A literature review of the lived experiences of Chaplains in the Irish Prison Service

Rebecca Rudden

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Bachelor of Arts degree (Social Science Specialization) at DBS School of Arts, Dublin

Supervisor: Maryrose Molloy

Head of Department: Paul Halligan

April 2025

Department of Social Science

DBS School of Arts

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my supervisor, Maryrose Molloy, who provided invaluable advice and guidance throughout this process. Her enthusiasm and passion for my research carried me whenever I felt my energy dipping and for that I am deeply appreciative. My deepest thanks to Annette Jorgenson for putting up with my endless questions and queries and in helping me put my research together on a practical level.

I would like to extend my thanks to all my lecturers at the Dublin Business School who in a multitude of ways have helped shaped me and how I now think and look at the world. I am immensely grateful to my fellow students. We supported each other endlessly on this journey and I couldn't have asked for a more encouraging class.

To my family and friends who have put up with me endlessly disappearing for four years to write a random essay or study for an exam, thank you for your patience and understanding. I thank Mum, Rory, Chen, Shuqing, Killian, Lucy and Adam for their endless support, and I thank my father for instilling the importance of education in me, even though it took me years to understand and who inspired me to take this leap.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge and thank the Irish Prison Chaplaincy Service whose invaluable reports provided all the data for my research. These reports are an insight into a part of society that is often forgotten or is seen only through the lens of the media. Their unique insights and perspectives made this research possible, and I am immensely grateful.

ABSTRACT

This qualitative research project explores the lived experiences of chaplains in the Irish Prison Service. It is a literature review of prison chaplaincy's annual report using thematic analysis. The chosen reports provided a broad overview of the Irish prison service. They highlight the multifaceted and unique role that chaplains fulfil in the prison system as they advocate for prisoners, prison staff and families. The extensive support they offer includes rehabilitation, emotional, educational, spiritual and counselling. Their reports provide expansive insight into structural inadequacies within the prison system that is being consistently neglected. Key themes identified included engagement with prison staff, family engagement, bereavement, challenges of leaving prison and finally, social justice and endemic discrimination. The reports reflect how societal inequality is contributing to vulnerable demographics ending up in the prison system with limited alternative pathway and inadequate support systems when they leave.

INTRODUCTION

The position of chaplaincy in the Irish Prison Service is an elusive and often misunderstood role. It has been a constant fixture in Irish prisons since 1776 and while the role has evolved over time, they have consistently played an integral part in the functioning of the prison service. Prison chaplains are an independent presence, removed from the disciplinary aspect of prison life and have the freedom to move around all areas unaccompanied (Duggan, 2022). Yet despite the chaplain's expansive presence in this system, little research has been done around them and how they perform their duties (Sundt & Cullen, 2007; Carey & Medico, 2014; Denney, 2018; Robson et al., 2024). Sundt & Cullen (2007) argue that we cannot fully understand imprisonment and punishment until we have studied all those involved in the system and what their experiences of this system are, and the chaplains experience of this system is extensive. Duggan (2022) raises that their job can often be portrayed as simplistic in nature and believes this to be a disservice to the impact they have from the individual to a societal level through their professionalism and skill. Every year they are Statutorily required to write an annual report that discusses the positive and negative aspects of prison life from the previous year. These reports have often indicated systemic issues within the prison service from an impartial viewpoint. They have regularly highlighted the ill treatment of mental health prisoners, addiction problems, an aging prisoner population and lack of resources across all sections. This research will be a literature review of chaplain reports from 4 prisons from 2018 and from 2021. The aim of this research is to explore the realities faced by chaplains in the prison system through the lens of their lived experiences. In particular, this study will seek to gain a deeper understanding of the complex challenges navigated by chaplains and to examine underlying factors such as interagency communications, mental health, addiction and family dynamics.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chaplains

Chaplains are a presence in most institutions around the world. In America, there are approximately six thousand chaplains working across prisons, healthcare settings, universities, military, ports and other sectors. For some settings, they are a straightforward religious presence, in others they provide a role that is difficult to quantify but encompasses many responsibilities (Cadge & Skaggs, 2019). Chaplains have the ability to shape their role depending on the setting they find themselves in and the needs that are required of them. Their duties can comprise of everything from spiritual support, advocacy, interagency communication or helping people with government documents for jobs or accommodation (Robson et al., 2024). Most chaplains, no matter what institution they are in, will see themselves as intermediaries. They can provide a connection between clients and local support services, local government and social welfares (Robson et al., 2024). Their presence is often integrated within the operational frameworks they support. Port chaplains board ships to provide emotional assistance to people who have been away from their families for months while also offering physical provision such as telephone cards or transport to stock up on supplies. Similarly, hospital chaplains move between wards, recognising where their presence is needed. Lawrence Holst describes hospital chaplains as having to negotiate a complicated setting 'Each world, or structure, has its own domain and demands, its assumptions and mission' (as cited in Cadge & Skaggs, 2019). However, this complexity of structure could be true for many of the institutions that chaplains find themselves in including the prison service.

The History of Chaplaincy in the Prison Service

The enactment of the 1773 Gaol Chaplains Act meant it became compulsory for all prisons to have a chaplain. Their role became and continues to be intertwined with the prisons

system. The act provided a framework of the chaplaincy's role, and it was introduced as a means to reform prison conditions and to have an advocate for the prisoners onsite (Duggan, 2022). The Twentieth century saw a change in the role of the chaplain. There was a move away from religion and towards positivistic reasoning for criminal behaviour and psychiatrists, educators, and other roles were brought into the prison system to fulfil these needs. These responsibilities had previously fallen to chaplains, and this led to a period of uncertainty for the chaplain's role and position in the system (Denney, 2018; Robson et al., 2024). As a consequence, the chaplaincy position has grown to encompass a wide range of tasks and manages to 'straddle the sacred and the secular, the institution and the community, treatment and custody' (Sundt & Cullen, 2007, p. 133). The 1985 Whitaker report highlighted the complex role that the chaplaincy fulfils and described it as an 'informal ombudsman' and while the role of the chaplain has developed and grown, its origin objective remains the same, of acting as the 'voice of the prisoners' (Duggan, 2022).

The role of Prison Chaplain

Bahnaru et al. (2019) highlights the nuanced and multifaceted roles that prison chaplains inhibit within the prison environment:

> According to (Clear et al. 1992) and to (Randall & Bishop 2012), there are intrinsic reasons for religious involvement (dealing with guilt, dealing with the loss – especially of freedom, and finding a new way of life), and extrinsic reasons for religious involvement (access to outsiders, inmate relations, material comfort, safety) (p. 27).

