Cork Prison Visiting Committee
Annual Report 2018

Contents
Introduction .................................................................................................................. 2
Industrial Area .............................................................................................................. 3
Education Unit ............................................................................................................. 6
Cork Alliance Centre ................................................................................................. 7
Dillon’s Cross Project ................................................................................................. 9
St Nicholas Trust ....................................................................................................... 11
Post Release Project 2018 ......................................................................................... 12
Cork Prison’s Information Channels ........................................................................ 13
Video Link .................................................................................................................. 14
Churchfield Community Trust .................................................................................. 14
Conclusion and Acknowledgements ......................................................................... 17
Introduction

The Cork Prison Visiting Committee met on a monthly basis during 2018. The meetings were always well attended and were always addressed by the Governor or his Deputy which was very welcome and informative. Interim visits were held also on a monthly basis where two of the visiting committee members visited different sections of the prison.

We met with a number of prisoners during the year and issues that they had were brought to the Governor and solutions were found where applicable.

Members of the Cork Visiting Committee attended two training days in Brian Stack House which were organised by the Chairperson’s Visiting Committee Group. These were very informative and educational well done to the committee for organising them.

We also visited Arbour Hill Prison in Dublin during the year where we found a very contrasting style in prison occupation.

From visiting the different sections of Cork Prison our members continually praise the cleanliness within the Prison this is always of an exceptionally high standard and congrats to all involved.

One of the big issues pertaining to Cork Prison is the regular closure of workshops. This is due to staff shortages sometimes as a result of staff been re-deployed to cover escorts to courts, hospitals etc. which means that work or training cannot proceed. We have state of the art facilities in the Cork Prison workshops and it is a shame to see them so much underused.

It is hoped that with the current recruitment drive within the Irish Prison Service that extra officers would be assigned to Cork that would allow for the regular opening of the workshops.

The Committee recommend that prisoners on release be given appropriate holdall bag for their clothes and belongings on release rather than a clear plastic bags.

The Cork Visiting Committee have developed a relationship with some voluntary groups, as we believe that the transition from prison to the community is vital. Experience has shown that telling prisoners what to do, or what is available on release will not work. Prisoners must be taken by the hand, shown the way forward, introduced to their place of accommodation, training, addiction services, education or workplace as by enlarge prisoners are institutionalised and will not follow through on release if left to their own devices.

We commend the National Visiting Committee for organising the training days in Brian Stack House, as it gives the Visiting Committees from all the prisons nationally an opportunity to exchange views, to get a better understanding of their role, and the offenders they encounter. These days were very informative and educational and we commend the Committee for organising them.

The Education unit in Cork continues to provide a range of subjects both practical and academic and also continues to engage with students needing help at basic education level.
The Education Unit (CORK ETB) and IASIO, IPS and Cork Sports Partnership were 2018 National Award winners at the Irish institute of training and development awards ceremony in the Best not for Profit Partnership. The Community Coaching Programme was also shortlisted for a citizen impact award in the Civil Service Excellence and Innovation awards ceremony in 2018.

One of the most innovative decisions taken in the past number of years was the launching of the Cork Prison Information TV Channel in December 2015 in conjunction with the Cork Prison Visiting Committee. This channel has gone from strength to strength with a second channel added shortly after the initial introduction. This facility can also cater for channels in different languages and with voice over facilities.

We would like to welcome the recently appointed Prison Chaplain, Fr Ray Riordan.

We can see from the following reports from services that Cork has a very busy and active Prison with a very committed staff supported by a number of professional staff and voluntary agencies who provide excellent services for prisoners within the prison and on release.

Industrial Area

Report from Sean Nason Chief Officer (Work and Training) Cork Prison

Kitchen
The kitchen employs 24 prisoners per day. We have recently registered 20 of these with City and Guilds for the elementary cookery course. The kitchen staff are happy to be working in a new state of the art kitchen. They continue to cook for events such as the Listeners’ Graduation, retirement functions, etc, to a very high standard. A score of 77% was achieved in this year’s hygiene audit.

This year, thanks to help from Colm Carey, we placed two prisoners in local employment on release.

