

Travellers
in Prison Initiative

ssgt

st. stephen's
green trust



Seirbhís Phríosúin
na hÉireann
Irish Prison Service



An tSeirbhís Phromhaidh
The Probation Service

CLOSING THE REVOLVING DOOR

Travellers in Prison
Initiative (TPI) National
Conference 2021

Tuesday
5 October
10am – 1pm
zoom



We all want to live in safe, secure and healthy communities. This means communities that are free from crime, but also from racism, discrimination, exclusion and injustice. It means communities where all members have a sense of belonging and where cultural diversity is valued as enriching for all of us.

The TPI recognises the over-representation of Travellers in prison as linked to wider historical injustices against the Traveller community. Imprisonment is therefore not a just response to the trauma produced by systemic injustices. Prison adds to the trauma for Travellers in prison and their families.

The criminal justice system must be rehabilitated if we are serious about closing the revolving door of imprisonment.

The TPI conference, 'Closing the Revolving Door', recognises Travellers in prison and their families as the experts in their own lives. The conference will be a forum for listening and responding to the voices of these experts.

Our hope is that listening to the voices of Travellers in prison and their families will create the conditions for co-creating solutions based on cultural respect and social justice.

For information on the TPI and our partners, [click here](#)

CONFERENCE DETAILS

The conference will be online and will be held on Tuesday 5th October between 10am and 1pm.

It will be opened by his Excellency, **Michael D. Higgins, President of Ireland** and chaired by **Dearbhail McDonald**, award winning journalist and broadcaster and former Trustee of the SSGT. **Minister Hildegarde Naughton, TD**, Minister of State at the Department of Justice with special responsibility for Civil and Criminal Justice will make the closing address.

Speakers from the Traveller community who have experience of the criminal justice system will talk about the impact of imprisonment on their lives, and will make recommendations for positive change.

Speakers will also include **Caron McCaffrey**, the Director General of the Irish Prison Service and **Mark Wilson**, Director of the Probation Service.

Who should attend?

Travellers, Traveller activists, policymakers, staff in the IPS, Probation Service, and agencies with a remit across all stages of the criminal justice system.

ISL Interpreting

If you require the services of an ISL Interpreter please contact Anne Costello; anne@ssgt.ie. In order to facilitate interpreter arrangements, an early booking, preferably by Friday, 24th September, would be appreciated from delegates who would like to avail of ISL interpretation.

[If you haven't already registered please click here](#)



*Michael D. Higgins,
President of Ireland*

Travellers are over-represented in prison. Although Travellers make up just 0.7% of population in the Republic of Ireland, they account for an estimated 10% of the entire prison population and 15% of the female prison population (based on a census of Travellers in prison undertaken by the Irish Prison Service in 2018).

This over-representation is not unique to Ireland; the same trend exists for indigenous and minority ethnic groups in other countries who share Travellers' experiences of discrimination, poverty, educational disadvantage and associated trauma.

While the criminal justice system alone cannot address all of these issues, it can play a powerful role in supporting positive change.

AGENDA

Attendees can log in via Zoom from 09:45

10.00	Introduction and welcome <i>Anne Costello, TPI Coordinator</i>
10.10	Conference opening <i>Michael D. Higgins, President of Ireland</i>
10.25	Video: We keep going for each other - the voices of Travellers in prison and their families Part 1
10.35	The over-representation of Travellers in prison <i>Megan Berry</i>
10.50	Video: We keep going for each other - the voices of Travellers in prison and their families Part 2
11.00	TPI – the first six years – evaluation findings <i>Maria Joyce, NTWF Coordinator & TPI Chairperson</i>
11.15	Panel discussion <i>Chaired by Dearbhail McDonald</i>
11.30	Break
11.45	Video: Voices of ex-prisoners highlighting issues in the prison and probation system and what needs to happen
12.00	<i>Caron McCaffrey, Director General Irish Prison Service</i>
12.15	<i>Mark Wilson, Director Probation Service</i>
12.30	Panel discussion <i>Chaired by Dearbhail McDonald</i>
12.50	<i>Minister Hildegard Naughton, TD, Minister of State at the Department of Justice, with special responsibility for Civil and Criminal Justice</i>
1.00	Conference close

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Megan Berry is the Traveller outreach officer in Maynooth University (MU) and also works in St Catherine's Community Services Centre Carlow as the Traveller women's awareness worker. She has an MA in Professional Community and Youth work from MU and a Level 8 degree in social care from St Patrick's College Carlow. She was placed with TPI in 2020 for work experience while studying in MU. Megan has had direct experience of the prison system as the family member of a loved one who was imprisoned.

Anne Costello is the coordinator of TPI. She has been actively involved in community work since qualifying with a H.Dip in Community & Youth Work from Maynooth University (MU) in 2000. She has previously worked with Clondalkin Travellers Development Group, the Community Platform and Galway Traveller Movement. She completed a BA in Psychology in 1987 and an MA in Applied Social Studies at MU in 2012.

Maria Joyce is the coordinator of the National Traveller Women's Forum. She is a Traveller activist who has worked in the Traveller movement and human rights fields for the past 20 years. She is a graduate of Maynooth University (MU) with a Degree in Applied Social Studies. Maria is committed to the achievement of full gender equality for Traveller women and represents the NTWF in a number of National Traveller policy committees across various government departments.

Caron McCaffrey was appointed Director General of the Irish Prison Service in 2018. Caron has worked within the Justice sector for the last 20 years and at Director level in the Irish Prison Service since 2008. She worked in the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform before transferring to the Irish Prison Service in 2006 as Press and Programme Manager. She was promoted to Director of Corporate Services in 2008. Caron holds a Diploma in Corporate Governance, an Advanced Diploma in Applied Employment Law, an MA in International Relations and a BA in English and History.

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Patrick McCann is in his second year in Maynooth University (MU) studying for a Bachelor of Social Science (Professional, Community & Youth work). He completed a Level 5 Certificate in Community & Youth Work with the INOU. He did his work experience placement with TPI while studying in MU. He has direct experience of both the prison and probation systems.

Dearbhail McDonald is an award-winning journalist, author and broadcaster. A global Eisenhower Fellow, the former Group Business Editor of Independent News and Media is a recipient of the Mary Cummins Award for Women of Outstanding Achievement in Media. Dearbhail has served on the Board of the St Stephen's Green Trust and the External Advisory Board of Maynooth University Department of Law. She holds an LL.B (Law) from Trinity College Dublin as well as a Master's Degree in Journalism from Dublin City University.

Mark Wilson was appointed Director of the Probation Service in 2020. Mark has overall responsibility for the provision of probation supervision, community service, anti-offending behaviour programmes and related specialist support to both adult and young offenders, which aim to prevent them committing further offences. A qualified social worker, he has previously held positions in the Irish Prison Service (as Deputy Director of Operations) and in the Probation Service (where he contributed to the setting up of both the Sex Offender Risk Assessment and Management (SORAM) and the Joint Agency Response to Crime (JARC) models of joint offender management.