Chaplains have described themselves as 'serving a silent community'. The term 'presence' and 'seeing' people has been used to describe their mandate. The idea of 'presence' in prison is about engaging with people and accepting where they are personally and socially without judgement (Cadge & Skaggs, 2019). They provide a physical being in a space of captivity for

people to turn to for spiritual or emotional support. Hargaden (2020) discusses how Chaplains struggled with this aspect of their role when Covid-19 restrictions were brought in as it meant they couldn't hear the 'whispered concerns of a distressed prisoner' or 'hold their hands as they pray'. An Australian study on young detainees discussed how they supported prisoners in developing inner resources and on finding a purpose that allowed them to focus on creating a life beyond prison. It allowed prisoners to become more reflective and to identity unhealthy behaviour patterns (Gordon & Jones, 2018; Jarrett, et al., 2024). A chaplain's day is organised around 'seeing' people for a range of reasons. Vulnerability comes in many forms. Those who have been incarcerated for the first time often need guidance in understanding the prison system. There are high levels of mental health issues in the prison service and as a consequence risks of suicide and self-harm. Grief and bereavement are extremely common and losing somebody while incarcerated can be particularly difficult as they are away from loved ones while trying to manage their pain. Some prisoners want the presence of a spiritual advisors for support and guidance, others simply want to be heard (Orr, 2024; Robson et al., 2024).

Prisoners Profile

The Irish Prison service (2023) reported that prisons across Ireland are substantially over their capacity limits. Cells are overcrowded, hundred are sleeping on mattresses 'and significant waiting lists to access nearly all vital services'. This report also raised concerns over the amount of homeless people who are being incarcerated with nearly 800 by the end of 2023. A substantial portion of people in the criminal justice system have mental health problem and 50% of those also reported 'alcohol and drug misuse, difficult family relationships, and accommodation instability' (Finnerty & Gilheaney, 2021, p. 34). Prisons contain a broad spectrum of social problems, and many come from 'extreme social disadvantage' (Gordon & Jones, 2018). People who have been incarcerated have a higher probability of chronic health problems, suicide rate and unemployment (Massoglia & Pridemore, 2015; Hargaden, 2020;

Walker et al., 2022). Upon release, many end up in homeless accommodation which creates barriers in accessing the appropriate healthcare and will often end up reoffending (Finnerty & Gilheaney, 2021). Duggan (2022) feels the chaplains annual prison reports provide an invaluable perspective into 'the wasteland of human tragedy; both for those in custody and their victims and families, which is not as easily measured'.

Trust Building

Prison chaplains fill a distinctive space that brings them into contact with an immensely vulnerable demographic. They are the connection for prisoners to spiritual needs, educational development, community growth and personal requirements (Sundt & Cullen, 2007). 'By [chaplains] being so closely interwoven in the fabric of such an institution [as prisons] it provides chaplains with a unique opportunity to minister to immediate and often raw need' (Carey & Medico, 2014). Building relationships and trust is fundamental to the chaplains work (Cadge & Skaggs, 2019; Robson et al., 2024, Jarrett et al., 2024). Unlike other services, theirs cannot function without trust as their work involves clients being able to share and discuss sensitive topics. Van Dijke et al. (2023) discusses how chaplains apply empathy throughout their duties. It provides a pathway to connection and one chaplain describes it as 'a complex, demanding, strong yet subtle and gentle way of being'. Chaplains will usually meet prisoners on their first day incarcerated to begin on building a trusting relationship with them (Robson et al., 2024). It takes time for prisoners to recognised that chaplains are not there as a form of surveillance for the prison service but as a presence to support them (Orr, 2024). One Port chaplain discusses their clerical collar as a shorthand in gaining trust with people in unfamiliar settings (Cadge & Skaggs, 2019). They are also adept at communicating with a vast array of people. They learn to 'tune in' to people quickly and sometimes this means using plain English or speaking in their own language where possible (Robson et al., 2024). This enables them to meet the client where they are and provide the best guidance that they can. Their neutral

position within the prison service can bring a sense of comfort to those incarcerated (Gordon & Jones, 2018). This impartial remit extends beyond the prison walls as they provide a connection to families on the outside and are representative of the 'entire prison community' (Duggan, 2022).

Family Relationships

Family relationships are an intricate aspect of the prison system that is often overlooked. Chaplains are the link between new detainees and their families, providing information and empathy as they navigate this unfamiliar system. It is a difficult space to be in, as family relationships can be complex and sometimes combative. Some feel it is family members who suffer the most when someone is incarcerated, and chaplains can be the 'intermediary who communicates the mundane and the urgent' and allows them to feel come kind of connection (Hargaden, 2020). It can be a very confusing and emotional time for families as they can feel cut off from society and face lengthy separations and sometimes financial uncertainty. The Chaplain service can be the link that helps them maintain their relationship and who understand the importance of social connection (Denney, 2018; Hargaden, 2020). Poor social structures has been linked to reoffending and 'cycles of being in and out of prison' (Irish Penal Reform Trust, n.d.). Having connections on the outside can reduce recidivism.

The breakdown of family relationships, such as having a parent incarcerated, can have a significant impact on children and adolescents. Social Bond Theory emphasises that social bonds especially with family, can reduce offending behaviour and substance use. However, this is dependent on having a supportive and stable family life. This stability is reduced when a family member becomes involved in the court system or is incarcerated (Kopf, & Mowen, 2024). A study of homeless adolescence found absent parents to be a substantial moment that effected their life choices. A 2021 report found that many inmates had complex and difficult

family dynamics. Family violence was acknowledged by 2.2% of males and 33.3% of females. Childhood trauma was a factor for 20% of cases interviewed (Power, 2021). Chaplains in a Youth detention centre facilitate young people so that 'those experiences can be reframed for them to walk back into the broader community' and to help them heal from their experiences (Gordon & Jones, 2018).

