

Press release

New data shows that people who have been subject to probation orders earn up to 30% less than other workers

From [Probation Service \(/en/organisation/25cc7-probation-service/\)](/en/organisation/25cc7-probation-service/).

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The Earnings Background of Probationers 2014-2020

(<https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-ebp/theearningsbackgroundofprobationers2014-2020/>) – the first ever analysis by the Central Statistics Office of the earnings and employment records of people on probation compared to the general population shows a significant pay gap between the two groups.

Overall, median weekly earnings for probationers are up to 30% less than those of the general population.

The research published today also reveals that 64% of individuals who received probation orders during the timeframe examined are not active in the labour market.

The new data points to a significant gap in the earnings of women who have been subject to probation orders, compared to their male counterparts. Overall, women on probation earn one third less than men on probation; this gender gap is significantly higher than in the general population.

The data provides information on the earnings from employment of individuals who received probation orders in 2017, tracking these earnings between 2017 and 2020. The research shows that the gap in earnings between probationers and the general population narrows over time – from 30% in 2017 to 20% in 2020.

In welcoming the publication, Minister for Justice Helen McEntee said:

"Access to stable employment and income is an important part of reducing reoffending, providing a path back to social inclusion and a lifestyle that contributes to the wellbeing of communities. This in turn reduces the damage to victims and the families of offenders.

"This is why my department, the Probation Service and the Irish Prison Service recognise the importance of education and training. In particular, my department's 'Working to Change Social Enterprise Strategy' strives to create a flexible, responsive system that prepares people with criminal histories more appropriately for the working environment, and to have the skills and talents required for identified labour shortages now and into the future, and not just at entry-level positions.

"I very much welcome the work of the CSO in this area. These data matching exercises give us a new understanding of social problems, and provide insights that can inform the development of appropriate policy responses. I note that over the years after receiving a probation order, the difference in median weekly earnings of Probationers and all employees reduces and this is to be welcomed."

The "Working to Change Social Enterprise Strategy" sets out the Department of Justice's direction for supporting employment options for people with convictions by working to remove systemic barriers so that people can make sustainable changes. This Strategy builds upon a solid foundation of employment supports already in place across the criminal justice sector and is a collaboration between the Prison and Probation Service and the Department of Justice.

Reflecting on the new research, the Director of the Probation Service Mark Wilson said:

"I welcome the publication of this valuable research which provides us with the data that backs up what we in the Service are aware of anecdotally – that those who are subject to probation orders are very often marginalised and economically disadvantaged.

"It underlines for us the importance of continuing to provide the services and supports needed to encourage individuals who have come into contact with the criminal justice system to access education and training with a view to entering, or re-entering the workforce. From our work with clients we know that this plays a crucial role in helping them to move away from offending.

"The research has also revealed a significant earnings gap between men and women we work with, highlighting that women who have been subject to probation orders are amongst the most economically disadvantaged groups in society."

He concluded:

"I would like to thank our colleagues in the Central Statistics Office for their continued support in developing this new research. Access to timely, accurate data is crucial to ensuring probation practice is evidence-informed and continues to meet the increasingly complex needs of our service-users to produce better outcomes for community safety. We look forward to working with the CSO on future reports in areas of relevance to the Service such as employment, social welfare, housing and education."

The statistical report also provides some analysis of sectoral trends in relation to the earnings of people under probation. For example, the construction sector provided the highest level of employment for those subject to probation, with 16% of those in work employed in that sector. Weekly pay in construction was higher than the average earnings for those on probation.

Further details on the report is available via [the CSO website](https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-ebp/theearningsbackgroundofprobationers2014-2020/).
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