



**Comptroller and Auditor General
Special Report**

Annualised Hours in the Irish Prison Service

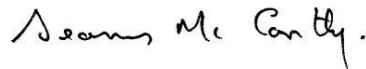
Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General

Annualised Hours in the Irish Prison Service

I have, in accordance with the provisions of Section 9 of the Comptroller and Auditor General (Amendment) Act 1993, carried out an examination of annualised hours in the Irish Prison Service.

This report was prepared on the basis of information, documentation and explanations obtained from the Irish Prison Service. The Irish Prison Service, the Department of Justice and Equality and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform were asked to review and comment on the draft report. Where appropriate, the comments received were incorporated in the final version of the report.

I hereby submit my report for presentation to Dáil Éireann in accordance with Section 11 of the Act.



Seamus McCarthy
Comptroller and Auditor General

30 May 2016

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Summary

Summary

In 2005, the Irish Prison Service introduced an annualised hours system to replace overtime. Historically, overtime ran at very high levels in the Prison Service, peaking at a cost of €59 million a year in 2002 and 2003. The Prison Service estimated that the new system would provide annual savings of €31 million.

This examination looked at the impact of the annualised hours system on the total hours required to operate the Prison Service, on sick leave, on overall costs and on individual prison officer's pay.

Annualised hours system

Prison officers' standard working week is 39 rostered hours. Under the annualised hours system, prison officers contract to work a fixed number of additional hours annually, based on one of four specific bands. Additional hours are paid at 1.8 times the basic salary rate. A related pensionable allowance of 8% is also paid to each prison officer. This payment is made irrespective of what band the prison officer is contracted on.

Resourcing and Operating the Prison Service

In 2001, a Staffing and Operations Review Team carried out a prison-by-prison review of the staffing required annually to operate the Prison Service.

Under the annualised hours system as proposed in 2005, a total of 7 million hours were to be provided, comprising just over 6 million standard rostered hours from some 3,072 prison officers, and 946,000 additional 'contract' hours. In order to deliver the agreed additional hours, prison officers were required to work an average of 308 additional contract hours a year.

Following the introduction of the annualised hours system, there has been a reduction of 49% in the average number of hours worked by prison officers over and above their basic work week. Officers worked an average of 459 paid overtime hours in 2005, compared to an average of 222 additional hours in 2014.

Prison officers may not be required to work all the contract hours for which they are paid. Such unworked hours are referred to as 'write-off hours'. The average level of write-off hours across the Prison Service is 15%. However, there is significant variation in the level of write-off hours across the 14 prison institutions.

Relative to prison services in other states, the Prison Service has a comparatively low ratio of prison officers to prisoners. This suggests that some efficiency gains may be possible. Joint task reviews were carried out under the Public Service Agreements, 2010 – 2014 and 2013 – 2016, which resulted in changes to staffing configurations. However, no in-depth review of the tasks carried out in prisons and the resources required for these has been carried out since 2001. In particular, there has been no formal process for the identification of potential efficiencies which may have arisen from prison infrastructure expenditure, which totalled €223 million since 2001.

Sick Leave

Prior to the introduction of the annualised hours system, it was estimated that 15% of all overtime arose to cover for colleagues' sick leave. The Prison Service anticipated a reduction of around one third in sick leave relative to 2001 levels, following the introduction of the annualised system. However, there was a sharp increase in the level of sick leave taken between 2001 and 2005. As a result, even though the incidence of sick leave fell after the rolling out of the annualised system in 2005, the reduction in sick leave levels anticipated by the Prison Service has not been achieved.

Cost of the Annualised Hours System

The annualised hours system has led to savings for the Prison Service in providing operational cover when compared with the cost of overtime in the preceding years. While the savings are significant, they are substantially less than the Prison Service anticipated.

The average annual net cost saving since the introduction of the annualised hours system is an estimated €5.5 million a year. This is significantly less than the savings of €31 million a year estimated by the Prison Service before its introduction. However, the estimated annual savings were partially offset by once-off lump sum payments, totalling €41 million, made to prison officers for adopting the annualised hours system. As a result, the net saving over the period 2006 to 2014 was around €8 million.

The main benefit from the introduction of the annualised hours system is that it has provided the Prison Service with a level of certainty around the availability of staff to work additional hours as required by circumstances.

Impact on the Earnings of Individual Prison Officers

Average earnings have not changed significantly in cash terms for individual prison officers since the introduction of the new system. This is despite a significant reduction in the amount of hours in excess of core hours being worked.

There is also now a more even distribution of earnings from additional hours. The cap on the number of additional hours that a prison officer may contract to work (360 hours a year) has ended the practice of individuals working extremely high numbers of hours.

Annualised Hours in the Irish Prison Service

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Irish Prison Service operates as an executive agency within the Department of Justice and Equality, headed by a Director General. The Prison Service is administered centrally with its headquarters located in Longford.
- 1.2 There are fourteen custodial institutions in the prison system – eleven closed prisons, two open centres, which operate with minimal internal and perimeter security, and one semi-open facility with traditional perimeter security but minimal internal security (the Training Unit).
- 1.3 Each custodial institution is controlled by a governor. Governors are responsible for the financial costs of their respective institutions. They are also responsible for allocating the resources assigned to them as effectively as possible.
- 1.4 The estate of the Prison Service comprises modern purpose-built prisons, older purpose built-prisons and adapted buildings. The current standard condition of buildings, renovations and capital investment impact on staffing requirements.

Overtime in the Prison Service

- 1.5 The Prison Service rosters operational staff to provide continuous 24-hour cover at all prison locations. Prison officers' standard working week is 39 hours, referred to as rostered hours. Rostered hours provide for all routine tasks and include some provision for staff leave, training, sickness and unauthorised absences. Any gaps in the provision of operational cover must be covered by calling in officers who had not been scheduled to work during the period in question, or extending duty hours.
- 1.6 Up to and including 2005, the requirement for such supplementary hours was met by prison officers working overtime. Historically, overtime ran at very high levels in the Prison Service. In 1998, the associated cost amounted to €42.9 million and it rose steadily to a peak of around €59 million in both 2002 and 2003. A number of reviews were carried out between 1997 and 2005 in response to the high levels of overtime payments being made to meet the unscheduled demands for operational cover, including in respect of sick leave.¹ Based on the review analysis, an annualised hours system was adopted to replace overtime. The key features of the system are set out in Figure 1.1.
- 1.7 The Prison Service estimated that the new system would provide savings on the payroll of almost €31 million a year. It was also expected to provide certainty around the availability of staff to work additional hours and the total cost of additional hours per annum. From a staff perspective, it was expected that the system would result in more predictable earnings and attendance requirements.

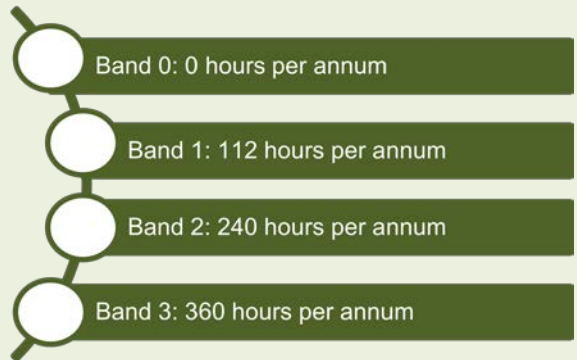
¹ Prison Service Cost Review Group 1997; Report of the Staffing and Operations Review Team 2001; Report of the Strategic Effectiveness Programme 2003; and the Proposal for Organisational Change 2005 (see Appendix A).

Figure 1.1 Annualised Hours System in the Prison Service

The annualised hours system was introduced on a phased basis in the Prison Service between late 2005 and early 2006 to replace overtime hours.

Additional Hours Bands

Under the terms of the annualised hours system, prison officers¹ contract to work a fixed number of additional hours, up to a maximum of 360 hours annually within a banding system. Prison officers may opt for one of four bands of additional hours annually.²



Payment for Additional Hours

Staff are paid for the contracted additional hours whether they are required to work them or not, with hours not worked classified as ‘write-off hours’ and effectively written off by the Prison Service. Prison officers are not required to work hours in excess of their selected band, except in the case of major emergencies.

The following table summarises the impact on the pay structure of the transition from the traditional overtime which was in place in the Prison Service up to 2005, to the annualised hours system currently in place.

Impact of the annualised hours system on pay

Pre (to 2005)	→	Transition	→	Post (from 2006)
Overtime System		Lump Sum:		Annualised Hours System
Overtime hours		€13,750 paid over three years to each prison officer for adopting the new system		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational allowance Additional hours payment Pooled worked hours

Source: Irish Prison Service

1 The prison officer grade structure starts at Grade 1 - recruit prison officer - and continues up to Grade 7 - governor. Grade 7 includes governor grades 1, 2 and 3.

2 Officers may be either excluded from the scheme or placed on a lower band as a consequence of unauthorised absences.

Elements of the Annualised Hours System

Operational Allowance

- An annual allowance, calculated at 8% of basic pay, is paid to each prison officer, including those who opt for band 0 (zero additional hours). The operational allowance is pensionable.

Additional Hours

- Additional hours are paid at 1.8 times basic salary rate. The annual number of hours that a prison officer opts to work is divided equally across each quarter – for example, 90 hours per quarter for those on the maximum band.

Write-off Hours

- A prison officer may not be requested to work all the additional hours for which they have opted. The hours that are not worked for this reason are referred to as write-off hours and the officer is paid for these at the additional hours rate.

Pooled Hours

- In the event that a prison officer does not attend for planned additional hours (e.g. due to unauthorised absence or sickness), the officer is not paid for these hours. The hours are transferred into a pool of available hours ('pooled hours').
- From 2013, all pooled hours are allocated for the Hospital Inpatient Scheme, which covers staff assigned to guard prisoners who are admitted to hospital as inpatients. This scheme is centrally controlled.
- Prior to this, pooled hours were available to each prison governor to meet the operational needs of their prison.
- Pooled hours are paid for at the additional hours rate. If a prison officer works pooled hours, the officer's unworked additional hours, or write-off hours, are not affected.