Relationship with Other Prison Staff

The prison chaplaincy service is woven into the complicated network of the prison system. Their role cannot exist in isolation and functions by supporting other staff members (Duggan, 2022). They have to negotiate a complex working environment that includes hierarchy, interagency communication and security protocols (Carey & Medico, 2014; Cadge & Skaggs, 2019). A 2019 study found that chaplains were concerned that prison staff didn't have the training, resources or time to be dealing with the older inmates population in prisons **(**Shaw et al., 2019). Prisons are challenging places to work in and the relentless atmosphere can affect staff members outside of the job. One study discusses a chaplain providing support to a prison warden who had discovered a body from suicide on Christmas day. The warden was reminded of this trauma every Christmas. 'Prison can be brutal, and it follows that prison can brutalize the officers as much as the prisoners' (Hargaden, 2020). The chaplain service is often a space to cushion this brutality. The skilled experience that chaplains brings to their roles is evident by the trust that the staff place in them (Duggan, 2022). However, chaplains also need time and support for themselves to handle the prison atmosphere. One chaplain discusses how emotionally demanding it can be dealing with those with mental health issues and needing to take time to recover afterwards (Van Dijke et al., 2023). It has been described as a 'trauma-laden landscape' which chaplains provide an insight into while also dealing with its consequences (Duggan, 2022).

Chaplaincy Reports

Prison chaplains are responsible for reporting on immediate issues that have arisen as well as wider concerns that they feel need addressing. These are contained in the annual chaplain report (Duggan, 2022). There are two recipients of this report, the head of prison services and the Government.

> 'Under Prison Rules 2007. 119. (1) Each chaplain shall, not later than the 31st day of March, or such later date as may be specified by the Minister, in each year, prepare and submit to the Director General and to the Governor, a report on matters relevant to the provision of chaplaincy services in the prison during the year immediately preceding the year in which the report is to be submitted' (Irish Penal Reform Trust, 2023).

The Irish Prison service (IPS) published these reports up until 2010 and they played a significant part in drawing attention to issues within the prison system including the treatment and imprisonment of children in St Patrick's Institution which has since been shut down (Irish Penal Reform Trust, 2020). The practice of publishing them was discontinued until 2019 when the decision was made to make these reports once again available to the public on the Irish Prison Service website as they were recognised as a matter of public interest (Irish Penal Reform Trust, 2023). Finnerty & Gilheaney (2021) used chaplaincy reports in their study on access to mental health in the criminal justice system report which highlights the important data that is contained in these reports. Despite this, there have been no Chaplaincy reports since the publishing of the 2021 reports. According to the Irish Prison Reform Trust (2023) these were only made available in May 2023.

CONCLUSION

The role of the prison chaplain is a unique one and the extent of what they do can often go unnoticed and unacknowledged (Gordon & Jones, 2018). Their annual reports contain a rare insight into the realities of the prison service. They come into contact into all aspects of prison life yet very few studies have explored what their role entails and how they carry it out in such a complex and under resourced system (Sundt & Cullen, 2007; Carey & Medico, 2014; Denney, 2018; Robson et al., 2024). In 2022, Sean Duggan undertook to look at one year of chaplaincy's annual reports across all prisons in Ireland. In his research he highlighted that chaplains have a history of recognising and highlighting concerns in the prison system long before it becomes the 'subject of popular debate' (Duggan, 2022). They provide an important voice not just for the prisoners but also for other employees who work in this difficult atmosphere. Their reports are regularly used by media outlets as a source of information and have 'historically offered balanced and fair critique of conditions in prisons' (Irish Penal Reform Trust, 2021). While previous research has looked at a specific aspect of chaplaincy in Prison such as working with young detainees or elderly prisoners or Covid 19, this research will expand to encompass a broad look across all aspects of prison life. It will explore 4 reports from 2018 and the same reports from 2021. These reports will provide a representation of prisons across Ireland as they will include two male prisons, one female and one mixed gendered prison. Two of these prisons are located in Dublin, one is in Limerick, and one is in Castlerea. What are the lived experiences of Chaplains across the Irish Prison Service in 2018 and in 2021?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This research was a literature review of prison chaplain reports from two male prisons, one female and one mixed gendered prison. These were chosen to provide a broad perspective on the prison systems across Ireland. The same data set were analysed from 2018 and 2021. 2018 is the first year that the reports are available from on the Irish Prison Services Website and 2021 is the last. This allowed for an exploration of developments over a longitudinal period. This project used qualitative research methodology through thematic analysis to extract data from these reports. The original design of this research project had envisioned the use of qualitative interviews, however due to challenges around the practicalities of implementing this within the Irish Prison Service, the methodology was re-evaluated. A literature review of the prison chaplain reports was subsequently chosen because they are primary documents that contain an expensive source of insight into the Irish prison system for answering the research question. A qualitative literature review allowed for an in-depth qualitative analysis of the results and comprehensive overview of the data (Ezatul Alia et al., 2024). Reflexive thematic analysis was the chosen research tool to analyse the qualitative data as it allowed for a flexible approach in identifying themes and patterns. ‘Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organises and describes your data set in (rich) detail’ (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 6). A systematic process was employed to allow for a structured approach to interpretation and analysis. The research utilised Braun and Clarke’s (2006) framework for the thematic analysis. It consists of six progressive stages that build upon each other for thorough data analysis (Naeem et al., 2023).

Participants

This research was based on primary literature sources as they contained comprehensive data for answering the research question. Each prison in Ireland has a Chaplaincy service and they are statutorily obliged to provide an annual Chaplaincy report under the Prison Rules 119(1) (Oireachtas.ie, 2022). These reports provide an overview of the previous year and are a detailed account of what the Chaplaincy service has provided by means of support, observations they have made and suggested improvements to the services and to social policy. As they are an independent body with unlimited access to the prison, these reports contain unique and invaluable insights into the prison system.

In order to provide a broad overview of data that was representative of the prison population, the prisons chaplaincy reports were selected to bring insight from both male and female prisons and from both urban and rural locations across Ireland. The 2018 section only contained six prisons chaplaincy reports. Based on the criteria and the limitations, the following prisons were selected: Wheatfield, Castlerea, The Dóchas Centre and Limerick Prison. Wheatfield Prison is a male medium security prison located in Dublin. Castlerea Prison is a male medium security prison located in Roscommon. Limerick Prison is a medium security prison for males and females. The Dóchas Centre is a medium security female prison. It is located in Mountjoy Prison in Dublin.

Procedure

Once the Prison reports had been chosen, the first step of thematic analysis was familiarisation with the data corpus. This process initially used hard copies of the reports. There were 8 reports in total, 4 from 2018 and 4 from 2021. Each report was read several times and notes were made on initial thoughts. For step two, the reports were uploaded to the qualitative data analysis computer software NVivo 12. Keywords, terms and quotes were highlighted that

appeared relevant to the research question and coding within the dataset was generated (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Open coding was used as there were no predetermined categories and this allowed themes and concepts to emerge systematically as data was processed (Williams & Moser, 2019). Nodes and memos were assigned to begin to get a framework of commonality of concepts. Step three concerned the generating of themes from the coded data. Significant data was categorised into reoccurring potential themes. For step four, the themes were reviewed and looked at in relation to the entirety of the dataset. Similar themes were merged together to reduce repetition of ideas. For step five, themes were defined and clarified. They were selected based on those that best described and encapsulated the data within them. Their relevance to the research question was examined to justify their inclusion. For step six, findings were written up and some direct quotations were used to present the findings within each theme (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017).