Hurley / Joinery workshop
This has been a very disappointing year for the Hurley workshop, due to a high level of staff redeployments. The staff are very keen to teach City and Guilds, as can be seen from last year’s report, and comments, but they cannot teach City and Guilds or anything else under the current circumstances, unfortunately. There has been no certified training done here this year.

The hurley shop has through the dedication of two W.T.O., s and the prisoners has continued to provide a valuable service to the G.A.A. Club’s in the community. Redeployments have had huge impact in this shop. Management of resources around time and streamlined process’s by the staff has determined its continued success as a service provider for the community. The joinery shop works in conjunction with Light maintenance, building cabinets, notice boards, units and benches in order to enhance the prison community for the staff and prisoners.

Computer / print workshop
All of the printing for Cork Prison is done in this workshop, class logs, p19’s, reception books, health and safety books, etc. Prisoners also make cards here for birthdays, etc.
This has been a very disappointing year for the Print / Computer workshop, due to redeployments. There has been no certified training done here this year. On a very positive note W.T.O. O Donovan has been involved in amazing one to one training with a prisoner who is on the autism spectrum. This work is linked to the services in the prison. This is having a big positive effect on the prisoner’s welfare and he is integrating very well with the other prisoners in the workshop and in the prison community.

**Fabric Workshop**
This workshop is redeployed regularly, and has done no certified training this year.

**Light Maintenance**
Unfortunately, this workshop is regularly redeployed, and has produced no certified training this year. However W.T.O. Sheehan and his prisoners still managed to paint the whole prison in 2018 as well as fit cabinets and notice boards throughout the buildings.

**Laundry**
The Laundry is working well, with usually around 10 prisoners working there daily. The Laundry had a very good year, with the Laundry being certified again in May, to carry out training under the Guild of Cleaners and Launderers Certificate scheme. The two W.T.O’s have started accredited Laundry Guild Training with the prisoners and we would hope to be at certification stage early in the New Year.

**Industrial Cleaning workshop**
This post is manned by 2 WTO’s, on a back to back basis. They provide training, work and support for 16 prisoners 7 days a week.

The new cleaning chemical system introduced in 2017 is working very well and adheres to the highest standards found anywhere. The cleaners have become highly trained in the use of the auto dilution system. The cleaners have learned so much through the use of this dilution system, regarding dilution rates, chemical hazards and the environmental, physical and biological factors impacting chemical use. In 2018 we introduced a one dip mopping system which helps minimise people’s exposure to infection and disease. Each cell is given a clean, hygienic mop head every day, and it is collected every day after use, and replaced again the next day. This system is operating with very good level of success. Clean pass training and certification is hoped to be rolled out for the prisoners in late spring.

The Workshop is also in the process of purchasing 3 new burnishers which will further develop the trainee’s skillset. The Industrial Cleaning workshop is in the process of construction. It is not yet completed. This is due to completion in February 2019.

**Officers Mess (training kitchen)**
This kitchen and dining area is working very well, and has 6 prisoners employed every day. This is a new departure from the norm, and is working very well. It is a state of the art facility, and is well used by prison staff. We will hope to have 6 prisoners trained to City and Guilds Elementary cookery level this year.
Integrated Sentence Management (ISM)
The ISM. Staff are busier than ever, with the Community Returns Scheme (CRS), and the Community Support Scheme (CSS). These are both going very well, and the high success rate of both continues. Our numbers for CRS and the CSS are up on last year. The Staff in this area have also played a big part in the community coaching course and the kid’s summer camps for the prisoner’s families.

Waste Management
This new workshop has been very successful in reducing our waste, and increasing the amount of recycling here in the prison. This means lower bills, and a saving to the state for waste management expenses. It also helps the environment. We are now normally over 60% recycled waste every month. This is going in the right direction, thanks to the dedication of the staff involved. Waste Management is now linked with the Red Cross and has started the process of recycling on landings B2 and B3.

Industrial Skills /Craft workshop
This is on the same floor as the other workshops, in consists of a picture framing and engraving workshop. The new W.T.O. has just arrived and the machines and IT Support are in the process of commissioning. We are excited at the prospect of this new shop and its potential to expand the skillset, knowledge and opportunities for prisoners working there.