Scope of the Examination

1.8 The examination reviewed

- the hours required to operate the Prison Service and the impact that the annualised hours system has had on this
- the effect of the annualised hours system on the level of sick leave
- the cost of the annualised hours system compared with the previous overtime system, and whether the annualised hours system is achieving the saving in expenditure projected by the Prison Service
- the impact of annualised hours on the pay of individual prison officers.

Methodology

- 1.9 Information on pay, allowances, overtime and sick leave were generated from the Prison Service's own data systems and analysed by staff of the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General. Clarification and explanations were sought from the Prison Service, by way of interviews, where necessary.

Report Structure

- 1.10 Chapter 2 reviews the impact of the annualised hours system on the resources used to operate the Prison Service, the hours worked by individual prison officers, and the level of sick leave in the Prison Service. The chapter also examines the extent to which additional hours provided are utilised and the extent to which reviews of the resources required to operate the Prison Service have been carried out since the introduction of the annualised hours system.
- 1.11 Chapter 3 examines the changes in costs associated with the operation of the annualised hours system in comparison with the previous overtime system.

2 Resourcing the Prison Service

- 2.1** The average annual prison population increased from around 3,150 in 2005 to almost 4,400 in 2011 – an increase of 40%.¹ Since 2011, the average has fallen gradually, to 3,915 in 2014 – 11% below the peak. The number of prison officers has fluctuated between 3,100 and 3,400 in the period 2005 to 2014 – at the end of 2014 there were 3,212 prison officers employed, around 4% higher than in 2005. The ratio of prisoners to prison officers rose from 1.02:1 in 2005, peaking at 1.37:1 in 2011 before falling back to 1.22:1 in 2014 (see Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1 Prison population and number of prison officers, 2005 to 2014^{a, b}



Source: Irish Prison Service

Notes: a Average number of prisoners annually.

b Number of prison officers at year-end.

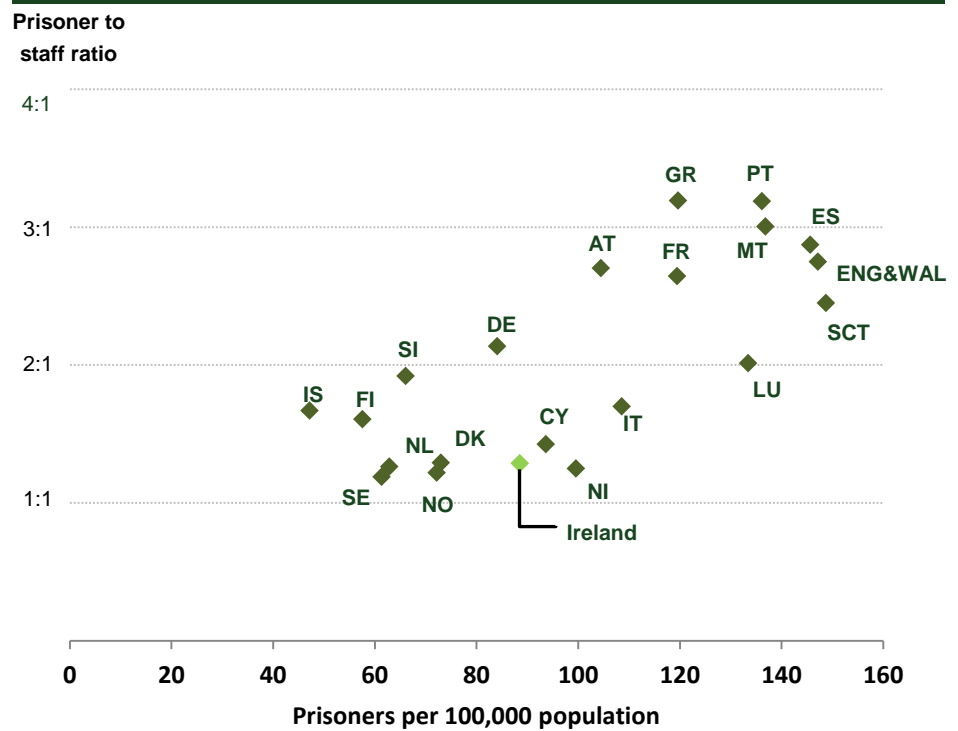
- 2.2** The Council of Europe produces annual prison administration statistics. The average number of prisoners to staff reported for 2013 was 2.7:1.² Only nine of the 47 prison administrations reported on had a ratio which was equal to or less than Ireland (see Appendix B).

- 2.3** The ratios in 2013 for the wealthiest countries are compared in Figure 2.2.

¹ Based on daily average numbers of prisoners in custody for each calendar year.

² The Council of Europe reports separately the ratios of prisoners to custodial and other (medical, educational and training) staff. The ratios were combined for current purposes.

Figure 2.2 International comparison of prisoners to prison officer ratios and prisoners per 100,000 of population, 2013



Source: Council of Europe, Annual Penal Statistics 2013. (See Appendix B for more details.)
GNI per capita per the World Bank

Note: Countries analysed are Council of Europe member countries with GNI per capita of \$20,000 and over for 2013. Small states (e.g. Monaco, San Marino, Andorra) are not included. Switzerland and Belgium do not appear as no figures were available for numbers of prison officers.

2.4 The Council of Europe data illustrate that there is a significant correlation between the prison population per 100,000 of population and the ratio of prisoners to staff. Countries with prison populations on the higher end of the scale also display higher ratios of prisoners to staff. The average prison population, across all 21 countries, was 100 per 100,000 in 2013.¹

2.5 Germany had a prison population in 2013 of 84.1 prisoners per 100,000 of population, which was the closest in size to Ireland’s prison population of 88.5 prisoners per 100,000 of population. Although the prison population ratios were similar, the prisoner to staff ratios were quite different with Germany reporting a ratio of 2.14 prisoners to each staff member compared to Ireland’s ratio of 1.29 prisoners to each staff member. Ireland’s prisoner to prison officer ratio was similar to those in Norway, Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands, which have lower prison population ratios.

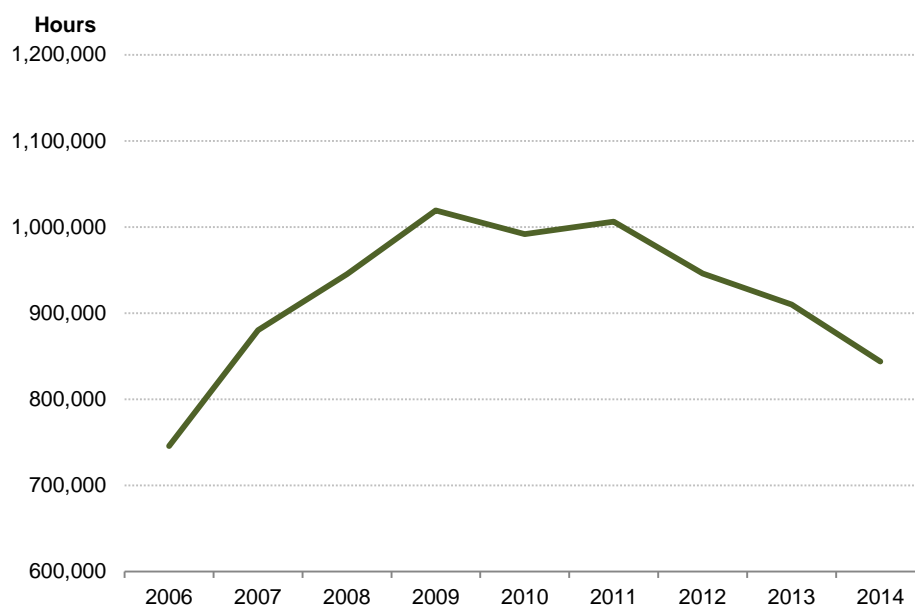
¹ This is the simple average, and does not take account of the differences in total population of each country.

Hours Required to Operate the Prison Service

- 2.6** In 1998, the Prison Service established a Staffing and Operations Review Team (SORT) to undertake an assessment of the staff hours required to operate the Prison Service. The terms of reference specified that a credible record of what is actually happening in each prison was required and the review team analysed practices and tasks at each prison. The study was completed in 2001.
- 2.7** As part of the assessment, SORT differentiated between the hours required to perform planned, predictable tasks and those required to carry out tasks which were generally less within the control of local management. The review estimated that around 7.4 million hours in total were required to operate the Prison Service annually, including projected hours required to operate new prisons at Cloverhill, Midlands and the Dóchas Centre. The closure of the Curragh and Fort Mitchell prisons in 2004 reduced the number of hours required.
- 2.8** Under the annualised hours system proposed in 2005, a total of 7 million hours were to be provided, comprising just over 6 million rostered hours from some 3,072 staff, and 946,000 additional 'contract' hours. This included a contingency provision of 5% of hours.
- 2.9** In order to deliver the agreed additional hours, whole time equivalent staff were required to work an average of 308 additional contract hours a year. This required the majority of staff signing up for (or being assigned to) the 360 hour band, with small proportions assigned to the other bands. It was anticipated that about 10% of officers would opt for the zero additional hours band.