Ethical Considerations

Chaplaincy reports are publicly available on the Irish Prison Service website. The Irish Prison Service has already reviewed the chaplains reports under GDPR and privacy concerns. Some reports details have been redacted where the Irish Prison service has deemed necessary. The Dóchas 2021 report in particular had significant redactions made including a large part of section 2: Dóchas 21 and the entire number 16 section and its title. This has ensured that the identity of certain participants mentioned in the reports and security issues arising more broadly are protected. ‘Confidentiality is an active attempt to remove from the research records any elements that might indicate the subjects’ identities’ (Lune & Berg, 2017).

FINDINGS

The aim of this research is to explore the realities and challenges faced by chaplains in the prison system through their lived experiences and to explore underlying factors that impact their experiences. Thematic analysis was used to do a literature review of the Chaplaincy reports from 2018 and 2021, to derive valuable insights into the lived experiences of these unique actors who operate within the intrinsically concealed prison system environment.

Theme 1: Engagement with Prison Staff

There is consistency amongst the reports of a strong sense of gratitude towards other prison staff. They reflect deep appreciation and recognition of the difficult setting they all function in and the reports serve to highlight the collective efforts and solidarity needed to navigate it. The Castlerea 2018 report emphasised the importance of teamwork and its essential role in sustaining the service. There is a continual commitment to being a source of emotional and pastoral support for staff particularly during times of excessive stress such as the Covid 19 pandemic.

> As chaplains, we meet our prison colleagues every day and it's very common for a colleague to ask for a prayer, a mass card or an opportunity to talk about some matter of concern. Our availability to colleagues is always very important to us (Limerick, 2021).
>
> A recent survey conducted by the Inspector of Prisons stated that high stress levels at work for prison officers increased from 25% (pre pandemic) to 59% (during the pandemic). For many officers/prison staff throughout 2021, alongside work stresses, there were added, extra underlying anxieties about vulnerable family members, their children, and their own health (Limerick, 2021).

The understaffing of prisons is having far-reaching consequences on both the daily practicalities and the effectiveness of support services. The Dóchas 2018 report discusses how lack of available staff has resulted in important offsite family visits with children being abruptly

cancelled. Visits like these involve multiple agency involvement and collaboration that are being undermined and can cause immense emotional distress. It has also been observed that inadequate staffing has a negative impact on rehabilitation initiatives (Wheatfield, 2018). Staff shortages has meant essential daily operations such as phone calls and letters are significantly delayed, further exacerbating those separated from their families.

> The Prison Service must get prisoner's post to them. It is not good enough to be reading of your family's summer holiday at Christmas. Or not receiving cards or letters from your children or your partner. Or not being able to get a child his or her birthday card. Months pass before a child will receive that card. Relationships break down….. Governors are having to make choices about whether workshops open or letters are sorted (Wheatfield, 2021).

Prison staff shortages is also impactful on the staff themselves. The reports expressed fear over the health and safety implications for prisoners and staff when dealing with severely mentally ill prisoners or those needing treatment for addiction. Castlerea 2018 report expressed a struggle to provide a safe environment for the prisoners where their dignity, wellbeing and needs can be effectively met. It is giving rise to frustrations across all departments. A consequence of lack of staff has resulted in long waiting lists for all the services and untrained staff are left trying to handle situation they feel ill-equipped to deal with.

> Prisoners can arrive in prison in psychotic states. Untrained prison officers are then expected to manage their psychotic behaviour. Prison officers are regularly injured by psychotic prisoners. This puts a strain on the officer and his or her family, because the Court has decided that prison is the correct place for the prisoner to be in. (Dóchas, 2021).

Theme 2: Family Engagement

Across all the chaplain reports is a recognition of the profound effect incarceration has on families. Chaplains recognise the vital role they play in maintaining a connection between

families and those inside. They are in the unique role of providing support that extends far beyond the confines of prison walls. The Limerick 2021 report discusses the vulnerability faced by families as ‘they do their time outside prison wall’. Many will experience financial instability and ‘are often lonely, struggling, isolated and emotional and just want someone to listen to them’. Wheatfield 2021 report describes how this immense loneliness and isolation is far reaching as ‘The community will often not allow them to forget’ and so they must ‘suffer silently and unendingly too, for the crime their child committed’.

There are milestones in a family’s life that will never happen again such as communions, confirmations and funerals. The reports highlight that these are opportunities to build stronger relationships between prisons and local churches. This could offer prisoners a chance to feel less detached from these family experiences ‘Missing a child's First Communion or Confirmation not to mention marriage is a difficult time, but each is an opportunity for Church to reach out to its absent parishioner’ (Dóchas, 2021). While family dynamics can be complicated, providing an option to include incarcerated family members through options like video links, would allow them to be feel connected to these precious family moments. ‘Just because a parent is in prison does not mean that children should be deprived of their parents accompanying them on this latest part of their journey in faith’ (Dóchas, 2021).

The Dóchas report further discusses the impact of separating children from their mothers and how this should be a last resort for serious charges. The damage this causes permeates far beyond the prison walls. It can cause immense damage to a child and generate ill feelings towards gardai and the court system. They can grow up associating these systems with the negative experience of losing their mother. Chaplains often witness intergenerational incarcerations and multiple members of the same family getting trapped in cycles of criminal behaviour. Removing a parent from a child’s life can have a negative impact on their life choices.

> Chaplains are used to maintaining links between family members scattered across the prison estate. "I remember when his / her father, mother, brother, sister where here years ago" is heard too often. So much for the deterrence of prison sentencing (Dóchas, 2021).

Addiction is an extremely common issue in the prison system, and it can impact a prisoners families in a multitude of ways. It is a destructive force within a family and can cause financial hardships and immeasurable emotional damage. The charges of theft are often a result of needing money to buy drink or drugs which brings them before the courts systems and continues the cycle. ‘Drugs have always been a problem in prisons and we in Castlerea are no strangers to them either. Despite increased security and stringent measures taken, drugs seem to infiltrate our landings regularly’ (Castlerea, 2018). The availability of drugs makes it extremely difficult for people to not be tempted, even for those attempting to ‘get clean’. This can make a prisoners family vulnerable and exposed to dangerous people and unpaid debts. Chaplains observe the constant pain and suffering that addiction causes to families and feels prisons need to do more to allow for treatment and rehabilitation while people are incarcerated.

