



Self-harm in Irish Prisons 2019

Self-harm in Irish Prisons 2019: Third Report from the Self-Harm Assessment and Data Analysis (SADA) Project presents the full findings of the third year of the SADA Project¹ for the year of 2019. This forms part of the work of the National Suicide and Harm Prevention Steering Group (NSHPPG) and is supported by the multi-disciplinary teams across the prison estate who play a pivotal role in analysing the incidence and profile of self-harm in prisons. This project uniquely collects information on the level of medical severity and suicidal intent for each episode of self-harm, identifies individual and context-specific factors relating to self-harm and examines patterns of repeat self-harm (both fatal and non-fatal). This data continues to inform policy and practice development in

order to enhance the treatment and management of individuals in custody who pose a risk of self-harm and suicide and to protect individuals in their care.

The Health Service Executive's (HSE) National Office for Suicide Prevention (NOSP) and the National Suicide Research Foundation (NSRF) assist the IPS with data management, data analysis and reporting.

¹Irish Prison Service (2021). Self-harm in Irish Prisons 2019. Third report from the Self-Harm Assessment and Data Analysis (SADA) Project. Irish Prison Service.

In Irish prisons in 2019...

203
EPISODES
of self-harm
involving
109 individuals

RATE
2.9 per 100
prisoners
equates to
1 in every 34
prisoners

FEMALE
RATE
X8.2
Female rate was
8.2 times higher
than rate among
male prisoners

SUICIDAL
INTENT
1 in 3
Approximately
one in three (31%)
were deemed to
have suicidal intent

AGE

The rate of self-harm was highest among prisoners aged 18-29 years (3.4 per 100) – 1 in every 29 prisoners

MALE
3.1 per 100
1 in every 32
prisoners

FEMALE
10.3 per 100
1 in every 10
prisoners

TIME



Over half of all self-harm incidents (51.7%) occurred between **2pm** and **8pm**

DAY



One fifth (19%) of episodes occurred on a **Thursday**

METHODS



64.7% involved self-harm by **self-cutting** or **scratching** (2 in every 3)



21.1% involved self-harm by **attempted hanging** (1 in every 5)

2.3
per 100

Prisoners Sentenced **Prisoners on Remand**

The rate of self-harm was lower among prisoners sentenced than those on remand (2.3 versus 5.7 per 100)

5.7
per 100

TREATMENT
1 in 7
required
hospital
treatment

REPETITION



One-third (33.9%) of individuals engaged in non-fatal self-harm more than once during the calendar year

CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS



Mental Health



Relational



Environmental



Procedural



Medical

The majority (56.2%) of factors related to mental health issues; 17.6% to relational issues; 11.9% to environmental issues; 10.1% to procedural issues; 4.1% to Medical issues.