Distribution of Bands to Prison Officers

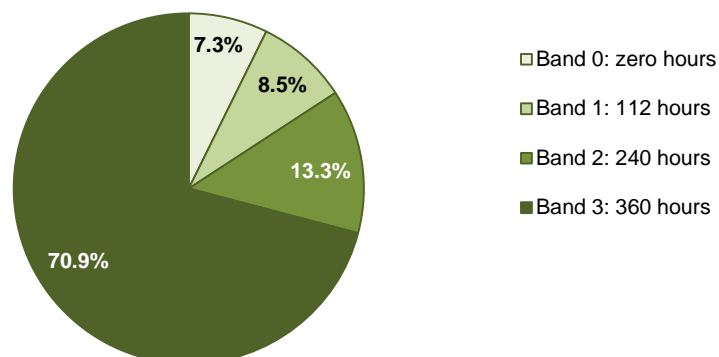
- 2.10** It is the responsibility of each governor to ensure that the allocated hours are utilised to maximum effect within their prison and budget. In allocating bands, preference is given to prison officers with longer service where there are more applicants than places in a particular band. Where there are insufficient applications for a band, volunteers from a lower band will be sought in the first instance. If there is an insufficient number of volunteers, then staff with shorter service are appointed to the band.
- 2.11** In practice, the number of additional contract hours delivered has fluctuated, reflecting changes in the number of prison officers employed and the distribution of officers between bands. For 2007 – the first full year of operation of the system – the total additional hours amounted to 880,000. This increased to around one million hours from 2009 to 2011, dropping back to a level of around 844,000 hours by 2014 (see Figure 2.3).

Figure 2.3 Total additional hours paid for, 2006 to 2014

Source: Irish Prison Service

- 2.12** Changes in the average number of additional hours paid for by the Prison Service were even more pronounced. On average, prison officers were each paid for around 273 hours in 2007. This increased to an average of almost 300 hours in 2009, and to a peak of around 311 hours in 2011.
- 2.13** Both the Public Service Agreement 2010 – 2014 (Croke Park Agreement) and the Public Service Stability Agreement 2013 – 2016 (Haddington Road Agreement) sought to secure payroll savings in the Prison Service.
- 2.14** One of the principal clauses relating to the Prison Service in the Haddington Road Agreement relates to changes to the proportions of staff to be assigned to each band under the annualised hours system. The 360 hour band applied to almost 85% of prison officers in November 2013. The Haddington Road Agreement set a target of 70% of prison officers on the highest band (360 additional hours annually), with the remaining 30% split evenly between the remaining three bands. These targets imply an average of 287 additional contract hours.
- 2.15** The Prison Service has introduced a number of measures aimed at achieving this alignment of bands. Additional hours budgets are now assigned to prisons on a quarterly basis and are based on current staff numbers as well as the realigned band allocations. In addition to this, requests for changes to bands are now processed centrally in line with the new allocation, and all officers who transfer into a new prison are placed on the second band (112 additional hours contracted). By October 2014, the proportion of prison officers contracted to work 360 additional hours had fallen to 71% (see Figure 2.4).

Figure 2.4 Proportion of prison officers on each additional hours band, October 2014

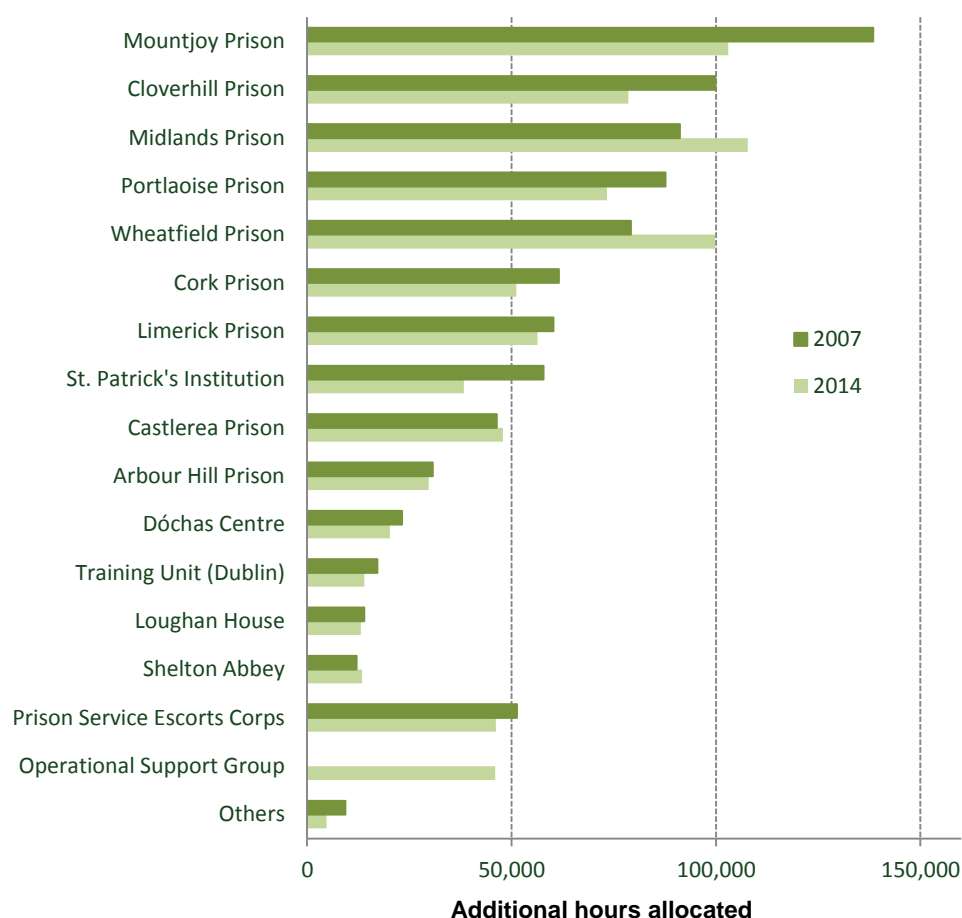


Source: Irish Prison Service

- 2.16** Prison officers were paid for an average of 261 additional hours in 2014 – about 16% below the 2011 peak.

Allocation of Hours to Prisons

- 2.17** For planning purposes, available additional hours are allocated between prisons and operational divisions. The SORT review in 2001 took account of the existing prison population and infrastructure. The allocations were subsequently adjusted to take account of prison closures and openings, changes in prison populations and staffing levels, and capital development projects.
- 2.18** Figure 2.5 shows the changes in paid additional hours, by location, in 2007 and 2014. The biggest changes were in respect of Mountjoy, St Patrick's Institution and Cloverhill, which have had substantial reductions in their prison populations. Significant increases occurred in Midlands and Wheatfield, where there were major investments in additional prison accommodation. There was also a substantial allocation of additional contract hours to the Operational Support Group, which was established in 2008.

Figure 2.5 Additional hours by location, 2007 and 2014

Source: Irish Prison Service

Impact of the Annualised Hours System

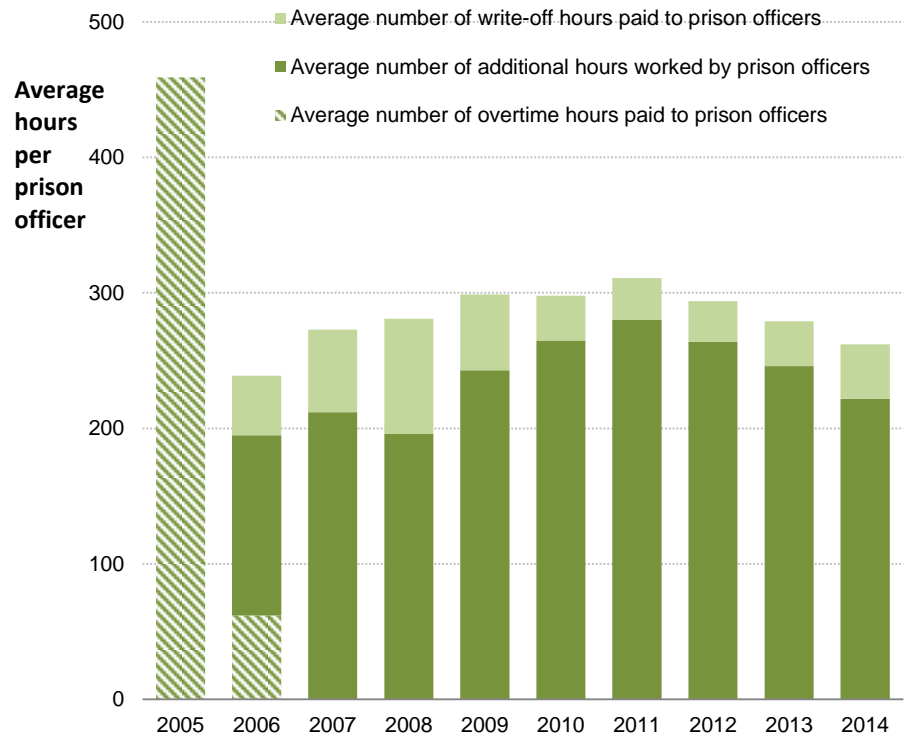
- 2.19** Overtime peaked in 2002 and 2003. In each of those years around 2 million hours overtime were worked. By 2005, just prior to the introduction of the annualised hours system, the number of overtime hours worked had reduced to around 1.4 million hours. In contrast, the number of paid additional hours fluctuated in the range 800,000 to 1 million in the period 2007 to 2014.¹
- 2.20** Prison officers undertake to work up to the maximum annualised hours specified for the band they select (or are assigned to) and are paid for those hours. However, they may not be called on to work the full amount of contracted hours. The difference between the available hours and the hours actually worked are referred to as 'write-off' hours.
- 2.21** Write-off hours accounted for an average of 16% of paid additional hours over the period 2006 to 2014. In 2008, write-off hours accounted for 30% of paid additional hours. In 2014, write-off hours accounted for 15% of total additional hours.

¹ See Figure 2.3 (page 20).

Additional Hours per Prison Officer

- 2.22** Over the period from 2006 to 2014, prison officers worked, on average, around 236 additional hours each annually. This compared with an average of 459 paid overtime hours worked in 2005 – a reduction of 49% in extra hours.
- 2.23** In 2014, prison officers were paid for an average of 40 write-off hours – the equivalent of almost two weeks basic pay. The average number of annual write-off hours over the period 2006 to 2014 was around 46 per prison officer – the peak was in 2008 at an average of 85 hours per prison officer - the equivalent of about four weeks basic pay (see Figure 2.6).