> Families can experience severe intimidation, with death threats, harm to their partner in jail, and harm to them, threatened. The level of duress that families are exposed to is almost unimaginable. What is the way out of this cycle for the men and their families? (Wheatfield, 2018).

> The waiting lists are impossibly long. If we get serious about rehabilitation, double the addiction counsellors. The knowledge about what works is here. It is hard to understand how under-resourced services are (Wheatfield, 2021).

Theme 3: Bereavement

Bereavement is an extremely difficult time for a prisoner and can highlight their vulnerability. Chaplains will act as an intermediary between the prisoner and their families, make arrangements in relation to the funeral and will advocate for them to get the support and

space that they need. The Dóchas 2021 report noted that they attempt to build a connection and trust with prisoners as soon as they are incarcerated, one reason for this is should the death of a family member ever occur they hope the relationship they have built will help with the process. The chaplain reports emphasised the significance of the ritual of a funeral and the importance in physically attending. They discuss the importance of the process as being the first step of grief and an acceptance of what has happened. Not getting to participate in this process can exacerbate the grief and devastation.

> What cannot be replaced by chaplains through virtual means is the physical need a grieving prisoner has to see the body of the deceased, to shoulder the coffin of a parent, to touch their hand, to pray for their soul, to ask for forgiveness from them, to bury them, to honour them and to remember them (Wheatfield, 2021).

There is an appreciation for the development in technology around funeral that allows prisoners to watch services, a process that was particularly important during the Covid19 pandemic. However, there is a concern that there is now an over reliance on this technology as a replacement for physically attending a funeral. ‘When technology fails as a prisoner's loved one's funeral requiem is about to begin, to say the least, the feeling of disappointment is palpable. It could even threaten to be dangerous’ (Dóchas, 2021). There is also a need to ensure these video links take place in a private space to allow for the dignity and privacy of the person who is grieving.

> We see the devastating impact that a significant bereavement has on a man in custody. Separated from friends, family, and community rituals that would alleviate the pain, the men feel their efforts to work with the system, fails them at a critical moment, and their grief is compounded (Wheatfield, 2018).

The Dóchas 2021 report explicitly highlights the need for procedures around handling bereavement and funerals arrangements to eliminate ‘the ad hoc arrangement currently in

operation'. This would ensure that situations are handled with respect and sensitivity. The Wheatfield 2018 reports called for additional staff to be allocated to accommodate funeral attendance or for hospice or hospital visits to help ease a prisoners suffering. They further advocated for additional and extended phone calls in a private space. 'The grief at times was unbearable' (Wheatfield, 2021).

Theme 4: Challenges of Leaving Prison

The process of leaving prison is not straight forward and can be challenging for the services involved. It involves multiple agencies and interagency co-operation to create a release plan. Even with this involvement, many prisoners are leaving incarceration to become homeless (Castlerea, 2018). Homelessness can be a chaotic and challenging service. Sometimes people may only get a bed for a night and have to carry their belongings with them at all times. They are at risk of having their personal effects robbed and may be placed in rooms with people doing drink or drugs. They fear for their own personal safety. The build up to be being released can bring on anxiety and fear for the prisoner. Lack of external support can have an effect on a person's wellbeing on the outside. Many will have no one to meet them upon release.

> A lack of functioning supports in the community, can lead a person into a spiral of depression, anxiety, addiction issues and inevitably for some, to suicidal thoughts. (Limerick, 2021).

The storing and the transport of personal belongings is challenging, particularly for those who are homeless or who have no outside support. The Dóchas 2021 report suggested that luggage be an additional cost that is included in their release plan so that they don't have to leave prison with their belongs in rubbish bags 'the same bags that are used to contain rubbish in the prison system. What is that saying to a prisoner?'. Instead, they can leave with some resonance of dignity with a suitcase or appropriate baggage. The responsibility for an

incarcerated person's belongings was highlighted. These often include memories and photos 'the only vestiges of family life that they have' (Dóchas, 2021). Chaplains consider this the states responsibility that is protected under 'Article 8 of the European Convention declares the Right to Family life' (Dóchas, 2021). At present neither homeless hostels or prisons have the space to store them so many get thrown away.

> The heart break that causes, when they discover that photographs and mementoes of dead children and family members have been lost, is very hard to deal with. (Dóchas, 2021).

Death and suicide are a risk for newly released prisoners and when a death occurs it has a ripple effect not just on their friends and family but also on the prisoners who knew them and the staff who had supported them while they were incarcerated. These deaths can impact the moral of those still incarcerated as they lose hope for their future.

> When they hear how one of their own hasn't made it, despondency sets and in real terms that can be devastating. The dark clouds are already gathering before they leave the Dóchas. When they hear that they are at the back of the queue it is easy to understand how despondency could easily take over. "Passing" is an attractive option (Dóchas, 2021).

Elderly prisoners are a particularly vulnerable demographic within the prison service. While younger prisoners can re-educate or retrain for employment, there isn't a similar pathway set up for the older cohort who have little chance of finding employment. There is currently no system set up to allow for a transition into a public nursing home, so homelessness becomes a common occurrence. Some may have been incarcerated for significant amount of time so will leave the service with no external support of friends or family.

> Mental and physical health issues, welfare, food, and housing are issues that few older prisoners can manage without significant support (Wheatfield, 2018).

Theme 5: Social Justice and Endemic Discrimination

The chaplain reports challenge the existing system and call for the State and society to deeply reflect on the criminal justice system and its workings. They recognise prisoners as being a particular demographic in society that are easy to dismiss yet are so profoundly interconnected (Wheatfield, 2021). 'Prisoners are the chosen forgotten aspect of society' (Dóchas, 2021). It is made up of those who lack education, stable families, economic resources and who suffer from mental health and addiction problems. Without societal intervention, these problems will simply escalate. These are deep rooted social issues that chaplains have consistently brought to government attention and there is immense frustration at the lack of meaningful state response.

> Chaplains have been wasting their time for years drawing attention to the discrimination and human rights abuse of the least among us. The State has developed a professional competence at ignoring the advice it doesn't want to hear. In recent times the advice of the Chief Medical Officer has become a mantra on our news bulletins. That is because politicians need the advice to protect themselves when election time comes around. Prisoner welfare does not attract votes (Dóchas, 2021).

