals who received fine sentences during the legal process spent no time in custody and are not now considered to be suitable to include in custodial related re-offending estimates.

5.2.2.5 Processing Errors

Cross validation of variables used for reducing and identifying coding errors

5.2.2.6 Model-related Effects

Unaffected

5.3 Timeliness and Punctuality

5.3.1 Provisional Results

No provisional results are published

5.3.2 Final Results

- 3- year prison re-offending published for reference year 2015
- 1-year prison re-offending published for reference year 2018

Improved communications with data providers will enable more recent years to be published shortly

5.4 Coherence

Re-offending estimates are broadly in line with international comparison

5.5 Comparability

Non- standard methodology internationally limits comparability. These are:

- Different reference periods for time to re-offend
- Different custodial and sanction concepts

5.6 Accessibility and Clarity

5.6.1 Assistance to Users, Special Analyses

- Ad-hoc reports provided when requested to IPS and Department of Justice

5.6.2 Revisions

- Overlaps of years are included when significant revisions take place. A separate technical note is also published to explain the changes

5.6.3 Publications

5.6.3.1 Releases, Regular Publications

Prison re-offending statistics 2018

5.6.3.2 Statistical Reports

None currently

5.6.3.3 Internet

 https://www.cso.ie/en/statistics/crimeandjustice/prison_recidivism/

5.6.4 Confidentiality

Data provided for prison re-offending is stored in line with CSO procedures on data protection

6 Additional documentation and publications

None currently