We have one new unopened workshop here in Cork Prison.

Horticulture workshop
This is a wonderful new facility, at the back of the prison. There is a polytunnel, raised beds, a glasshouse, and a work shed / potting shed. We are hopeful that this may be opened later in the year. We are waiting to have the staff assigned to this post, to use this excellent facility.

Other Training
Tight resources have resulted in workshop closures but we are still committed to equipping as many prisoners as possible leaving prison with some essential courses.

These are:
- Manual Handling
- Safe Pass
- Primary Food Hygiene
- ‘Changing’ course

Myself Sean Nason I teach Manual Handling and also Tommy Gaine is in the process of becoming a new instructor. Frances Mc Mahon who used to teach the Food Hygiene has now retired and we wish him all the best for the future. WTO Karen Whelan is now in training to become a food hygiene instructor and will hopefully be qualified in March. Colm Carey organises the other courses and this process is with liaised with the ISM Officers as part of the prisoner’s sentence management plan. The goal of this is to give the prisoners a better chance to find employment on release. The above Certificates help with this.
2018 was a busy and successful year for the Education Unit, Cork Prison. We continued to offer a range of subjects both practical and academic ranging from Basic Education to Open University.

In 2018:
- One hundred and two QQI modules were completed between levels 2-5.
- Two students sat exams at Leaving Cert level.
- Five students are enrolled for Open University. Students are studying courses in Sports and Fitness, Science, Arts (two students), and Social Sciences
- Twenty students completed the Safe Pass course

In February, the Traveller Visibility Group with facilitator Patsy Horgan organised a Conflict and Lifestyle Modification Group for members of the traveller community. It is proposed that a peer mediation course will be introduced in 2019.

The Education Unit (Cork ETB) and IASIO, IPS and Cork Sports Partnership were 2018 national award winners at the Irish institute of training and development awards ceremony in the category Best not for Profit Partnership. Eleven students graduated from this course in December 2018. As part of the Community Coaching course, students complete an overall award in QQI L3 in addition to the coaching modules. The Community Coaching Programme was also shortlisted for a citizen impact award in the Civil Service Excellence and Innovation awards ceremony 2018.

Gerry Barnes and members of his theatre group visited the Education Unit and performed excerpts from ‘Someone who’ll watch over me’ written by Frank McGuinness.

The Education Unit held its’ second Spanish week in November.

This year we were delighted to continue our collaborative work with the Adult Continuing Education Department (ACE) in UCC. It was a great end to the academic year when the President of UCC presented each student with a certificate. This learning community partnership between ACE and the Education Unit has been successfully running since January 2017. To date, James Cronin (UCC lecturer) has delivered 4 successful courses. Much of his work with teacher Therese Cooper involved the process of ‘Visible thinking’ from research programmes like Project Zero in Harvard University. This success is reflected in the fact that 21 students participated across the courses – ‘Looking at Paintings: Masterpieces from Irish Galleries’, ‘Masterpieces of Prison Literature’, and ‘A Little History of Cork’. Congratulating each individual, President O’Shea formally acknowledged their achievements as UCC students. “Your expression through art communicates, refreshes and inspires. You are on a learning journey. May this journey be a lifelong adventure for each of you.”

The fifth annual art exhibition was launched on Spike Island in June. The title of this year’s exhibition was ‘Inside-Out’ and the exhibition showcased work from all areas of prison education including the collaborative work between students in the Education Unit and UCC. Another highlight of the exhibition was the stained glass from the artist in prison scheme with Debbie Dawson.
The work of the Red Cross Programme continued. This year students ran several campaigns in areas such as the importance of hand hygiene, mental health awareness, being sun-smart, anti-bullying, smoking awareness and a harm reduction and overdose prevention course. The annual graduation ceremony was held in June and in 2018 the Cork Red Cross won a Special Status branch award.

Artists in prison: The Education Unit in Cork was delighted to facilitate 2 artists in prison (AIP) workshops in 2018 - a stained-glass workshop with artist Debbie Dawson in addition to a workshop with Eileen Singleton on mosaic making. These workshops are co-funded by the Arts Council and the Irish Prison Service.