Figure 2.6 Average number of overtime and additional hours per prison officer, 2005 to 2014^a



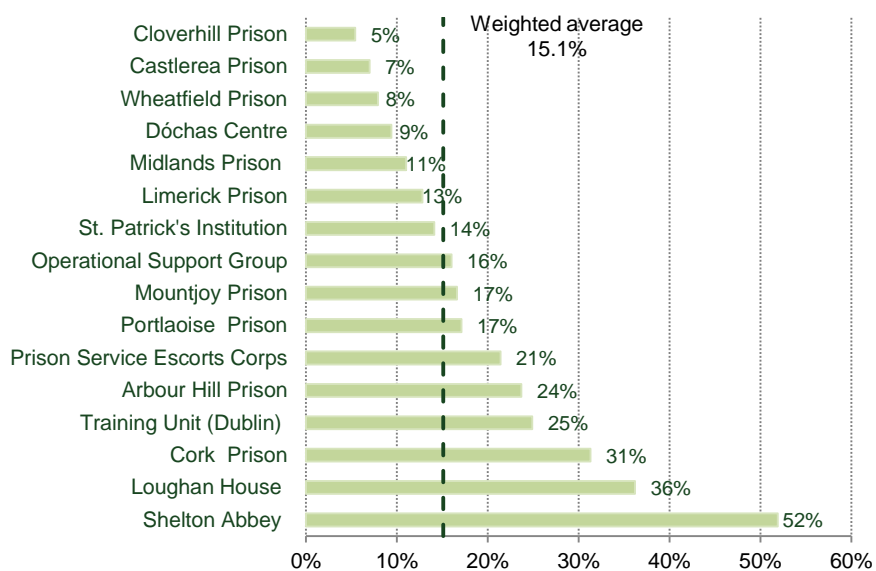
Source: Analysis by the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General.

Notes: a The average number of additional and overtime hours per prison officer is calculated by using the total number of additional hours paid for divided by the average number of prison officers for the year (which is based on the numbers at the start and end of each year).

Write-Off Rates by Prison

- 2.24** There is significant variation in the level of write-off hours across the 14 prisons. Write-off hours in Cloverhill Prison accounted for 5% of the total paid additional hours in 2014. By comparison, the rate of write-off at Shelton Abbey was 52% (see Figure 2.7).

Figure 2.7 Write-off hours as a percentage of additional hours, 2014



Source: Irish Prison Service

- 2.25** The Prison Service does not set a target for what is regarded as an acceptable level of additional hours utilisation in each prison.

Sick Leave

- 2.26** Prior to the introduction of the annualised hours system, staff absences in prisons due to sick leave were met by way of overtime. It has been alleged that under the overtime system, there was an incentive for prison officers to 'play the system' and that some prison officers took sick leave to boost the income of colleagues and vice versa.¹ One of the key aims of the annualised hours system was to achieve a reduction in sick leave taken.
- 2.27** The Prison Service estimated that, up to 2003, overtime due to colleagues' absence on sick leave accounted for around 15% of all overtime. Therefore, achieving a reduction in the amount of sick leave taken by prison officers was an integral part of the Prison Service's strategy to reduce total overtime hours.
- 2.28** Under the new system, where an officer is absent on a day on which they were due to work additional hours, the officer is not paid for the additional hours and the hours in question are pooled for redistribution. The exception to this is when an officer is absent due to an injury while on duty.

¹ Third Interim Report of the Committee of Public Accounts for the period October 2003 to July 2004 (June 2005).

Level of Sick Leave in the Prison Service

- 2.29** The Prison Service anticipated that, based on the experience where annualised hours systems had been introduced in other employments, there would be a reduction of around one-third in sick leave taken by prison officers.¹ The Prison Service has stated that the expected reduction was based on the 2001 sick leave levels of 21.8 days per prison officer – this implies a post-change average of around 14 days per officer.
- 2.30** The level of sick leave taken rose sharply in the period between 2004 and 2006, peaking in 2005 when the average number of sick leave days per prison officer (including rest days falling in periods of sick leave) was 26.5 days. By 2009, following the introduction of the additional hours system, the average had fallen to 17.3 days – a drop of over one third from peak.
- 2.31** Due to the methodology used by the Prison Service for recording sick leave up to 2009, not all recorded sick leave represented lost working days.
- Up until 2009, sick days recorded included rest days falling within a period of sick leave.
 - From 2010 onwards, the Prison Service changed its methodology for recording sick leave. Rest days falling within periods of sick leave were excluded from the statistics and the average number of days sick leave represents lost working days.
- 2.32** Following the change in the methodology for recording sick leave, the recorded average was 12.6 days per prison officer in 2010. The average remained in or around this level up to 2013, before falling to 11.4 days in 2014 (see Figure 2.8).² The Accounting Officer has advised that in 2015, average sick leave taken was 13.2 days per prison officer – an increase of almost 14% compared to 2014.

Figure 2.8 Average sick leave days per prison officer, 2001 to 2014



Source: Irish Prison Service

¹ Final Report of the Committee of Public Accounts on the Appropriation Accounts 2006; Report of the C&AG 2002; and Report of the C&AG 2006.

² The average number of days sick leave across the civil service in 2014 was 10.1 days.

Sick Leave in Individual Prisons

2.33 In 2014, average sick leave ranged from 5.8 days (Arbour Hill Prison) to a high of 13.8 (Castlerea Prison). Prison officers took an average of over 13 days sick leave annually in four prisons while the average in five prisons was nine days or less (see Figure 2.9).

Figure 2.9 Average sick leave days per prison officer (excluding rest days), by prison, 2014



Source: Irish Prison Service

International Comparison

2.34 The reported rate of sickness absence in the prison service in England and Wales was 10.5 days for 2013/14.¹ This was around a day (8%) less per prison officer than the Prison Service. The rate of absenteeism in the prison service in South Australia was 8.7 days for 2013/14², which is significantly lower than that for the Prison Service in 2014.

Views of the Director General

2.35 The Director General stated that the Proposal for Organisational Change was predicated on the basis that sick leave would decrease by 33% across the Prison Service. This was based on the experience in other enterprises where annualised hours systems had been introduced. This level of improvement has not been achieved to date with the result that staff and management are not benefiting from the annualised hours system to the extent that they should. However, he noted that an improvement in sick leave has been achieved in most institutions and the general trend from 2010 to 2014 was downwards. This is due to a combination of intensive management of sick leave and new working arrangements. In 2015 there was an increase but it is too early to say if this upward pattern is an outlier or indicative of an overall upward trend. The Prison Service remains committed to improving on the downward trend.

1 National Offender Management Service Annual Report and Accounts 2013-2014. The average days applies to public sector prisons, probation trusts and the service headquarters. Absenteeism data relating to contracted-out prisons is not included.

2 The Department for Correctional Services, South Australia, Annual Report 2013 – 2014.

Review of Annualised Hours

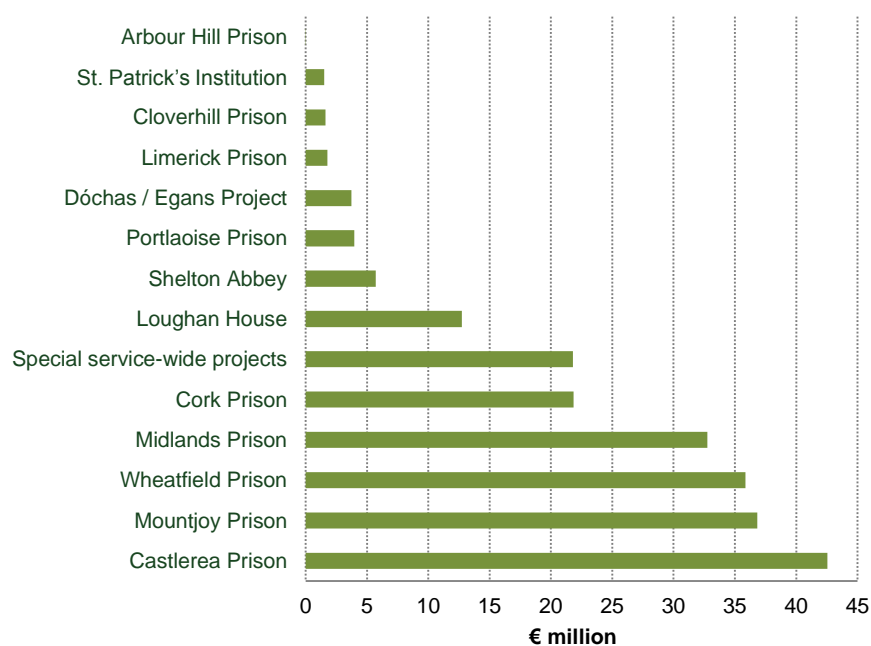
- 2.36** Under the terms of the 2005 Proposal for Organisational Change, a National Monitoring and Review Committee was established, consisting of management and staff representatives with an independent chairperson and appropriate secretarial staff. The Committee's mandate included the monitoring and review of all aspects of the new work arrangements at a national level, including dispute resolution at local level.
- 2.37** A review of how the additional hours system was operating was carried out in 2008. One of the recommendations of this review was that a complete re-analysis of each prison should be undertaken to ascertain what new tasks were being carried out since the original SORT analysis. It was also recommended that the analysis should examine new construction work underway in each prison and its potential impact on the resource demand.
- 2.38** However, despite the recommendations made in the SORT report and the 2008 review that a comprehensive review of the hours required to operate the Prison Service should be undertaken, no such review has taken place.
- 2.39** A series of joint task reviews as agreed under the Croke Park and Haddington Road Agreements took place between 2010 and 2015. The Accounting Officer stated that these reviews sought to achieve greater efficiency in the operation of the Prison Service, mainly through a reduction in the cost of staffing while maintaining and, where feasible, improving services. He further stated that another significant and complementary aim of this process was to enhance the role of staff at all grades, which was progressed through an examination of the roles of staff and the levels at which work is currently being carried out.
- 2.40** The Director General of the Prison Service stated that structures are in place to provide close monitoring and review of working arrangements both at local and national level. This includes local monitoring and review committees comprising management and staff representatives in each prison, and meetings between Prison Service senior management and the Prison Officers Association to review difficulties that cannot be resolved locally. The Proposal for Organisational Change also provides for meetings to take place under the Chairmanship of the Labour Relations Commission, as necessary.

