



# **What's happening now**

**Has it gotten better?**

# NDTRS statistics

2020, the NDTRS reported that 9,702 cases presented for drug treatment in outpatient, inpatient, low threshold, prison or general practice settings. They noted that fewer cases presented due to COVID-19. Of these, 3,796 were new cases attending. Of the total cases, 73.9% were men and 25.9% were women.

. In 2020, 2,619 cases reported cocaine as a main problem, an increase from 853 cases reported in 2014. In each year from 2014 - 2020, most cases (80%) reporting cocaine as a main problem were men

The proportion of women reporting cocaine use increased from 17.2% in 2014 to 20.8% in 2020. Crack cocaine accounted for 15.8% of all those treated for cocaine in 2020 (an increase from 14.3% in 2019) (Kelleher, Carew, & Lyons, 2020).

During following years the reported figures have increased; drug treatment cases totalling 12,009, 13,104, and 13,295 in 2022, 2023 and 2024 respectively.

# Increase in women accessing treatment

- **An increase in the percentage of women has been observed each year, women representing 30% of the total numbers treated in 2024. The main problem drug was identified as cocaine in 2024; 40% reported cocaine as their main problem drug, while 25% reported opiates (HRB, 2024, 2025).**
- **one notable finding in 2023 and again in 2024 related to crack cocaine use, highlighting women's treatment presentation at 46% of the overall numbers recorded (HRB, 2024, 2025).**

# Criminal Justice System

- **Over the past two decades in Ireland, several reports have documented significant changes information about women's involvement in criminal activity and although many offences are low-level and linked to acquisitive crime, they suggest that women may be active within the drug economy.**
- **Kelly and Bogue (2014, p.87) noted that the Irish prison service reported in 2010 that the number of women in prison increased by 84% from 2001 to 2010.**
- **In 2020, there were 649 committals of women to prison as compared to 155 committals of women in 1999.**
- **the numbers in the entire prison system were reduced by 29% during the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuing restrictions (Irish Prison Service, 2021).**

# Women in prison

- In Ireland in 2020, women represented approximately 3.8% of the prison population,
- The daily average number of women in custody was 148, which represented a 12.9% (-22) decrease on the 2019 average of 170.
- The daily average number of women in custody in the Dóchas The daily average number of women in custody in the Dóchas Centre in Mountjoy, Dublin was 120, while there was a daily average of 28 women in custody in Limerick prison.
- The average number of women in custody in 2021 was 144, which represented a 2.4% (- 4) decrease on the 2020 average of 148 (Irish Prison Service, 2022).

# Worrying Trend in Female Incarceration

- **632 committals in 2022 and a large increase of 20.1% was recorded in 2022 in the daily average number of women in prison, recorded as 173 compared with 144 in 2021 (IPRT, 2023).**
- **787 women were committed to prison in 2023, the daily average number 173 (IPRT, 2024).**
- **The daily average number of women in prison was 251 in 2024 (IPRT, 2025)**
- **It was reported that women's imprisonment had increased to record levels with women representing 5.5% of the Irish prison population and the latest figures suggesting 309 as the daily average (World Prison Brief, December 2025).**

# **Risks for women**

- **Homelessness**
- **Community Violence**
- **Higher Incarceration Rates**
- **Lack of interagency work after prison**
- **The Rise in Toxic Masculinity**

# What can we do?

- **Alternatives to Prison**
- **Gender Responsive Services**
- **Ensure that women get supports for the many intersecting issues that arise in their lives.**
- **Fight for an understanding compassionate criminal justice system that understands that women involved in the drugs economy have so many other positive attributes than the ones they are judged on..**
- **Raise our sons to respect and love the women they come across..**

# Thank you

