

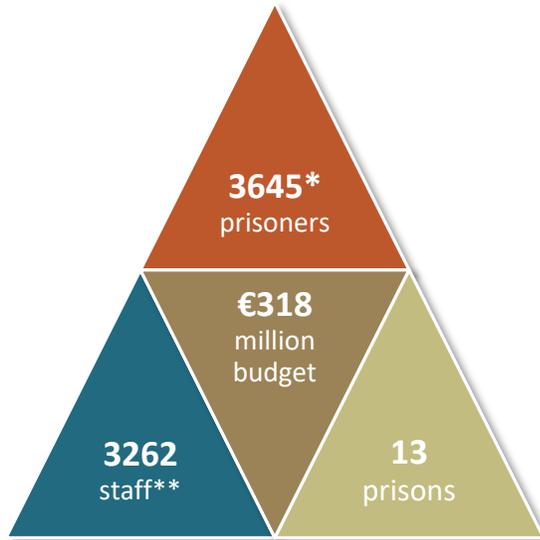
# Prisoner Education Expert Group Meeting

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KIERAN MOYLAN  
IRISH PRISON SERVICE

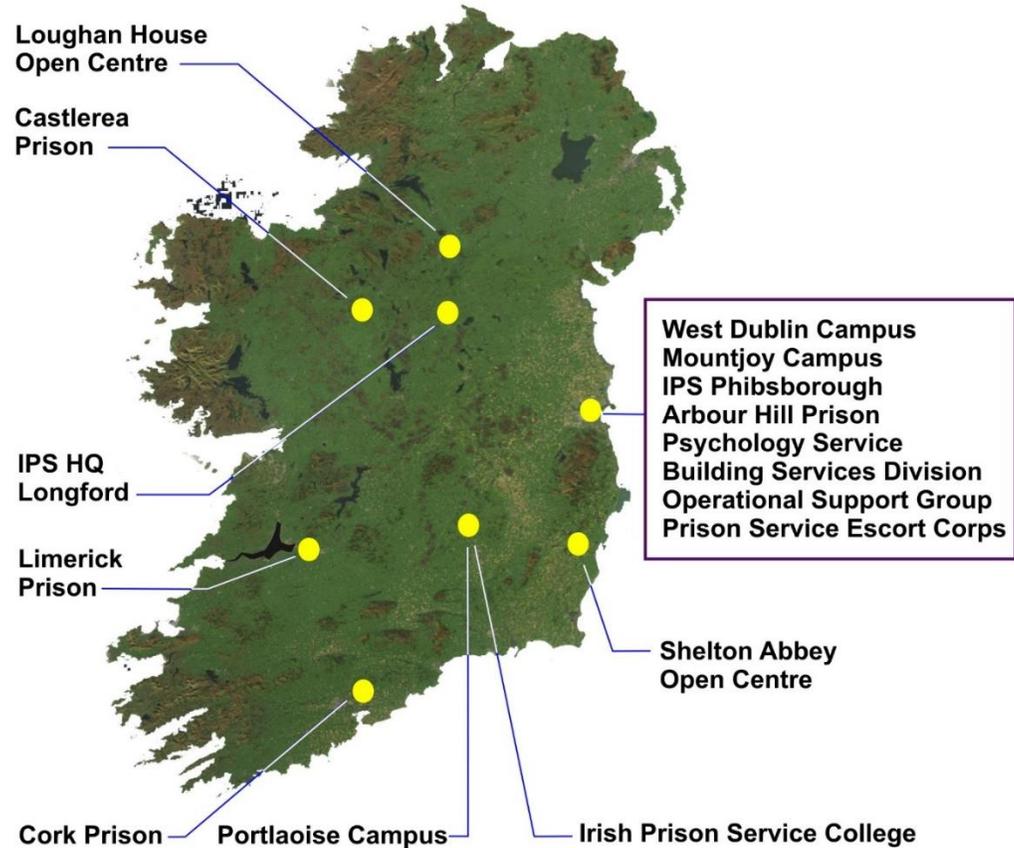


# Irish Prison Service

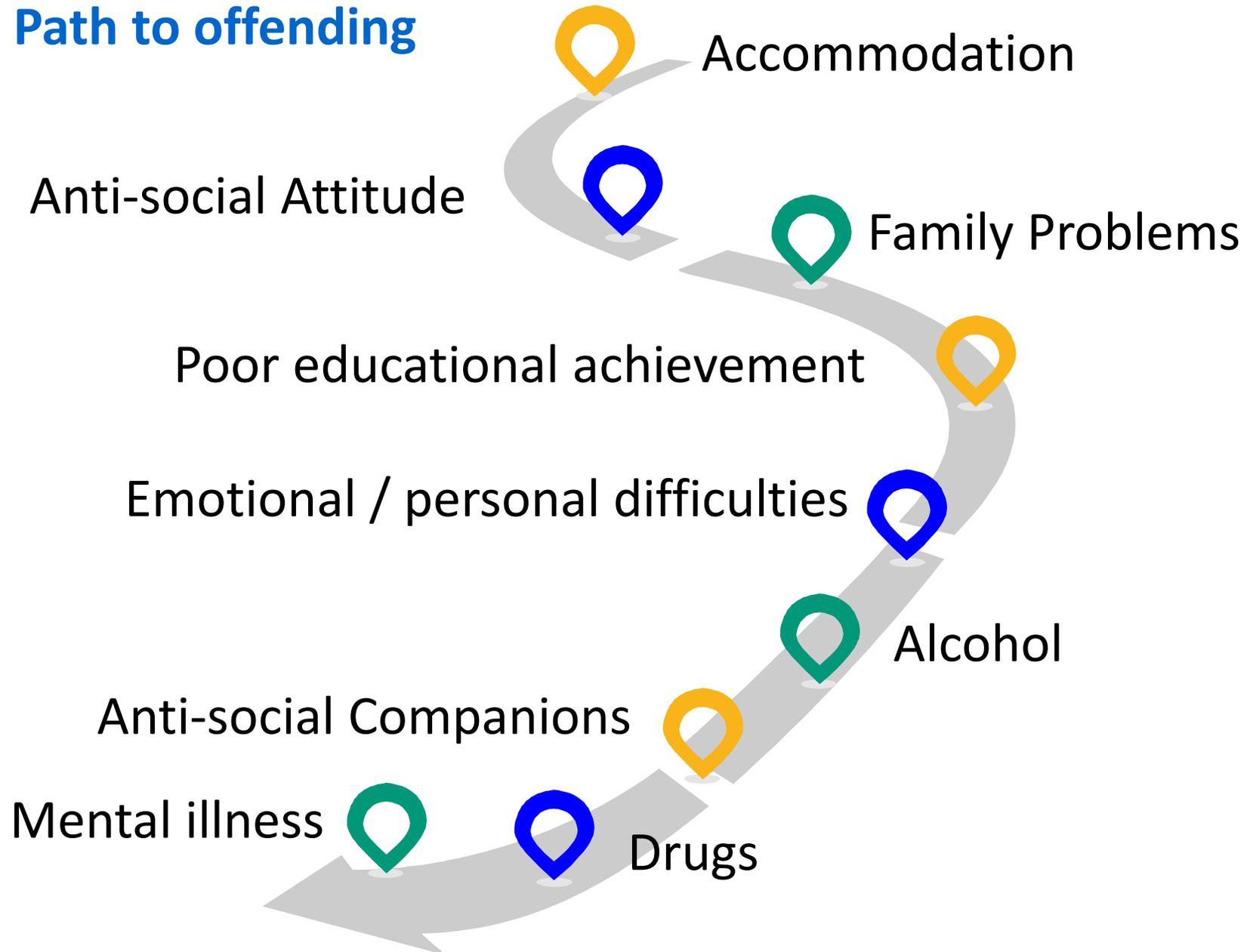


\*20<sup>th</sup> September 2016,  
Male – 3498,  
Female – 147.

\*\* includes HQ staff.



## Path to offending



# Challenges in delivering education in a prison context

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- ❑ Security imposes restrictive conditions in which to operate
- ❑ Prisoners with mental health issues require a therapeutic rather than a custodial environment in which to learn
- ❑ Prisoners from other nations without English as an operating language
- ❑ Prisoners on restrictive regimes – limited schedule available
- ❑ Meeting the needs of distinct groups – young offenders, travellers/Roma, women etc.
- ❑ Learners with a history of being failed by education services
- ❑ Prisoners with limited literacy/numeracy

# Statutory basis

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Irish Prison Rules 2007, refer to the provision of a broadly-based prison education service, to meet the needs of prisoners to:

- Cope with their imprisonment
- Achieve personal development
- Prepare for life after release
- Establish the appetite and capacity for lifelong learning

and

- Encourage prisoners to participate in educational activities
- Give special attention to prisoners with basic educational needs, including literacy and numeracy needs

# Provision of Education in Irish Prisons

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- ❑ There are Education Centres in all 13 prisons, staffed by teachers funded by the Irish Ministry of Education and employed by Education and Training Boards
- ❑ 220 teaching posts are funded, with a Head Teacher in each prison
- ❑ Education programmes are separate from prison workshops which provide accredited training in vocational skills and provide essential services (catering, laundry, cleaning), staffed by Work Training Officers (Prison Officers)
- ❑ The non-staff operating costs of the prison education service are funded by the Irish Prison Service



# Contrasting Learning Environments

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# Mission

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The provision of a programme that is quality assured, learner-centred, and that facilitates lifelong learning while helping persons in custody respond to their sentence through personal development and positive renewal

# Joint Strategy for Prison Education

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- ❑ A three year strategy (2016-2018) agreed with the Education and Training Boards
- ❑ A formal meeting each 3 months with the Head Teachers
- ❑ An annual meeting with the Heads of the Education and Training Boards to review the implementation of the strategy
- ❑ Four strategic pillars
  - Supporting the Prison Education Service
  - Accredited and non-accredited education and digitalisation
  - Consultation and Integration
  - Service Quality and benchmarking
- ❑ No formal contract in place