Prison Infrastructure

- 2.41** The SORT report in 2001 noted that the Prison Service at that time was using a mixture of modern purpose-built buildings and older purpose-built and adapted buildings. The report noted the need for building renovations and in some cases, major construction projects and that most of this work would result in a reduction in staffing requirements, as well as contributing to a better living environment for prisoners and an improved working environment for staff.
- 2.42** The SORT report noted that a detailed task analysis was central to any efficiency gains and that further efficiencies, including those arising from capital investment, should reduce the overall staffing requirement. For example, a proposal to construct a modern purpose-built prison wing, that either replaces an older one or operates alongside existing prison wings, should examine the potential for greater efficiency by way of increased use of automated doors and closed circuit television cameras, reducing the number of prison officers required at any one time. The report stated that the relevant recommendations in its reports and the associated staffing implications should be considered in the design phase of any building work.

- 2.43** Separately, departments and offices are required to carry out project appraisals appropriate to the scale and complexity of a proposed capital project.¹
- 2.44** Assessments of proposed capital expenditure on prison infrastructure should accordingly identify how proposed improvements will reduce staffing requirements (and costs), and SORT hours should be adjusted to reflect such reductions.
- 2.45** In the period 2002 to 2014, the Prison Service undertook capital development projects to the value of €223 million² (see Figure 2.10). Despite the requirement to undertake comprehensive analysis of proposed capital projects, major developments at Mountjoy, Midlands Prison, Wheatfield and Castlerea were commenced without detailed consideration of the expected impacts of these projects on staffing requirements.
- 2.46** The Accounting Officer stated that staffing issues were considered by the Capital Projects Board in the most recent major capital projects undertaken by the Prison Service, including the new Cork Prison and that, where possible, changes were made to the proposed layout of rooms etc. to achieve staffing efficiency. The business case for Limerick Prison has also considered possible staff savings and the business case currently being prepared for a major development at Portlaoise Prison will also do so.

Figure 2.10 Expenditure on prison infrastructure, 2002 to 2014



Source: Irish Prison Service

¹ The Public Spending Code: Expenditure Planning, Appraisal and Evaluation in the Irish Public Service – Standard Rules and Procedures, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. (Similar requirements were included in previous guidance).

² This excludes the Training Unit, IPS HQ, Building Services Division and other minor works.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Impact of Annualised Hours System

- 2.47** The introduction of the annualised hours system led to an average reduction between 2006 and 2014 of 45% in the total number of additional hours worked by prison officers when compared with the number of overtime hours worked in 2005, the last full year of the overtime system. The result of this is that the Prison Service is now more efficient than it was prior to the introduction of the annualised hours system, as less hours overall are required to operate the system.
- 2.48** Because the number of prison officers increased over the same period, the impact for individual prison officers was greater. Prison officers worked, on average, around 460 hours overtime in 2005. Between 2006 and 2014, prison officers worked an average of 236 additional hours a year – a reduction of 49%.

Ratio of Prisoners to Prison Officers

- 2.49** In the period from 2005 to 2008 there was, on average, one prisoner for every one prison officer employed. By 2014, the ratio had changed with, on average, 1.2 prisoners per prison officer employed. Despite the increases, the ratio in Ireland is significantly below that in other developed countries. The average ratio for prison administrations in Council of Europe countries in 2013 was 2.7:1. Upon further examination of these ratios for the wealthiest countries, only four prison administrations had prisoner to prison officer ratios which were lower than the Irish Prison Service. This suggests that great efficiency may be possible in staffing levels.

Recommendation 2.1

The Prison Service should review practices in a number of other prison administrations where higher ratios of prisoner to prison officer have been achieved, in order to identify any work practices or other factors that could lead to greater efficiencies in the operation of the Prison Service.

Accounting Officer's response

Agreed. The Prison Service is in regular contact with prison administrations in other jurisdictions, with a view to examining best practice in a number of areas such as improved work practices but also on issues such as prisoner welfare, improved regimes policies for prisoners, improvements in security measures and utilisation of new and improved technologies. The Prison Service commits to working to liaise with other jurisdictions to specifically review potential work practice efficiencies which can be achieved.

The agreed staffing model in the Prison Service is based on joint task reviews. This process was agreed under the Croke Park Agreement and has allowed the Prison Service to achieve significant reductions in staffing numbers since 2009. As this process is based on tasks, it allows the Prison Service to deliver the service with the identified staffing levels, even if prisoner numbers were to increase significantly. Since the commencement of the Public Sector Reform Agreements in 2010, there has been an overall reduction in prison officer grades in the Prison Service of 238 posts from 3,388 (end December 2009) to 3,150 (end February 2016).

Write-off Hours

- 2.50** The average level of write-off hours across the Prison Service in 2014 was around 15%. However, there is significant variation in the level of non-utilisation of additional hours – ranging from 5% in Cloverhill to 52% for Shelton Abbey in 2014. This indicates that the additional hours allocated to some prisons may be excessive relative to needs.

Recommendation 2.2

The Prison Service should conduct a review of additional hours allocated to each prison in light of each prison's utilisation rate of write-off hours with the objective of a possible reduction in allocation in those prisons where there is a high level of non-utilisation.

Recommendation 2.3

The Prison Service should set a target utilisation level for additional hours across the Prison Service. Such targets should then be monitored regularly.

Accounting Officer's response (recommendations 2.2 and 2.3)

Agreed. The Prison Service continually examines ways of delivering the greatest value for money from the additional hours system, with particular emphasis on the utilisation rate of additional hours.

Under the Haddington Road Agreement, the parties agreed to a 70:10:10:10 distribution of staff across the additional hours bands. As a result of the introduction of a number of measures by the Irish Prison Service, the alignment of staff on the highest band (360 hours) has reduced significantly from over 80% in 2013 to around 70% in June 2015.

Variation in the utilisation rate between locations is predicated on a number of variables, including prisoner demographics, security risk and level of regime, as well as staff demographics at each location.

Generally, the lowest utilisation rates (i.e. those with the highest level of write offs) are in open centres which, by their nature, house low risk prisoners and are typically staffed by officers with a higher age profile. The high age profile of staff generally leads to a reduction in long term absenteeism, which reduces the requirement for the utilisation of additional hours. Notwithstanding the rates of utilisation in open centres, the high levels of utilisation are not simply a product of practices used but are also dependent on staffing levels at any particular time and in any particular location.

The primary difficulty associated with redistributing the hours elsewhere in the system, or in fact removing an element of hours from locations with low utilisation rates, is that the additional hours system operates on the basis that the hours are assigned to the officer. As such, these changes would require significant consultation and discussion with staff representatives. The Prison Service is actively examining mechanisms to address this issue on an ongoing basis.

The Prison Service further commits to prioritising the review of locations identified as having low utilisation rates with a view to ensuring appropriate additional hours utilisation in each site.

Impact on Sick Leave

- 2.51** The Prison Service had anticipated a reduction of around a third in sick leave, from 2001 levels, from the introduction of the annualised system. While the incidence of sick leave fell considerably after the introduction of the annualised system, a sharp increase in the years immediately preceding its introduction has meant that the reduction anticipated by the Prison Service has not been achieved. Sick leave levels were relatively constant from 2010 to 2013, with a small reduction in 2014, before increasing significantly in 2015.
- 2.52** Since 2010, sick leave has averaged between 12 and 13 days a year per prison officer. This is higher than some international comparators, so there may be further scope to reduce sick leave in the Prison Service.
- 2.53** There were significant differences in the level of sick leave across the Prison Service in 2014. The highest levels, between 13 and 14 days sick leave on average, were recorded in Castlerea, St Patrick's Institution, Mountjoy and Cloverhill prisons. In some of the smaller prisons, the sick leave of prison officers averaged nine days or less with only 5.8 days recorded in Arbour Hill. This reflects varying work pressures and risks in different prisons.

Review of Resource Requirement

- 2.54** Fourteen years have elapsed since the report of the 2001 SORT review, which estimated that 7.4 million hours were required to operate the Prison Service. That review recommended that staffing levels should be reviewed on an ongoing basis and adjusted as required. Notwithstanding this recommendation, no formal review of the SORT report has been conducted since 2001. While the joint task reviews established under the two Public Service Agreements did result in changes to staffing configurations in the Prison Service, they did not constitute updates or revisions of SORT. The 2001 assessment recorded what was happening in each prison, while the recent task reviews are focused on achieving targeted savings in expenditure, without a comprehensive review of requirements.
- 2.55** The SORT report also noted that detailed analysis should be conducted to identify efficiency gains that would accrue from capital investments and the consequent impact on staffing requirements. Although capital expenditure of €223 million was incurred between 2002 and 2014 in respect of the Prison Service, the expected impact of the projects on staffing levels were not analysed in advance.
- 2.56** This may have resulted in a failure to identify efficiencies arising from the capital investments and to adjust the resources allocated to run the Prison Service accordingly. Staffing issues have been considered by the Capital Projects Board in the Prison Service's most recent major capital projects.

Recommendation 2.4

The Prison Service should undertake a comprehensive review of the hours required to operate the Prison Service. This should include a review of significant infrastructural projects carried out since the introduction of the annualised hours system, to capture any associated efficiency gains not yet achieved. The overall review should provide updated information about the staffing requirements of each prison. This information should be reflected in the additional hours system.

Accounting Officer's response

Agreed. The Prison Service has conducted joint task reviews of each of the prisons and auxiliary services, together with staff representatives. The reviews carried out have identified the tasks or activities required in order to operate the Prison Service and the associated staffing levels to deliver these tasks.

The Irish Prison Service will continue to bring forward proposals for ongoing change in the Prison Service, and implement the reforms necessary to ensure that we have a service that is fit for purpose and capable of responding to the dynamic working environment that exists within the sector.

