



Invitation to Tender

A Scoping Study on Maternal Imprisonment in Ireland

About IPRT

The Irish Penal Reform Trust (IPRT) is Ireland's leading independent charity campaigning for a penal system that is just and humane; protects and promotes human rights, equality and social justice; and uses prison as a last resort. Our work is underscored by the recognition that prison is inherently damaging in itself and impacts disproportionately on marginalised and disadvantaged groups. Our goal, therefore, is to shift the focus of Ireland's penal system away from its current emphasis on punishment towards approaches based on prevention, early intervention, diversion, and the integration of criminal justice policy with wider social policy.

Context

Imprisonment of a child's primary caregiver can have an extremely detrimental impact on the child, with parental imprisonment being recognised as one of 10 'Adverse Childhood Experiences' (ACEs) which can have a lasting impact on people into adulthood ([IPRT 2021](#)). While less is known about the specific impact on children of having a mother in prison, research from England and Wales has suggested that maternal imprisonment is likely to be even more disruptive to a child than paternal imprisonment ([Lockwood 2020](#)). Internationally, research has explored the issue of maternal imprisonment and the harm caused to children when their mother – who is often the primary carer – is imprisoned. To date, however, there has been very limited examination of the numbers and experiences of mothers imprisoned in Ireland, or their children.

Project Outline

In 2020, IPRT was awarded funding for a 3-year project looking at the children and families of prisoners, with the aim of reducing the harm caused to these children and families and particularly reducing female imprisonment. The main vehicle through which these project goals are delivered is the *Action for Children and Families of Prisoners* Network ([ACFP Network](#)). Two key objectives (among others) of the project are as follows:

- **To develop detailed recommendations for alternatives to custodial sentences, embedded in children's rights, and expand the use of existing sanctions such as Community Service Orders as a direct alternative to imprisonment.**
- **To enshrine in legislation the principle that alternatives to prison should be exhausted before a custodial sentence is imposed, particularly where the case concerns a child's primary carer.**

As part of the work involved in achieving these two objectives, funding is now available for specific research to be carried out into maternal imprisonment in Ireland, with the aim of better understanding the levels of maternal imprisonment in Ireland and identifying any gaps in the data currently available. The research will also involve a literature review of domestic and international research on maternal imprisonment, as well as proposals for reducing the number of mothers sent to prison.

Tender Outline

IPRT wishes to commission an expert researcher(s) to provide research on: the numbers of mothers imprisoned in Ireland; any gaps in the data currently available on such numbers; trends in maternal imprisonment internationally; the impact of maternal imprisonment on both women and children (based on national and international research); and proposals for reducing the number of mothers sent to prison and addressing any negative impacts arising from maternal imprisonment.

Our project proposal envisages the basic model set out below. We are open to considering adapted models of delivery (with the agreement of the project funders) within the budget and time constraints of the project.

The research should include the following:

- A **literature review** of the available national and international research on the impact of maternal imprisonment on both women and children;
- The **rates of maternal imprisonment in Ireland**, including the numbers of mothers imprisoned and any discernible trends (to the extent that such data is available);
- Identification of any **data gaps** in understanding maternal imprisonment in Ireland;
- Identification of any **trends** in maternal imprisonment internationally; and
- Proposals for **evidence-based recommendations** on how the number of mothers sent to prison in Ireland may be reduced and the negative impacts (if any) arising from maternal imprisonment may be addressed (drawn from national and international best practice).

It is envisaged that the above research will involve looking at the sentencing of women and mothers in Ireland (to the extent that this is possible), including how court decision-making impacts the rates of maternal imprisonment and possible ways of addressing this in legislation and/or through other measures.

Project Deliverables

The successful tenderer will be expected to produce a research report (circa 10-15k words), with clear recommendations for addressing maternal imprisonment in Ireland, by 30th November 2022. While to be confirmed, the launch of the report would be likely in early- to mid-2023. The successful tenderer is expected to attend the launch and present the findings of the research.

Requirements

- Postgraduate degree in a relevant discipline;
- Demonstrated knowledge of the Irish criminal justice system (including the specific topic of sentencing) and human rights in Ireland;
- Proven experience of designing and carrying out research projects;
- Experience in quantitative research methods, including undertaking desk-based research and data analysis;
- Experience in producing high-quality, publishable documents to agreed deadlines, within strict wordcounts;
- First-rate drafting abilities, exceptional writing skills, attention to detail, and ability to adhere to budgetary requirements.

Tender Process

Tendering individuals or organisations must submit a tender document of no more than four pages. Each tender should include:

- A profile or CV of the individual(s) making the proposal;
- Details of previous relevant work in this area;
- Two samples of written work (these may be URLs to work published online);
- The methodology you propose to adopt in order to achieve the key deliverables;
- Costing and timeline with respect to the proposed work expressed within the overall budget for research of €6,000 (inclusive of VAT if applicable);
- A comprehensive risk assessment with mitigating actions; and
- Estimated number of days for completing the work.

Assessment of Tender

Each tender received will be assessed on the basis of:

CRITERIA	SCORE
Demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the brief	30
Track record in relevant work	20
Approach/methodology including risk assessment	20
Value for money	20
Availability to carry out the project within the stated timeframe	10
Total	100

Note:

- Valid tax clearance certificates will be sought from the successful tender.
- Additional information may be sought at the assessment phase.
- Before the final decision, a number of the most competitive tenders may be invited for further discussions on their proposals for elaboration, clarification, and/or aiding mutual understanding.
- IPRT shall not be liable for any costs and/or expenses incurred in respect of the preparation or the submission of any tender documents or associated material.

Lowest price tender is not a guarantee of success.

Tenders should be submitted by email to tenders@iprt.ie by noon on Monday 11th July 2022 at the latest. (Extended from the original deadline of 24th June.)

Queries should be directed to Senior Policy & Research Officer Sarahjane McCreery at sjmccreery@iprt.ie. **Please note that tenders will not be accepted at this email.**

We are grateful to Katharine Howard Foundation and St Stephen's Green Trust for supporting this timely piece of work.

