Silence & Punishment Survey Results

The Silence & Punishment survey explored the TCD community’s knowledge of Irish prisons and their attitudes to prison as a form of punishment.

We asked our survey respondents (n = 1,302) to estimate various characteristics of the Irish prison population. The following is a snapshot of the Irish prison population as of March 2019.

- As of March 2019, there are 4,002 people in custody in Irish prisons.
- Of these, 4.4% of prisoners are women.
- 14.1% of prisoners are under the age of 25.
- 14.4% of prisoners are over 50, the age that an individual is regarded as an older person in prison.
- 54.4% of prisoners are serving sentences for non-violent offences.
- Most prisoners are currently serving sentences of between 1 and 3 years.

The basic cost of housing a prisoner in an Irish prison for one year: €68,635

The approximate cost of a Community Service Order for one year: €2,500

- 58% of our respondents did not know that prisoners wear their own clothes in prison.
- 52% (approx.) of prisoners have left school before their Junior Certificate exams.
- 85% of our respondents did not know that the majority of prisoners eat meals in their cells.
AGREED that a person who has repeatedly committed criminal offences can change if offered the right support.

AGREED that some of the money that we are spending on housing prisoners should be shifted to strengthening community based programs like probation and parole.

AGREED that mentally ill offenders should receive treatment in mental health facilities instead of being sent to prison.

AGREED that offenders with a drug addiction should receive treatment in drug recovery programmes instead of being sent to prison.

AGREED with the statement that most people come out of prison worse than they go in.

DISAGREED with the statement increasing the number of people in prison will reduce crime.