The Prison Service commits to conducting a scoping exercise to assess the best manner in which to take forward a detailed review of the hours required to operate the Prison Service.

Recommendation 2.5

The Prison Service should ensure that capital appraisals undertaken consider any efficiency gains that might arise as a result of capital projects and associated implications for staffing levels.

When projects are completed and fully operational, reviews should be undertaken to ensure that projected changes in staffing levels identified in the business case and by the Capital Projects Board have been realised.

Accounting Officer's response

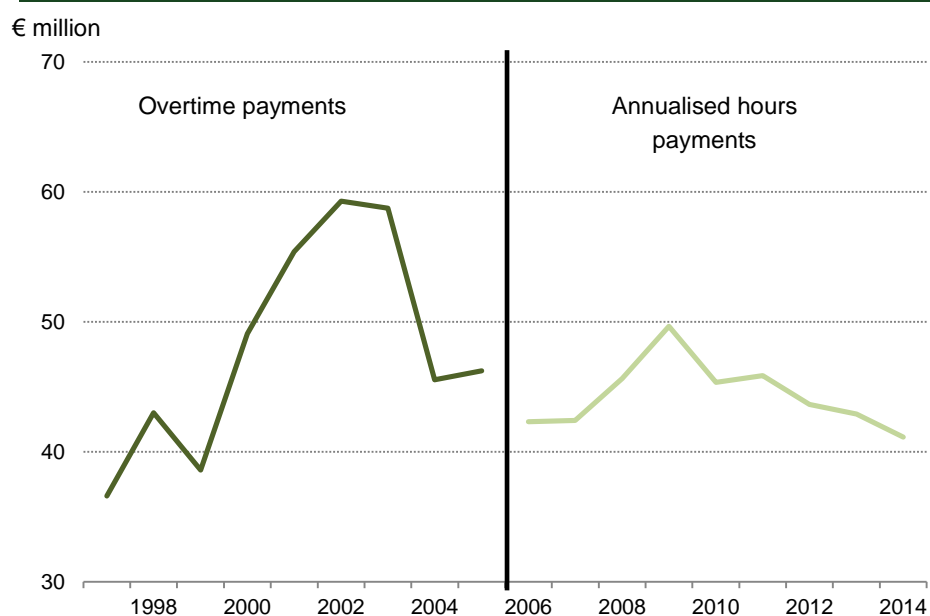
Agreed. Business case analyses were carried out on Prison Service projects in line with Department of Public Expenditure and Reform capital appraisal guidance and was subject to audits and spot checks by Mazars on behalf of the Department of Justice Internal Audit unit. Staffing issues were considered by the Capital Projects Board in the most recent major capital projects, specifically, with regard to the new build of Cork Prison. The business case for Limerick prison has also considered possible staff savings and the business case currently being prepared for a major development at Portlaoise prison will also do so.

The Prison Service commits that any future capital appraisals undertaken will consider the potential for the achievement of efficiency gains.

3 Cost of the Annualised Hours System

- 3.1** The cost to the Prison Service of paid overtime peaked in 2002 and 2003 at around €59 million a year. In 2004 and 2005, the two years immediately prior to the introduction of the annualised hours system, overtime payments fell to around €46 million each year, a reduction of about 22% (see Figure 3.1).
- 3.2** Following the introduction of the annualised hours system, the overall cost of additional hours payments – including operational allowances but excluding transitional lump sum payments – was around €42 million a year in 2006 and 2007 but increased to around €50 million in 2009. The annual cost had since fallen back to around €41 million by 2014.

Figure 3.1 Annual overtime/additional hours payments 1997 to 2014^a

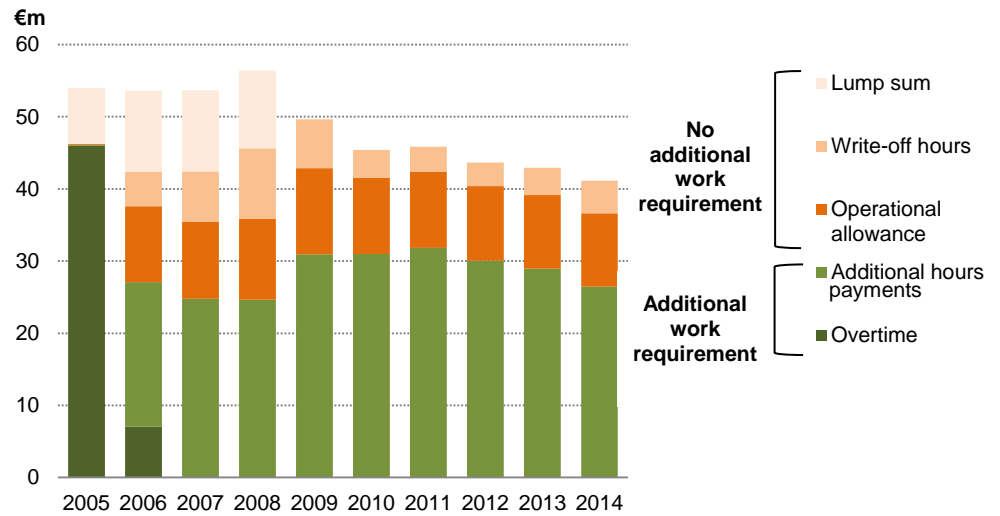


Source: Irish Prison Service

Note: a The cost of lump sum payments made to prison officers when the annualised system was introduced are not included.

- 3.3** The composition of payments in respect of the annualised hours system each year from 2006 to 2014 is set out in Figure 3.2. These included lump sums amounting to €41.2 million paid to all prison officers between 2005 and 2008 and operational allowances totalling around €10 million a year.

Figure 3.2 Additional hours total cost, 2005 to 2014



Source: Irish Prison Service

Note: Additional hours comprises additional hours worked and pooled hours worked.

Savings Related to the Annualised Hours System

- 3.4 Prior to the introduction of the annualised hours system, the Prison Service estimated that there would be an annual saving of almost €31 million arising from the change to the new system, compared with using overtime to meet gaps in operational cover.
- 3.5 The Prison Service based its estimate on the difference between overtime payments to prison officers in 2003 and the projected cost of 998,000 additional hours that had been identified in the SORT review (see Figure 3.3).

Figure 3.3 Estimated annual savings arising from the introduction of annualised hours system

	2003 overtime costs	Estimated cost of annualised hours system	Additional cost/ (saving)
	€m	€m	€m
Overtime (1.97 million hours)	58.75	Nil	(58.75)
Additional hours (998,000 hours)	Nil	27.89	27.89
Estimated saving			(30.86)

Source: Irish Prison Service, submission on costings to the Civil Service Arbitration Board, October 2004.

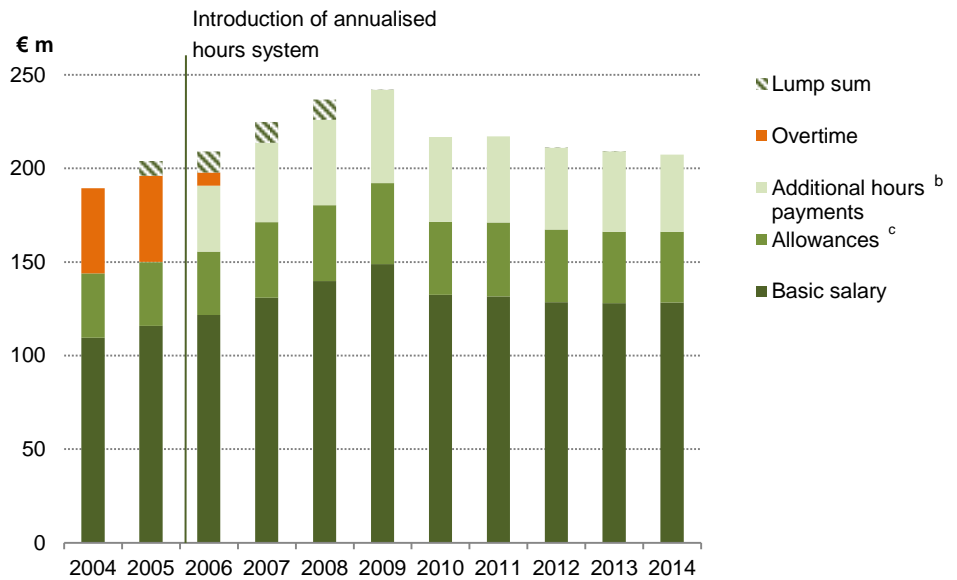
- 3.6 There were a number of factors that the Prison Service’s estimate of anticipated annual savings did not properly take into account.
 - The estimate was based on the assumption that the level of overtime that occurred between 2001 and 2003 would continue. In fact, overtime levels fell significantly in 2004 and 2005, prior to the introduction of the annualised hours system.

- The Prison Service’s estimate of savings did not include provision for the operational allowance of 8% of a prison officer’s basic pay that is paid to all prison officers as part of the agreement to introduce the system. This is a recurring cost of the annualised hours system as implemented. In 2007 – the first full year of the new system – this amounted to €10.6 million. In addition, the operational allowance is pensionable, whereas overtime is not.

Overtime Pay Bill

3.7 The total pay bill for prison officers was just over €200 million in 2005. It then rose steadily each year until 2009 when it peaked at around €245 million. Following reductions in pay arising from the provisions of the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Act 2009, the pay bill fell to around €220 million in 2010, and then fell more gradually to around €208 million in 2014.

Figure 3.4 Total pay bill for Prison Officers from 2004 to 2014^a



Source: Analysis by the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General

- Notes:
- a Total pay bill for all prison officer grades, including governor grades. Other Prison Service staff, for example civilian staff, are excluded. Employers PRSI is also excluded.
 - b Including the operational allowances.
 - c Excluding the operational allowances.

3.8 In 2005, overtime payments represented 40.5% of prison officers’ basic pay. Between 2006 and 2014, recurring payments under the new system have represented, on average, almost 34% of basic pay.¹ On that basis, the estimated average annual cash saving in payments to prison officers in the period 2006 to 2014 arising from the introduction of the annualised hours system, when compared with overtime payments made in 2005, was around €8.5 million, before taking account of superannuation costs (see Figure 3.5).