The government's rapid response to the Covid Pandemic exposed to chaplains the state's systemic neglect of persistent and endemic societal problems. 'Studies have concluded that the drug pandemic has cost twice as many lives as Covid 19 in the area between the Royal Canal and the Grand Canal in Dublin alone' (Dóchas, 2021). The report further draws parallels with the existing conditions in the Irish prison system and moments in Irish history where the state failed to protect its most vulnerable citizens. It discusses the ability of the state to consistently remain silent when injustices are occurring and compares the mental health crisis in the prison system to the mother baby homes scandals.

> Irish Society has become adept at developing the social amnesia that enables us to ignore the addicts and alcoholics so prevalent on our streets or the beggars outside our shops or the homeless piled under heaps of duvets on cardboard boxes in our doorways. The State is celebrating 100 Years of its existence that includes discriminating against its poorest and most marginalised citizens this year (Dóchas, 2021).

Prisons are filled with those who are the most vulnerable members of society. Individuals who have been failed many times over long before they encountered the judicial system. 'How is prison seen as a response to a person who cannot read or write, who is possibly uneducated, traumatised, addicted, without economic prospects, without socially ascending prospects? (Wheatfield, 2021). Some have special needs who lack the cognitive capacity to comprehend their own actions or the consequences of it. There is a sense that both gardaí and the prosecution have failed in its duty of care to recognise this vulnerability during the arresting process. The reports discuss a lack of willingness to acknowledge the structures of economic inequalities and how criminal behaviour is often a response to this. 'The bigger issue is that we in Ireland need to own the lack of opportunity for all our citizens' (Wheatfield, 2021). Those who do end up in the prison system tend to come from poverty which simply continues on the cycle of punishing those that are most disadvantaged in society.

> The shop-lifters are really the dead bodies floating down river. It is time to trace back up the river to identify where and why the bodies are falling into the river in the first place and stop it (Dóchas, 2021).

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to explore the realities faced by chaplains in the prison system through their lived experiences as advocates on multiple fronts. The unique space that chaplains fill in the Irish Prison Service has not been hugely researched and when it has, the research was based on a certain aspect of chaplaincy such as those working with youth detentions or the experience of the Covid 19 Pandemic. This research sought to provide a broader insight into specifically the Irish prison chaplaincy experiences within this setting and the factors that they encounter. This research seeks to answer the question: What are the lived experiences of chaplains across the Irish Prison Service in 2018 and in 2021? Prison chaplains act as intermediary for all those who are incarcerated and those extenuating relationships arising therefrom. Therefore, a complex, sophisticated and multi-dimensional role emerges. They advocate for those incarcerated and speak for them on many platforms. Chaplains provide a connection to prisoners families while recognising families on the outside also need their support in navigate a difficult, isolating and uncertain time. They act on prisoners behalf while dealing with support services across a wide range of needs including addiction treatment, mental health issues, accommodation and educational needs. This is consistent with previous research that looked at chaplains role in different work settings where it was found their role is encompassing of a wide range of services and supports. Their position is difficult to quantify as it is connected to so many different aspects of that workspace that boundaries become blurred (Cadge & Skaggs, 2019; Bahnaru et al., 2019).

Family Engagement

The theme of family was significant across all the reports. Similar to studies done in American prisons and during the Pandemic, this research found that chaplains are instrumental in keeping families connected to their loved ones. Families are often the forgotten element of

those who have been incarcerated. Losing somebody to the prison service can lead to financial instability, emotional distress and can be an extremely lonely time (Denney, 2018; Hargaden, 2020). Many of the reports talk about the sense of loss in a family when a member is lost to the prison system and how in effect, they too are serving a sentence as their life comes to halt. They have lost that connection, and chaplains feel a deep responsibility to continue this link. They are all too aware of the impact on children whose parents are incarcerated and that it can have a lifelong impact on future decisions that they make. Studies have shown that positive social bonds within a family is important for healthy lifestyle choices when it comes to alcohol and drugs and when considering long term consequences of behaviour so the work chaplains do in this area is hugely impactful (Kopf, & Mowen, 2024). Family relationships are complex, and Chaplains do everything they can to maintain them and provide a space, both physically and emotionally, for relationships to continue even while family members are in prison. They strongly advocate for them to be included in significant family occasions such as communions and funerals by organising video links and organising neutral family spaces. Chaplains also recognise the importance of family support for those incarcerated as it provides a lifeline for them to work towards and those who have support on the outside are less likely to reoffend and to choose alternative pathways. This concurs with research by the Irish Penal Reform Trust (n.d.).

Challenges of Leaving Prison

Leaving prison is a time of immense upheaval and uncertainty for both prisoners and staff alike. Chaplains will work with numerous support services in the build up to a prisoner's release because they understand the vast challenges that lie ahead for those who leave prison. The reports discuss the realities of this process and its lack of humanity and dignity. Many are going straight into homeless services where they will likely remain and will leave with their belongings in bin bags, an indication of the value the states places on their most precious

possession. Finnerty & Gilheaney (2021) report discussed the immense difficulties those in homelessness face. The homeless service is particularly difficult for women and elderly men who are vulnerable in these settings. The Wheatfield report voices frustration at the lack of pathways available for elderly prisoners upon release. This forgotten demographic has no structures in place for transitioning into a senior living facility or even financial independence. This is indicative of the social disadvantage that many encounter before and after incarceration as highlighted by Gordon & Jones (2018) report. Studies have consistency emphasised how the prison population has a significantly high proportion of people from low economic backgrounds who suffer from poor education. mental health and addiction issues. A higher percentage of incarcerated people will commit suicide upon release compared to the national average. The Dóchas report lays bare the pain that is felt within a prison when someone takes their own life. It signals to those still incarcerated that life outside is unbearable. This differential continues to their overall health as homelessness makes consistency of healthcare and treatment extremely difficult to maintain (Massoglia & Pridemore, 2015; Hargaden, 2020; Walker et al., 2022). The Chaplain reports recognise that the cards are stacked against many who leave the prison system and there is an overwhelming sense that the state has failed in its obligations to set up adequate support services and pathways to prevent recidivism.