I would like to conclude by thanking the Governor and his management staff for their help and support throughout the year. I would like to especially thank the team of school officers who work with the staff in the Education Unit.

Finally, I would like to sincerely thank all the teachers in the Education Unit for their hard work and commitment to their students.

Cork Alliance Centre

The Cork Alliance Centre was established in 2003 with the support of the Probation Service. The Centre works with both men and women on release from prison. It seeks to facilitate the process of personal recovery and empowerment with the overarching view of desistance from crime. As people seek to become better equipped to manage their lives more positively. Our service is based in the community with in-reach work in the prisons. The Centre’s core funding is from the Department of Justice and Equality through the Probation Service and the Irish Prison Service.

The work of the Cork Alliance Centre relates to activities directed towards facilitating service users to become generally better equipped to manage their lives positively. ‘To desist from crime, ex-offenders need to develop a coherent, pro-social identity for themselves’ (Maruna, 2001), therein the importance of self-esteem, self-efficacy, self-respect and self-determination cannot be underestimated. Facilitating service users as they restore their positive ‘connections’ with their family, friends, community, society and most importantly with themselves is fundamental to the work of the Cork Alliance Centre.

Those who access the service of the Cork Alliance Centre choose to do so voluntarily. The foundations of the Cork Alliance Centre are based in a shared-caring approach, where with the agreement of the service users, support and assistance is garnered from state, semi-state and voluntary organisations and their representatives. The Cork Alliance Centre manages two programmes with both the Probation Service and the Prison Service (http://www.corkalliancecentre.com/programmes).

The significant challenges to the work of the Cork Alliance Centre relate specifically to the high proportion of people in custody who are homeless, together with the challenges of working with
people in addiction and with poor mental health when there are insufficient residential resources in the community to support them.

The Desistance and Integration Support Programme is open to all people from Cork who have been in prison. Together with supporting people to address their offending behaviour, the team work to support people as they seek to build constructive and connected lives. The support is on a one-to-one basis, as personal plans are developed, realised and built upon. As the Centre works with a service user on all aspects of their life, a better ‘wrap around’ service is provided, linking in where appropriate with other agencies and departments in a more joined up service. The services offered include

- Support and motivation work where among other areas offending behaviours, thinking skills, coping mechanisms, socialisation skills etc. can be addressed
- Supporting access to voluntary and state organisation to source and secure accommodation
- Supporting access to secure financial supports
- Supporting access to source, secure and sustain trainings, education and literacy supports
- Supporting access to source, secure and sustain employment schemes and employers
- Supporting access to addiction treatment programmes and services
- Supporting access to professional counselling and acupuncture
- Supporting access to parenting and family programmes
- Highlighting emerging trends and developments among our service users and wider community

The Community Support Scheme is run in conjunction with the Irish Prison Service, and offers prisoners serving sentences between 3-12 months the opportunity to serve part of their sentence in the community rather than in the prison. This constructive community based alternative to imprisonment is a means of positive sentence management offering a chance for change for the prisoner in an effort to break the cycle of repeated short-term imprisonments. The opportunity to serve a sentence in the community rather than in prison is a short-term practical intervention linking those availing of this early (temporary) release programme to services and service providers within
their home locality, as a means to improve the individual’s chances of sustaining life outside of prison. The Cork Alliance Centre operates the programme in Cork, Portlaoise and the Midlands prison.

### Community Support Scheme Annual Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Referring Prison</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Age Profile</th>
<th>Status at Year End</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cork</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>&lt; 25 yrs.</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limerick</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>26-35 yrs.</td>
<td>Temporary Release</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheatfield</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>36-45 yrs.</td>
<td>Non-Completion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castlerea</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&gt; 45 yrs.</td>
<td>Released under CSS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountjoy</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>473 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portlaoise</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midlands</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Released under CSS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dochas</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Released under CSS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>473 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Age band**: 18 – 66 yrs.
- **Participant Profile**:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Number in attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early school leavers</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex-offenders</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lone parents</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members of the travelling community</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Full QQI Certification**

Students in phase 1 and 2 achieve an overall award at QQI level 3 as well as completing individual modules at L4 in computers and childcare. This year four learners achieved the overall award at level 3.