¹ Overtime was paid at standard rates linked to basic pay. Additional hours payments are paid at 1.8 times basic pay rates. The operational allowance amounts to 8% of basic pay.

Figure 3.5 Estimated annual savings arising from the introduction of the annualised hours system, 2006 to 2014

Year	Total basic pay ^a	Additional hours payments as a % of basic pay ^b	Saving when compared with overtime payments in 2005 ^c	Estimated net pension cost of operational allowance	Net saving arising from annualised hours system
	€m		€m	€m	€m
2006	119.9	35.3%	6.2	(3.0)	3.2
2007	129.1	32.8%	9.9	(3.0)	6.9
2008	137.7	33.1%	10.1	(3.1)	7.0
2009	146.7	33.8%	9.8	(3.3)	6.5
2010	130.7	34.7%	7.5	(3.0)	4.5
2011	129.9	35.3%	6.8	(3.0)	3.8
2012	126.8	34.4%	7.7	(2.9)	4.8
2013	126.1	34.0%	8.2	(2.9)	5.3
2014	126.3	32.6%	10.0	(2.8)	7.2
Total			76.2	(27.0)	49.2
Average annual saving, 2006 to 2014			8.5	(3.0)	5.5

Source: Analysis by the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General.

Notes: a Total basic pay excludes governors' pay.

b Annualised hours payments include the operational allowance, all additional hours payments and overtime but do not include lump sum payments.

c The estimated saving is based on the assumption that overtime payments would have continued at an average of 40.5% of basic pay, which was the outturn in 2005.

Superannuation Cost

3.9 Prison officers accrue pension entitlements under an unfunded ('pay-as-you-go') defined benefits scheme. Consequently, the pay costs borne by the Prison Service do not represent the full cost of employing prison officers. This pension cost depends on factors including the starting date of employment, which affects the level of entitlements, and the pension contributions paid by prison officers. Actuarial calculations allow the additional cost associated with a year's service to be estimated.

3.10 The cost of a year's service is higher for prison officers than for most other public servants due to the shorter period over which benefits are earned and the consequent longer average period during which pension entitlements are drawn.¹ The latest available actuarial estimates indicate that for prison officers recruited from 2004 onwards, the gross annual pension cost was 27.8% of pensionable remuneration while the cost to the Exchequer, net of employee contributions and PRD was 15.6%. For prison officers recruited prior to 2004, the net Exchequer pension cost was 19.8%.^{2,3}

1 Public Service Pensions, Special Report 68, Comptroller and Auditor General, August 2009.

2 Annual pension cost represents the notional contribution that would be required to fund the full pension cost of each year's additional service.

3 The lower pension cost for post 2004 recruits reflects reduced benefits for those officers.

- 3.11** For new recruits the annual net pension cost in respect of the allowance is 15.6% of the allowance. However, all prison officers receive the full pension benefit of the operational allowance on retirement. Therefore, the annual cost is higher for prison officers with shorter periods to retirement than for those officers where the benefit is earned over their full career. The examination estimated that the average annual net pension cost for all prison officers was around 31% of the allowance when it was introduced. As serving prison officers retire, the average net pension cost will fall gradually.
- 3.12** It is estimated that the net pension cost in respect of the operational allowance amounted to, on average, €3 million annually between 2006 and 2014 (see Figure 3.5).

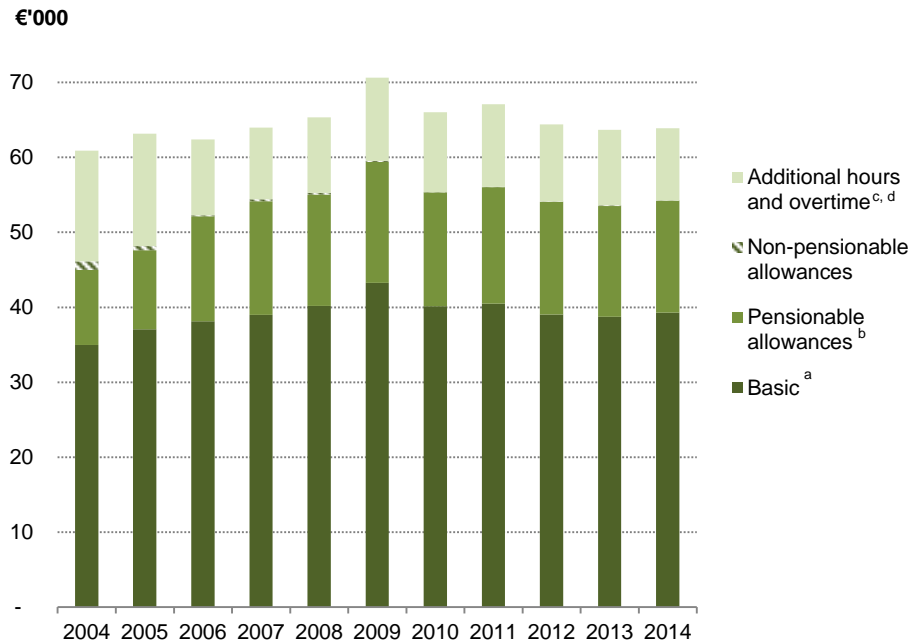
Estimated Total Reduction in Cost

- 3.13** The introduction of the annualised hours system has led to an estimated total reduction in annual costs, when compared with the cost of overtime in 2005, of an average of €5.5 million per year. The total saving over that period is estimated at €49 million.
- 3.14** These estimated savings do not take account of the cost of the lump sum totalling €41 million that was paid on the introduction of the system. When this is taken into account, the total estimated saving arising from the introduction of the annualised hours system is around €8 million for the period 2006 to 2014.

Impact on the Earnings of Individual Prison Officers

- 3.15** In the period from 2004 to 2014, the average annual earnings of prison officers, (excluding governor grades), was €64,600. The average was lowest in 2004 (€60,900) and was highest in 2009 (€70,700) (see Figure 3.6).

Figure 3.6 Average earnings comparison, 2004 to 2014



Source: Analysis by the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General.

Notes: a Excluding governor grades.

b The main allowances are the operational allowance, roster allowance and rent allowance.

c Excluding the additional hours operational allowance.

d Additional hours and overtime payments do not include the lump sums paid to prison officers for adopting the new system.

3.16 The average annual earnings of prison officers was more or less the same in 2014 (€63,900) as in 2005 (€63,200), which was the last full year of the overtime system. Some features of prison officers’ earnings between 2004 and 2014 are

- Since the introduction of the new system, basic pay has represented, on average, 61% of total pay, compared with 58% in 2004 and 2005 under the overtime system.
- Pensionable allowances paid to prison officers have averaged 23% of prison officers’ total pay since 2006, compared with 17% under the overtime system.
- The proportion of earnings attributable to annualised hours payments, including the operational allowance, in 2014 (20%) was just 4% lower than the proportion of earnings attributable to overtime in 2004 (24%).

Views of the Director General

3.17 The Director General stated that the additional hours system represented a significant achievement in that it was one of the most comprehensive change deals ever negotiated in the public service. Savings realised on overtime have allowed for increased funds to be directed towards prisoner rehabilitation programmes, training and education, modernisation and capital projects in the Prison Service. He noted that management have staff available when they are needed most as well as more predictable costs, while staff benefit from predictability of attendance and income levels.

Conclusions

- 3.18** The introduction of the annualised hours system has provided the Prison Service with a greater level of certainty around the availability of staff to work additional hours and the cost of such hours. This benefits the Prison Service in terms of planning and budgeting.
- 3.19** The annualised hours system has led to savings for the Prison Service in providing operational cover to respond to sick leave or other unforeseen circumstances, when compared with the cost of overtime in the years immediately preceding the introduction of the annualised hours system. While the savings are significant, they are substantially less than the Prison Service anticipated.
- 3.20** The Prison Service estimated that the annualised hours system would provide savings of around €31 million per annum. The ongoing annual saving has averaged just over a sixth of that (€5.5 million), when changes in the number of prison officers, changes in the level of basic pay, and the pensionability of the operational allowance paid to prison officers are factored in. These savings were partially offset by once-off lump sum payments, totalling €41 million, made to prison officers for adopting the annualised hours system. The total saving over the period 2006 to 2014 is estimated at €8 million.

Impact on Individual Prison Officers

- 3.21** There is now a more even distribution of earnings arising from additional hours. The cap on the number of additional hours that a prison officer may contract to work (360) has ended the practice of individuals working extremely high number of hours.
- 3.22** Average earnings have not changed significantly in cash terms for individual prison officers since the introduction of the annualised hours system. While there was a significant reduction in the average additional hours worked (from 459 hours on average in 2005 to 222 on average in 2014), an equivalent reduction in levels of average pay did not occur because payment of the operational allowance and write-off hours are not linked to hours actually worked.

Appendices

Appendix A

Prison Service Reviews 1997 to 2005

Prison Service Cost Review Group 1997

The overtime reform programme has its origins in the review group's report, which was published in 1997. It made a number of recommendations, one of which was that a multidisciplinary working party be established to examine how the tasks of the Irish Prison Service might be undertaken without the need for overtime working, and the changes which need to be made to the management and organisational structure and to the staff conditions of service.

This recommendation was taken up in 1998 by a team drawn from staff of the Prison Service and the (then) Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, known as the Staffing and Operations Review Team (SORT).

The National Social Partnership Agreement and the Staffing and Operations Review Team 1998 – 2001

Paragraph 16 of the agreement reached with the Prison Officers' Association in 1997, under the Programme for Competitiveness and Work, included a commitment to co-operate with the review subsequently conducted by the (SORT) in 2001.

The SORT project sought to provide a credible record of what was actually happening in each prison, establish the cost in staff hours of running the prison and make recommendations about how arrangements can be improved and/or work reorganised to deliver a more effective service. SORT proceeded to establish definitively the staffing requirements of each prison and how these can be met most effectively.