# Programmes Offered

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- ❑ Flexible and broadly-based
- ❑ Extend from basic literacy/numeracy to state (second level) examinations to further education accreditation (QQI) to open university courses
- ❑ A wide range of subject areas in each prison
- ❑ Ethos of adult and continuing education
- ❑ Non-accredited arts, drama, physical exercise, yoga etc. is also offered
- ❑ Adult Guidance service and referral to further education programmes on release

# Recent Developments

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- ❑ An IT system (PEMS) linked to the central prisons database (PIMS) is under development. This will enable timetables, student interviews, academic records, pre-release alerts to be created, retained, shared and printed
- ❑ A centralised educational resource (SPAN) enables on-line access to licensed educational resources in common subject areas
- ❑ An assessment of prisoner competences based on the EU's 8 adult learner competences is being planned
- ❑ More structured sentence planning and release planning arrangements are being put in place
- ❑ A Directory of Education Programmes is published every 2 years

# Informal Educational Programmes

Other educational and personal development programmes are supported:

- ❑ Red Cross community-based health and first aid programme (peer-led)
- ❑ Alternatives to Violence Programmes (external facilitators)
- ❑ Parenting Programmes
- ❑ Adult Guidance and Placement Services
- ❑ Arts and Writing and drama workshops
- ❑ Gaisce (Presidents Awards)
- ❑ Visiting Speakers

A library service is also available in each prison



# Quality Assurance

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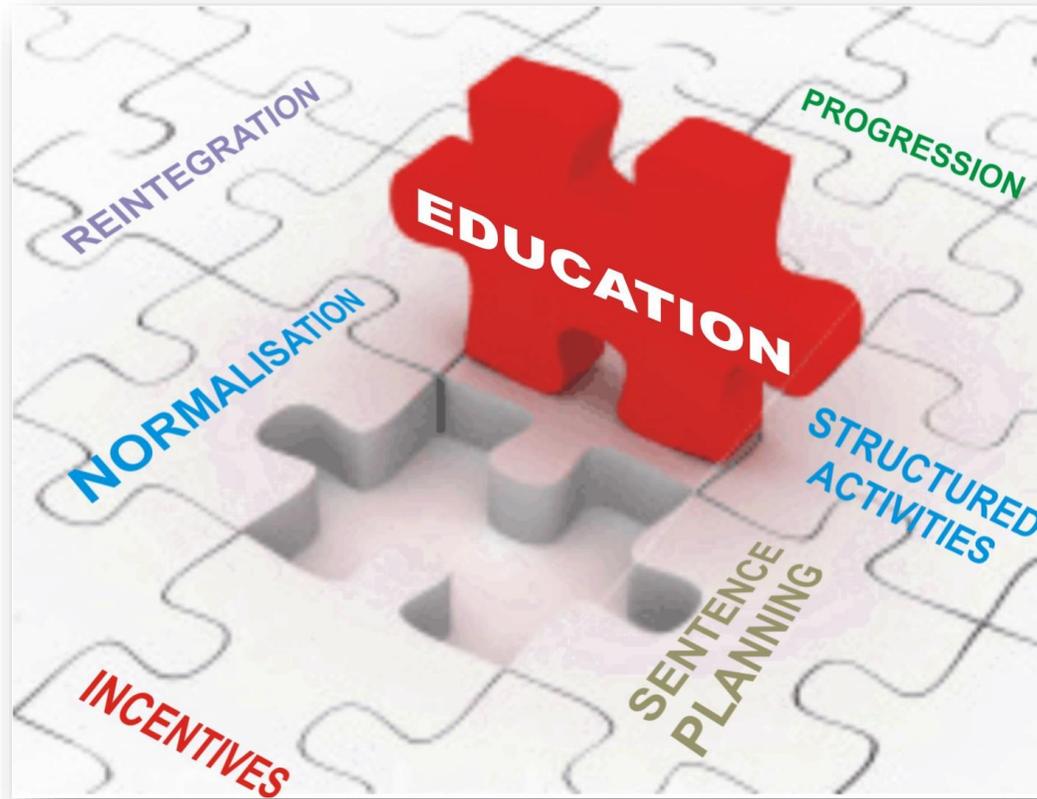
- ❑ Prison Education Centres accountable to the Education and Training Boards and to the Ministry of Education
- ❑ Accrediting Bodies e.g. QQI assess content and quality of education programmes
- ❑ Head Teachers are members of the prison multi-disciplinary teams
- ❑ State Examinations (second level) are set and marked according to national standards

# Constraints

- ❑ Limited access to IT resources
- ❑ Shorter school year – limited programmes during holiday periods
- ❑ Teaching resources provided is fixed at 220 wholtime equivalents
- ❑ Schools may close temporarily if prison staff not available to supervise/escort
- ❑ Security Clearances



# Conditions for change



**Education** – A key component



# Thank You

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