Standard Report on Methods and Quality for Probation Re-offending estimates

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This documentation applies to the reporting period:

2017

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1 Overview

- Measuring probation re-offending helps policy makers measure and understand how to reduce crime
- Probation 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 probationers who are released by the IPS each year
- The principle statistics published is the rate of re-offending for the released probationers 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 probation re-offending is designed to show the extent to which a released probationer re-offends after receiving their Probation Order 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 probation re-offending by using all offence incidents that result in a court conviction (from 2017 onwards).

2.5 Periodicity

- Annual (T-3 years)

2.6 Client

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

2.7 Users

  Department of Justice, Irish Probation 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

- Probation re-offending
- Probation / 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 probation 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 probationers 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 probation releases and offences is transferred to the CSO each year

3.8 Questionnaire (including explanations)

No questionnaire is currently used to compile probation 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

Probation release data is matched to Garda PULSE data for each released probationer. The probationer is then identified as a re-offender if a valid incident from Garda data is present. The characteristics of the probationer (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
- Custodial / Non- custodial re-offending sanction

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 probation re-offending. This includes

  - Deriving variables related to release date / probation 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 probation re-offending statistics

4.6 Computation of Outputs, Estimation Methods Used

Statistical outputs were compiled from the population of probation releases using SAS statistical software.

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 probation 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 probation 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 exists when individuals who received a probation order during the reference year are not successfully linked to their PULSE identit(ies) to identify relevant re-offending incidents. Currently, in a small number of cases a single individual on probation may have many PULSE identities (it is not easily possible to fully determine how many might exist) and until the Irish justice system is able to use a quality assured unique identification process the issue will persist.

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 probation re-offending published for reference year 2015
- 1-year prison re-offending published for reference year 2017

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

Probation re-offending statistics 2017

5.6.3.2 Statistical Reports

None currently

5.6.3.3 Internet

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