- Number of participants who completed Phase one - 4

---

**Dillon’s Cross Project**

The Dillon’s Cross Project is a community-based education project, designed to offer female relatives of offenders in Cork Prison, support and education. It offers participants the opportunity to attend classes and encourages them to progress to further education/training and motivates them to seek employment. It is located in the Old Youtheach Building on the grounds of the Glen Resource Centre, The Glen, a short walk from Cork Prison and is a unique project in Ireland.

The course starts in September and continues until end of May. No of participants: 14

**Age band**: 18 – 66 yrs.

**Participant Profile**:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Number in attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early school leavers</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex-offenders</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lone parents</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members of the travelling community</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Number of participants who completed Phase two - 6
- Number who completed all modules - 10
- Number who left early - 4

**Year highlights and progression updates:**

Two of our graduates completed their level 6 Hairdressing courses in Terence Mc Sweeney College.

Another student commenced a Batchelor of Arts in Applied Early Childhood Studies in the College of Commerce in September. We are delighted and very grateful to the Sisters of Mercy who are providing the necessary funding to enable her to achieve her goal.

Three of our last year’s students are now working.

**Inter-agency support/inputs:**

HSE Sexual Health Centre gave a series of talks to the women. They plan to do a follow up series aimed at providing information and advice to participant’s older/teenage children.

CETB Adult Career Guidance Counsellor delivered individual guidance sessions.

Our local drugs Task Force Counsellor, delivered a four session mindfulness/acupuncture course which was very well received and successful.

The Project was afforded access to a counsellor from CIT Three women availed of counselling. It was a great success and mutually beneficial.

CIT Lecturers gave a cookery demonstration and a childcare lecture. They were very well received. The women enjoyed the approach the lecturers took and were fascinated by the different strategies they employed.

Cork Citizen’s information and advice service was very giving of its time and expertise and their worker always facilitated us when we asked for help with different issues, in particular the serious housing crisis issues that arose.

**Events during the year**

The Dillon’s Cross Project held a very successful certificate presentation ceremony in October. This event was attended by David Stanton, Minister of State for Equality, Immigration and Integration, Michael Donnellan, Director General Irish Prison Service, Governors Pat Dawson and Peter O’ Brien and Ted Owens, Chief Executive of Cork ETB.

The Dillon’s Cross Project hosted a public quiz during the Lifelong Learning Festival which was very successful.

This year, the Dillon’s Cross Project, in conjunction with IASIO, the Irish Prison Service and Cork Sports Partnership ran a children’s Summer camp in the Glen resource centre. Over fifty-five children of the prison population attended the camp over a four-day period, including three children with autism, three asthmatics, and one with a physical disability. Three Muslim children also attended. This was the second year this camp, for seriously disadvantaged children was run in Cork and was again very successful. In addition to last year’s activities ie basketball, soccer, GAA, rugby and tug of war, this
year’s activities included dancing, arts, crafts and gymnastics. The project gratefully acknowledges the funding received from the Solidarity Trust fund which enabled the running of the Summer camp, paying for the use of the Glen resource centre, the additional activities listed above as well as daily lunches and pizza on the final day of the camp. Lord Mayor Mick Finn presented participants with medals at the concluding ceremony.

Acknowledgements

- We were delighted to receive funding from the HSE to purchase a photocopier which has made day to day operations so much easier
- The Project continued to benefit during the year from ongoing support and advice from the ETB, BTEI, HSE, IPS, Cork City Partnership, Cork LDTF, Mercy Sisters, Probation Service, Cork Citizen Advice and Information Service, Career Guidance CETB

St Nicholas Trust

Report from Mairead Carmody Chairperson and Director

St. Nicholas Trust continues to offer support, information and counselling to families of prisoners, particularly families who are dealing with imprisonment for the first time. We supply volunteers in the waiting room who provide a kind word, reassurance and a cup of tea at what is a very difficult situation for families. We continue to provide a telephone support system which is increasingly busy with calls from all areas of the country and we operate a support group where people in similar situations can share their concerns and support each other. We can additionally meet people in an informal way for a coffee and chat if they are unable to attend a meeting. In the past year we have met people in Dublin, Kerry and many outlying areas in County Cork in this informal way.