Engagement with Prison Staff

The chaplain reports call attention to the interdependency of their role with other staff in the prison system. Prison life can significantly impact the staff who work there, and chaplains feel they are there to support the staff as well as the prisoners which is similar findings to Duggans 2022 report. Their position is integral to the running of the prison system. The social issues that prisoners bring into the prison can create a relentless atmosphere. Many staff feel ill equipped and under resourced to handle these situations and it can take its toll on a staffs mental health. Hargaden (2020) had comparable results while examining prison staff experiences

during Covid 19. One report discussed the immense sadness that is felt throughout the prison when a prisoner dies after they have left the service. It is felt not just with other prisoners but also with the staff who had worked hard to help them get rehabilitated. The chaplains role involves navigating a complex and often difficult system and they have to build trust with the staff as well so that they can sufficiently support all areas and departments. They are effectively the cog within this intricate prison machine and their intermediary position connects everything together. This is consistent with other chaplain studies where their place in institutions is shaped by hierarchical structures and interagency co-operation (Carey & Medico, 2014; Cadge & Skaggs, 2019).

Bereavement

Bereavement and grief permeate a prisons atmosphere. Whether it's the death of a family member, loss of a child, death of an inmate or the death of a life they had imagined. It is clear the chaplains have a deep understanding of the grieving process and advocate consistently across the reports for the importance of prisoners to be physically present at funerals. They are instrumental in providing a space for them to grieve in and in organising video links and phone calls. Previous studies have discussed the concept of 'presence' and this is a demonstration of that ideology (Cadge & Skaggs, 2019). They remain 'present' for the grieving prisoner as they break the news to them and support them through the difficult process of being absent from family while grieving their loss. For some prisoners they will provide spiritual guidance and pray with them and for others they will simply allow them to talk or be listened to. Processes which have been recognised in other reports (Orr, 2024; Robson et al., 2024). The physical presence of a chaplain during this painful process is important and can be a form of immense comfort, something that Hargaden (2020) highlighted was significantly missing during the Covid 19 restrictions.

Social Justice and Endemic Discrimination

A 2019 study showed how Chaplains felt they were 'serving a silent community' and this is demonstrated throughout these reports with the theme of state and broader societal responsibility (Cadge & Skaggs, 2019). There is a sense of frustration amongst Chaplains that no matter how many reports they write and how many significant issues they raise, nothing demonstrably changes, and the patterns of destructive behaviours continue for years on end. The Dóchas 2018 and 2021 reports both discuss the substantial amount of prisoner presenting with mental health in the prison system and how prison is the wrong space for them. Similarly, Wheatfield's 2018 and 2021 reports highlight the knock-on effect of staff shortages on rehabilitation initiative within prisons. The prison population is representative of a cohort of society that is not being heard or adequately supported in society, and this has contributed to them ending up in the judicial system. Chaplains work hard to help prisoners find alternative pathways and to work on themselves, but this work is not adequately supported through sufficient funding and resources within prison or upon their release. (Gordon & Jones, 2018; Jarrett, et al., 2024). There are long substantial waiting lists for all vital services within the prison system and for services outside as well. It has been well documented that prisons are overcrowded, and conditions are well below European standards yet instead of facilitating alternative rehabilitation methods, the system continues to incarcerate people, separating families and continuing on the cycle without getting to the route of causation (Irish Prison Service report, 2023).

Limitations of study and scope for future research

This is a small study due to limited time and word count. As a consequence, this research was constricted as to the number of reports that could be used for analysis. The research used reports that were representative of the prison population. Some reports had been redacted by the Irish Prison Service. In particular, the Dóchas 2021 report had significant portions redacted which meant some data was unavailable for analysis. The Irish Prison Service website only has reports available from 2018 until 2021 (see Appendix A). However, the 2018 section did not contain reports for all of the Prisons in Ireland. This limited which reports could be used. The reports also lacked consistency in length. While on average they were 5-7 pages, some were much more and the Dóchas 2021 report was 26 pages in length. This meant the data extracted from it was much larger than other prisons. The Irish Prison Service has come under criticism for failing to publish prison chaplaincy reports since 2021. This lack of transparency has predominantly been addressed by newspaper articles and the Irish Penal Reform Trust rather than academic sources. The absence of academic literature around this issue may impact future research.

There is scope for further research in this field for a much larger research project that allows for all available chaplaincy reports to be analysed or to perhaps take one prison and extract data from each year. These reports provide a unique and unprecedented access into prison life that is rarely experienced by those who do not work in this field. They provide insights that arguably are important for future social policies and prison reform. While the Irish Prison Service website currently only provides reports until 2021, as these reports are written every year by all prison chaplains, they may be made available in the future. The themes highlighted within the reports all have the potential to be focused on in future studies and there were other themes I had to exclude because of limited wording. Themes such as the importance

of spaces within prisons, understaffing of the chaplaincy service, wage discrepancies and the social benefits that prisoners could be utilised for.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study emphasise the multifaceted and unique role fulfilled by the chaplaincy service in the Irish Prison Service. It shows that they advocate for prisoners, staff and prisoners families alike. The themes explored were family engagement, leaving prison, engagement with prison staff, bereavement and social justice and endemic discrimination and these served to highlight the significant impact the chaplaincy service has on those incarcerated and the extensive support that they provide. The reports also underscore the frustration felt by chaplains as they witness first-hand the effect of inadequate support structures and the inherent need for increased resources, staffing and policy changes. In conclusion, the Chaplaincy service fulfil an essential connection between those incarcerated, their families and institutional systems, however their role and contribution is undervalued and underfunded.

REFERENCE

Bahnaru, A., Runcan, R., & Runcan, P. (2019). Religious Education for Prisoners in Romania. *Scientific Annals of the "Al. I. Cuza" University, Iasi. Sociology & Social Work / Analele Stiintifice Ale Universitatii "Al. I. Cuza" Iasi Sociologie Si Asistenta Sociala*, *12*(2), 25–33.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Cadge, W., & Skaggs, M. (2019). Humanizing Agents of Modern Capitalism? The Daily Work of Port Chaplains. *Sociology of Religion*, *80*(1), 83–106.