SORT completed an in depth report on each prison, together with a global report summarising its conclusions and recommendations, as follows:

The Team's analysis of the 14 operational institutions assessed indicates that, with current practices and procedures, in excess of 6.3 million staff hours are required per annum to provide for all routine tasks (including escorts) and for the replacement of staff on sick leave. To deliver this number of hours without recourse to overtime would require 3,605 staff (including cover for annual leave). The recommendations contained in the reports on these institutions offer the potential to reduce the annual staff hours requirement to 4.95 million. As such, the staffing requirement could be reduced to 2,811 (again including cover for annual leave). If an alternative to the present practice for the replacement of staff on sick leave were implemented, the staffing requirement could be further reduced to 2,571. The Team's initial assessment of the three new prisons indicated a requirement for 629 staff but this is subject to review in the light of operational experience. The above figures do not take into account the additional cost of civilian staff and structural changes. Staffing levels should be reviewed on an on-going basis and adjusted as necessary.

Overtime in the Prisons Service is effectively perceived as being payment for time employed beyond regular hours. It has increased over the years to the extent that routine working of overtime has developed into a 'culture'. This culture has

its beginnings in the early seventies, a time when there was a substantial increase in prisoner numbers (particularly paramilitaries), a shortage of accommodation and a major change in the demands placed on staff. It was no longer possible to deal with peaks and troughs by a 'flexible' approach to allowing rest days to be taken and it became necessary to resort to paid overtime. The shortage of staff, overcrowding and the introduction of structured rostering contributed to its evolution. Attempts at managing overtime were limited to allocating a number of overtime hours to each institution and attempting to control the number of posts (i.e. the number of staff on duty at peak times). Overtime allocations appear to have been notional figures which were exceeded to the extent that they became meaningless and attempts at management appear to have been ineffective. It must be recognised that overtime is an inefficient method of balancing staffing requirements and that it is damaging in many ways. If overtime has to be performed it should be approved in advance and then only where there is no suitable alternative. Local management of overtime should be considered in terms of the need to perform a task or tasks in a particular time frame, rather than as something which will happen as a matter of course. The expression that there is 'no cost' in staffing a particular activity, meaning that there is no overtime involved, illustrates the need for a fundamental change of mind set.

The SORT agreement led directly to the establishment of a Strategic Effectiveness Programme (STEP) in 2003 that sought to identify what system would best achieve the recommendations of the SORT global report.

Strategic Effectiveness Programme (STEP) 2003

STEP considered a number of different options to address the overtime issue and to provide the necessary attendance cover.

The option chosen was an additional hours system whereby staff contracted to work a fixed number of additional hours each quarter, and got paid for these whether or not they actually worked the hours. This aimed to eliminate the unsustainable overtime culture and turn the emphasis to working fewer hours in a more efficient fashion.

The option of getting paid for un-worked hours (referred to as 'write-off' or 'bonus hours') sought to encourage staff to work smarter and to complete work in the shortest time. Apart from the additional hours, as part of the new system, new rosters were established and new technology introduced.

Proposal for Organisational Change (PFOC) in the Irish Prison Service 2005

The STEP recommended the introduction of an additional hours system and as a result, the Proposal for Organisational Change (PFOC) in the Irish Prison Service was published in 2005. This outlined in detail how the additional hours system was to be implemented.

It made detailed recommendations that were eventually agreed by both management and trade unions. The original proposal was rejected by trade unions, and as a result, the revised proposal allowed for more staff flexibility to apply for a certain number of hours, within bands, as they wished. The PFOC document sets out the detail of the revised working arrangements which resulted from facilitated negotiations between the Irish Prison Service and the Prison Officers' Association at the Labour Relations Commission. It also incorporates the findings of the Civil Service Arbitration Board. As such, some elements of the annualised hours system which resulted from the negotiations were beyond the control of the Prison Service.

Appendix B Prisoner Ratio Chart 2013^a

	Total number of prisoners (including pre-trial detainees) (A)	Custodial staff (B)	Ratio of inmates per custodian (A) ÷ (B) (C)	Medical and paramedical staff (D)	Staff responsible for assessment and the psychologists (E)	Staff responsible for education activities (F)	Staff responsible for workshops or vocational training (G)	Sum "other" (sum from D to G) (H)	Ratio of inmates per other staff (A) ÷ (H) (I)	Total ratio A ÷ (B + H) (J)
Albania	4,998	2,837	1.8	218	60	61	4	343	14.6	1.57
Andorra	47	57	0.8	8	–	1	1	10	4.7	0.7
Armenia	4,698	1,323	3.6	103	45	33	n/a	181	26.0	3.12
Austria	8,831	2,977	3.0	115	62	113		290	30.4	2.7
Azerbaijan	20,327	3,301	6.2		24			24	847.0	6.11
Belgium	12,697									
Bosnia and Herzegovina	17									
Rep. Srpska	1,003	484	2.1	19	12	71	153	255	3.9	1.36
Bulgaria	8,834	3,490	2.5	119	31	322		472	18.7	2.23
Croatia	4,352	1,651	2.6	112	28	125	300	565	7.7	1.96
Cyprus	592	393	1.5	–	–	–	22	22	26.9	1.43
Czech Rep.	16,266	1,859	8.7	435	Combined figure	1,198	76	1,709	9.5	4.56
Denmark	4,091	2,486	1.6	149		125	408	682	6.0	1.29
Estonia	3,256	707	4.6	108	21	29		158	20.6	3.76
Finland	3,126	1,369	2.3	185	Combined figure	208	184	577	5.4	1.61
France	67,310	25,307	2.7				134	134	501.2	2.65
Georgia	8,868									
Germany	67,681	26,852	2.5	234	682	1,753	2,143	4,812	14.1	2.14
Greece	13,238	4,146	3.2							

	Total number of prisoners (including pre-trial detainees) (A)	Custodial staff (B)	Ratio of inmates per custodian (A) ÷ (B) (C)	Medical and paramedical staff (D)	Staff responsible for assessment and the psychologists (E)	Staff responsible for education activities (F)	Staff responsible for workshops or vocational training (G)	Sum "other" (sum from D to G) (H)	Ratio of inmates per other staff (A) ÷ (H) (I)	Total ratio A ÷ (B + H) (J)
Hungary	18,313	6,626	2.8	435	50	5	–	490	37.4	2.57
Iceland	152	76	2.0	n/a	2	2	11	15	10.1	1.67
Ireland	4,065	2,722	1.5	135	19	2	279	435	9.3	1.29
Italy	64,835	37,150	1.7	69	2	906	–	977	66.4	1.7
Latvia	5,205	1,729	3.0	127	173	33	–	333	15.7	2.52
Liechtenstein	9	15	0.6	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.6
Lithuania	9,621	1,983	4.9	283	37	200	11	531	18.1	3.83
Luxembourg	717	293	2.4	1	5	21	35	63	11.5	2.01
Malta	577	187	3.1	2	2	1		5	115.4	3.01
Moldova	6,666	853	7.8	266	28	119	–	413	16.2	5.27
Monaco	29	32	0.9	3	–	–	–	3	9.7	0.83
Montenegro	1,142	128	8.9	12	3	12	25	52	22.0	6.34
Netherlands	10,547	6,706	1.6	308	107	318	902	1,635	6.5	1.26
Norway	3,649	2,440	1.5	–	–	–	552	552	6.6	1.22
Poland	78,994	15,768	5.0	1,691	537	2,388	n/a	4,616	17.1	3.88
Portugal	14,284	4,303	3.3			177		177	80.7	3.19
Romania	33,122	4,226	7.8	679	89	439	31	1,238	26.8	6.06
Russian Fed.	681,622	60,270	11.3	28,292	3,293	6,849	19,383	57,816	11.8	5.77
San Marino	2	5	0.4	1	1	1	–	3	0.7	0.25
Serbia	10,031	2,381	4.2	287	267	28	543	1,125	8.9	2.86
Slovak Rep.	10,152	789	12.9	243	75	296	n/a	614	16.5	7.24
Slovenia	1,360	528	2.6	14	10	67	89	180	7.6	1.92

	Total number of prisoners (including pre-trial detainees) (A)	Custodial staff (B)	Ratio of inmates per custodian (A) ÷ (B) (C)	Medical and paramedical staff (D)	Staff responsible for assessment and the psychologists (E)	Staff responsible for education activities (F)	Staff responsible for workshops or vocational training (G)	Sum "other" (sum from D to G) (H)	Ratio of inmates per other staff (A) ÷ (H) (I)	Total ratio A ÷ (B + H) (J)
Spain (total)	68,099	18,533	3.7	1,254	762	1,912	1,247	5,175	13.2	2.87
Spain (State Adm.)	58,089	15,354	3.8	957	645	1,471	901	3,974	14.6	3.01
Spain (Catalonia)	10,010	3,179	3.1	297	117	441	346	1,201	8.3	2.29
Sweden	5,868	4,238	1.4	117	26	233	317	693	8.5	1.19
Switzerland	7,072									
The FYRO Macedonia	2,846	529	5.4	23	30	31	36	120	23.7	4.39
Turkey	136,147	32,116	4.2	397	288	445	3,009	4,139	32.9	3.76
Ukraine										
UK: Engl. & Wales	83,842	26,010	3.2	120	758	–	3,598	4,476	18.7	2.75
UK: North. Ireland	1,822	1,345	1.4	5	30	36	38	108	16.8	1.25
UK: Scotland	7,928	2,724	2.9	–	57	–	449	506	15.7	2.45
Mean			3.6						48.7	2.66
Median			2.8						15.7	
Minimum			0.4						–	
Maximum			12.9						847.0	

Source: Council of Europe, Annual Penal Statistics 2013
Analysis by Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General

Notes: a 'n/a' is used where the question is irrelevant as the concept is not found in the penal system of the country concerned, '-' is used where the value is zero and a gap is used where no figures are available even though the concept does exist in the penal system of the country concerned.