Over the past few years SNT has produced three information booklets filled with simple information about the prison and its services and the difficulties around home-coming and children’s issues. We are regularly asked to send copies of the booklets to families in this position around the country. While the booklets relate to Cork prison, the information contained in them can easily be adapted for all the Irish prisons.

With this in mind, we have asked the prison management to support us in forwarding this aim. There is a very good printing press in the Midlands prison which has previously printed copies of the booklets. Our aim for 2019 is to get the booklets edited to incorporate some different practices in other prisons and include local information in each area and to get them printed in the new format to be distributed to all the prisons. We have already asked the waiting-room staff in the prisons if they would be interested in the booklets and they would welcome them. We believe this is possible with very little effort and cost. Since we produced the first booklets, people tell us that all the questions they want answered are addressed in the booklets and in effect they reduce the calls made to the prison service seeking simple information.
SNT continue to support families of prisoners with the help of a committed committee and a great group of volunteers who often travel distances to make visits easier for family members.

**Post Release Project 2018**

The Post Release Project coordinated by Frances Russell since 2001 continues to deliver a comprehensive and integrated approach to meet the needs of prisoners on release from Cork Prison. It strives to prepare, support and assist homeless prisoners for a positive resettlement back into the community. It continues to maintain strong links between the Post Release Service and the Housing Dept. in the City Council to ensure that no prisoner is taken off the housing list due to their committal to prison. It also ensures the co-ordination of services with statutory and voluntary providers i.e. Homeless Officers in all local authorities, Cork City Council housing, Focus Ireland, Cork Simon Community and St Vincent’s Hostel to ensure a realistic & achievable plan is in place prior to a prisoner’s release.

Recently the Homeless Persons unit, Drinan St closed it offices and staff returned to the Dept. of Social Protection. A referral system was set up with a staff member in the Dept. Abbey Court House which ensures all prisoners leaving custody have a set appointment, which will ensure they have access to a social welfare payment on the day of release. Prisoners leaving custody leave with all their social welfare applications completed so to ensure barriers of literacy and poor social or coping skills did not impede on prisoners claiming their social welfare payments. Access to emergency accommodation is now coordinated through the City Council.

All efforts continue to ensure that prisoners who are homeless on release from prison have access to emergency accommodation and supports from Focus Ireland for move on. As part of the Case Management Protocols for the Cork & Kerry Homeless Services, Initial and Housing Needs Assessments are carried out or updated on homeless prisoners serving over a 12- week sentence. Access to an emergency beds were also secured for prisoners serving less than 12 weeks. The project also sits on monthly meetings with the Homeless Action Team to refer and discuss specific supports for prisoners leaving prison with complex needs.

With the assistance of Sophia Housing, City Council and Dept. of Social Protection, 3 short term accommodation units are provided for prisoners, where they are given the skills to live independently thus breaking their cycle of prison sentences and homelessness. The Post Release Project continues to provide assistance with bedding and basic provisions to these prisoners. When the prisoners are ready, move on accommodation is identified. They continue to access ongoing supports from services once they move through the transitional flat on to long term accommodation. The service continues to work closely with an in-reach service provided by Focus Ireland, who offer support to prisoners accessing private rented accommodation and ongoing tenancy support.

The project maintains strong links with residential/community day addiction and mental health services to ensure access for prisoners to addiction assessment and counselling in/day patient care. It continues to work with staff in the Cork Alcohol and Drugs Task Force to ensure homeless prisoners continue to link in with services on their release.
The project commenced a pilot project with the Medical Card Unit to ensure prisoners have to access medical cards for prisoners on their release dates to ensure that the continuum of medical care on release. It continues to work with G.P.’s in the community to deliver this valuable service.

The provision of the Safe Pass Qualification continues to be delivered to enable prisoner’s access employment on release. It meets their educational needs by referring them to programmes been offered in the Education Unit in Cork Prison and by offering practical & financial assistance in enabling them access community education courses and post leaving cert colleges.

Cork Prison’s Information Channels

Report from Caroline O’Connor, Administration Manager

Cork Prison is the only Prison in the country to have two dedicated channels on the Prisoners TV’s for the information of Prisoners.