Carey, L., & Medico, L. (2014). Correctional Services and Prison Chaplaincy in Australia: An Exploratory Study. *Journal of Religion & Health*, *53*(6), 1786–1799. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-013-9788-9

Denney, A. S. (2018). Prison Chaplains: Perceptions of Criminality, Effective Prison Programming Characteristics, and the Role of Religion in the Desistance from Crime. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, *43*(3), 694–723. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12103-017-9425-3

Duggan, S. (2022). A Year in Irish Prisons: Chaplains' Annual Reports. *Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice.* https://www.jcfj.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/A-Year-in-Irish-Prisons.pdf

Ezatul Alia Md Emary, Siti Roshaidai Mohd Arifin, & Muhammad Zubir Yusof. (2024). A Qualitative Systematic Review of Healthcare Practitioners' Experience of Workplace Violence. *Malaysian Journal of Medical Sciences*, *31*(1), 51–61. https://doi.org/10.21315/mjms2024.31.1.4

Finnerty, S. & Gilheaney, P. (2021). Access to mental health services for people in the criminal justice system. *Mental Health Commission*. https://www.mhcirl.ie/publications/access-mental-health-services-people-criminal-justice-system

Gordon, C. S., & Jones, S. C. (2018). "I see so much in them": Australian Chaplains telling an alternative narrative of adolescents in the justice system. *Health & Social Care in the Community*, *26*(4), e505–e513. https://doi.org/10.1111/hsc.12566

Hargaden, K. (2020). Prison chaplaincy in the age of Covid-19. Theology, 123(5), 337-345. https://doi.org/10.1177/0040571X20944578

Irish Penal Reform Trust. (n.d.). *The Whitaker Committee Report 20 Years On: Lessons Learned or Lessons Forgotten?*. Author. https://www.iprt.ie/iprt-publications/the-whitaker-committee-report-20-years-on-lessons-learned-or-lessons-forgotten/

Irish Penal Reform Trust. (2021). *Prison Chaplain Annual Reports 2020*. https://www.iprt.ie/latest-news/prison-chaplain-annual-reports-2020/

Irish Penal Reform Trust. (2023). *Prison Chaplain Annual Reports 2021*. https://www.iprt.ie/latest-news/prison-chaplain-annual-reports-2021/

Irish Penal Reform Trust. (2020). *Irish Examiner reports on unpublished prison chaplain reports.* https://www.iprt.ie/latest-news/irish-examiner-reports-on-unpublished-prison-chaplain-reports/

Irish Prison Service. (2023). Annual Report 2023. https://www.irishprisons.ie/wp-content/uploads/documents_pdf/IPS-Annual-Report-2023-2.pdf

Jarrett, M., Skinner, J., Busulwa, R., Dyson, J., & Brooke, J. (2024). The Role and Impact of the Prison Chaplain: A Systematic Review and Narrative Synthesis. *The journal of pastoral care & counselling: JPCC*, *78*(4), 133–143. https://doi.org/10.1177/15423050241296487

Kopf, S., & Mowen, T. J. (2024). Family Support, Family Incarceration, and Substance Use Among Adjudicated Youth Across Time. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, *49*(1), 25-25–46. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12103-022-09674-9

Lune, H., & Berg, B. (2017). Qualitative research methods for the social sciences. *Pearson Education Limited.*

Maguire, M., & Delahunt, B. (2017). Doing a thematic analysis: A practical, step-by-step guide for learning and teaching scholars. *AISHE-J*, *9*(3), 3351. http://ojs.aishe.org/index.php/aishe-j/article/view/3354

Massoglia, M., & Pridemore, W. A. (2015). Incarceration and health. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *41*, 291–310. https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6124689/

Naeem, M., Ozuem, W., Howell, K., & Ranfagni, S. (2023). A Step-by-Step Process of Thematic Analysis to Develop a Conceptual Model in Qualitative Research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069231205789

Oireachtas.ie. (2022). *Prison Service – Thursday, 14 Jul 2022 – Parliamentary Questions (33rd Dáil) – Houses of the Oireachtas*. https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2022-07-14/652

Orr, S. (2024). Prison chaplaincy, church and the powers that be. *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church*, *24*(1), 3–15. https://doi.org/10.1080/1474225X.2024.2311434

Power, C. L. (2021). Moving forward together: mental health among persons supervised by the probation service. *The Probation Service*. https://www.probation.ie/EN/PB/0/0B47AF3EF3D3603D8025868D00349D68/$File/MOVING%20FORWARD%20TOGETHER%2004.03.21.pdf

Robson, K., Ruthven, I., & Innocenti, P. (2024). God's intermediaries: A study into chaplains' information behaviour. *Information Research*, *29*(2), 28. https://doi.org/10.47989/ir292844

Shaw, R., Stevens, B., Paget, J., & Snoyman, P. (2019). Ageing in corrective services: from the perspective of prison chaplains. *Psychiatry, Psychology & Law*, *26*(1), 97–109. https://doi.org/10.1080/13218719.2018.1483275

Sundt, J. L., & Cullen, F. T. (2007). Doing God's Work behind Bars: Chaplains' Reactions to Employment in Prison. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, *45*(3–4), 131–157.

Van Dijke, J., Duyndam, J., van Nistelrooij, I., & Bos, P. (2023). Empathic Flow: Dutch Humanist Chaplains' Experiences with Professional Empathy and Its Challenges. *Pastoral Psychology*, *72*(1), 1–22. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11089-022-01037-9

Walker, T., Wainwright, V., Dunlop, B. J., Forrester, A., Senior, J., & Shaw, J. (2022). A qualitative exploration of the views of people with lived experience of suicide within the criminal justice system. *Journal of Forensic Psychiatry & Psychology*, *33*(6), 868-868–882. Academic Search Complete. https://doi.org/10.1080/14789949.2022.2149418

Williams, M. & Moser, T. (2019). The Art of Coding and Thematic Exploration in Qualitative Research. *International Management Review*. 15(1). https://americanscholarspress.us/journals/IMR/pdf/IMR-1-2019/IMR-v15n1art4.pdf

Appendix A

List of chaplaincy reports currently available on the Irish Prison Service website as of 31st March 2025 – full list available at https://www.irishprisons.ie/information-centre/publications/chaplains-reports/

2018	
Castlerea	2018
Cloverhill	2018
Dóchas Centre	2018
Limerick	2018
Shelton Abbey	2018
Wheatfield	2018
2019	
Arbour Hill	April 2019 - March 2020
	April 2019 - March 2020 Part 1.1
Loughan House	2019 - 2020
Shelton Abbey	2019 - 2020
Castlerea	2019
Cloverhill	2019
Cork	2019
Dóchas Centre	2019
Limerick	2019
Midlands	2019
Mountjoy	April 2018 - March 2019
	March 2019 - March 2019
Portlaoise	2019
	2019 Part 1.1
Wheatfield	2019

2020

Arbour Hill	2020
Loughan House	2020
Castlerea	2020
Cloverhill	2020
Cork	2020
Dóchas Centre	2020
Limerick	2020
Midlands	2020
Mountjoy	2020
Shelton Abbey	2020
Portlaoise	2020
Wheatfield	2020

2021

Arbour Hill	2021
Loughan House	2021
Castlerea	2021
Cloverhill	2021
Cork	2021
Dóchas Centre	2021
Limerick	2021
Midlands	2021
Mountjoy	2021
Shelton Abbey	2021
Portlaoise	2021
Wheatfield	2021