



## Invitation to Tender

### Exploring the financial impact on children and families in Ireland when a family member is imprisoned

#### About IPRT

The Irish Penal Reform Trust (IPRT) is Ireland's principal independent non-governmental organisation working for systemic penal reform in Ireland. Our vision is a just, humane Ireland where prison is used as a last resort. We advocate for a progressive criminal justice system that prioritises alternatives to prison, upholds human rights, and champions reintegration. We do this through research, campaigning and changing attitudes.

#### 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). Previously IPRT estimated that more than 5,000 children had a parent in prison daily with over 10,000 children affected each year. However, with record numbers of people currently in prison, this number is likely to be much higher but concrete data are not available. To bring about positive sustained change for children and families of prisoners, the [Action for Children and Families of Prisoners Network](#) was established and in 2022, IPRT recruited a project coordinator to implement a three-year initiative focusing on children and families affected by parental or familial imprisonment.

While IPRT welcomes the inclusion of children of prisoners in [Young Ireland: The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People in Ireland 2023-2028](#) as a cohort in need of particular support, further research is necessary to better understand how poverty impacts children, young people and their families when a family member is imprisoned. Child poverty is a complex issue affecting more than 180,000 children and young individuals in Ireland, hindering their ability to achieve their full potential.

#### The aims of this research

When a family member goes to prison, existing financial challenges can escalate or new financial challenges can present with the loss of a wage-earner, changes in housing, reduced availability of childcare and the cost of visiting and supporting a person in prison. However, no comprehensive examination into the relationship between poverty and family imprisonment in Ireland has taken place to date, particularly with a focus on children and families of prisoners and the associated costs of having a family member in prison.

IPRT's existing body of research "[Picking Up the Pieces": The Rights and Needs of Children and Families Affected by Imprisonment](#) (2012), [Piecing It Together: Supporting Children and Families with a Family Member in Prison in Ireland](#) (2021) and [Maternal Imprisonment in Ireland: A scoping study](#) (2023) all highlight significant gaps in Ireland's efforts and acknowledge the challenges faced by families, especially those from low socio-economic backgrounds, due to the imprisonment of a family member.

#### Tender Outline

IPRT is seeking to commission an expert researcher(s) to conduct mixed-methods research to explore the financial impact on families with children and associated implications where an immediate family member (parent or sibling) is imprisoned. Our research proposal envisages the basic model set out below. We expect that the successful tenderer will:

- Conduct a **literature review** of the available national and international research on the relationship between poverty and imprisonment and a **desk-based collation of Ireland's national and international obligations** relating to child poverty and affording an adequate standard of living;
- **Consult with individuals with lived experience** of family imprisonment through **surveys, focus groups and interviews** to explore their experiences of the financial impact of imprisonment, average costs, and gather case studies to enhance our understanding of the economic impact of familial imprisonment;
- **Review existing national and international datasets** to identify any potential overlap and/or gaps on data related to people impacted by familial imprisonment compared with other cohorts experiencing disadvantage and better understand the impact of poverty and deprivation on these families;
- Examine how **low incomes and other aspects of disadvantage** impact families affected by imprisonment and the extent to which it may place **an additional financial burden** on these families in comparison to the wider population with particular reference to the **Minimum Essential Standard of Living (MESL) methodology**, and quantify the average associated costs of imprisonment to families, including loss of income, increased expenses, and debt accumulation;
- Explore the **role of wider systems (e.g. social security, insurance, housing)** in supporting these families and understand the repercussions of increased reliance on IT post-COVID on families who struggle to afford it and what support for them might look like;
- Share **successful strategies** with IPRT from both domestic and international contexts that have **demonstrated effectiveness in reducing or mitigating the financial costs** for families impacted by imprisonment; and
- Propose **evidence-based recommendations** to mitigate the impact of imprisonment on the financial well-being of families in the Irish context.

We are open to considering adapted models of delivery within the budget and time constraints of the project.

### Project Deliverables

The successful tenderer will be expected to produce a research report of circa 24,000 to 26,000 words, in clear, plain, and succinct language complete with an executive summary and clear recommendations for identifying and addressing any financial impact of imprisonment on families in Ireland, within **six months** of the contract for services being agreed and signed. The editing and proofing work is the responsibility of the researcher, and the final report must be ready for design and print. It is anticipated that the report would be published and launched within **two months** of the final draft being delivered to IPRT. The successful tenderer is expected to attend the launch and present the findings of the research.

IPRT will establish and manage a high-level advisory group to support the research and the researcher will be expected to engage with IPRT and the advisory group to update on progress at regular intervals.

### Requirements

- Postgraduate degree(s) in a relevant discipline (for example economics, social science, sociology) or a demonstrably related field;
- Proven experience of designing and carrying out research projects;
- Experience in qualitative and quantitative research methods, including undertaking desk-based research, conducting interviews in a sensitive manner, designing and conducting surveys, and data analysis;
- This research is seeking the engagement of people with lived experience, to include family members and children, therefore experience and evidence of successfully applying for ethical approval from

third-level institutions (if needed in the case of the tenderer being employed in such an institution) to conduct qualitative research;

- Experience in producing high-quality, publishable documents to **agreed deadlines**, within **strict word-counts**; and
- 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 **€12,000 – 14,000** (inclusive of VAT if applicable) with a breakdown including daily rate and associated costs of research;
- 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
Approach/methodology including risk assessment	20
Availability to carry out the project within the stated timeframe	10
Track record in relevant work	20
Value for money	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

### 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.

**The lowest price tender is not a guarantee of success.**

### Tender clarification or queries

Queries should be directed to Ashling Tobin, Children and Families Initiative Coordinator at [atobin@iprt.ie](mailto:atobin@iprt.ie). Please note that tenders will not be accepted at this email.

### How to Apply

Tenders should be submitted by email to [tenders@iprt.ie](mailto:tenders@iprt.ie) by **12 noon on Monday 23 September** at the latest.

We would like to acknowledge the support of our funders for this important research