1. “INFO4U” (displayed on Channel No: 17) was successfully piloted on the 10th July 2015 and officially launched on Thursday, the 17th December 2015 in the old Prison, Cork.

This channel displays information relating to Prisoners entitlements with regard to telephone calls, visits and gratuity. This channel also explains the differences and entitlements of each of the three regimes i.e.: basic, standard and enhanced.

It also provides the daily routine of Cork Prison including the times of breakfast, lunch and tea. All the services that are available such as probation, psychology, addiction, the ISM Team etc are also listed. It also displays details of the various opportunities and subjects available in the Education Unit.

As Prisoners are in their cells for long periods of time on a daily basis. INFO4U helps Prisoners adjust to life in Cork Prison and encourages them to make a plan with their time spending that time in an enjoyable and fulfilling way.

2. “Next Step Channel” (displayed on Channel No: 18) was successfully launched on Thursday, the 16th August, 2017 in the new Prison, Cork.

This channel offers the opportunity to Prisoners of display their works of art created during their stay, photos and details of various award ceremonies, up-coming Smoking Cessation courses, Mental Health week alerts, various sources of help and encouragement eg: ways of dealing with anger etc.

This channel also contains a Notice Board, which is a facility for alerting Prisoners of up-coming events.

As a result of the GDPR coming into effect on the 25th May 2018, these channels are now up-dated on site in Cork Prison, in compliance with the GDPR. Now created and modified for display as Mpeg 4 Video files here in Cork Prison, results in more timely up-dates and keeps the information current and interesting.

This initiative is now being examined for nationwide introduction to all Prisons within the jurisdiction, for the benefit of Prisoners and Staff alike.
This facility shall also cater for channels in different languages and with voice over facilities.

This is an exciting time for the Irish Prison Service, and will greatly improve the awareness and distribution of information and services to Prisoners while in custody.

**Video Link**

*Report from Caroline O’Connor, Administration Manager*

The first ever web rtc call (like skype) took place within the Irish Prison Service between a Prisoner and his family who are outside of the jurisdiction; on **Thursday, the 27th July, 2017** at 10.30am Irish time (12.30pm international time).

This happened in Cork Prison, where a “Lifer” Prisoner was able to connect with his family. This Prisoner had not seen or met any of his family members since his arrival in Cork Prison on the 18th April 2007 – over ten years ago.

This was an emotional and hugely successful connection where the prisoner got to see and interact with his mother and his siblings. He also got to meet nieces and nephews that he had never met before.

Since this connection took place, this facility has further developed and is now also facilitating Solicitors and their Clients also arranging meetings via Video link.

On Sunday, the 16th December, 2018 the first ever web rtc video link call took place between two Prisoners within the Irish system (Cork Prison and the Dochas Centre).

This is proving hugely successful, and a great facility and opportunity for all involved.

---

**Churchfield Community Trust**

*Report from Paul O’Donnell, Project Manager*

**Who We Are** - Churchfield Community Trust is a community-based organisation located on the Northside of Cork City. We respond to a very specific group of young people who need intensive support, therapeutic interventions, stability and acceptance, to achieve sustainable change at a crucial time in their lives.

**Our Mission** - Churchfield Community Trust as an organisation believes that all people should have the opportunity and supportive environment to overcome challenges re alcohol, substance misuse and offending behaviour. Our practice is grounded in the principles of the person-centred Servol Model and remains mindful of the core values:

- Individual programs are put in place in partnership with each participant according to his/her needs.
- We try to make respectful interventions, to foster responsibility and model open and honest communication always.

**Our Target Group** People aged 18 to 35 years • Ex – Offenders • All having substance/ alcohol dependency / addictions.
In Reach – Cork Prison

In reach support is provided at Cork Prison to persons who require 1:1 counselling support and to those who wish to engage with community supports post release.

The benefits of the In reach service include early assessment upon entry to Prison, identification and development of goals with a referral to the formal counselling services e.g. Psychology and Merchants Quay Ireland.

For individuals who are already engaged with other prison counselling services, and for other forms of engagement highlighted above, the In reach Service consistently provides detailed information, advice and the benefits that have arisen for those seeking structure and support within Churchfield Community Trust’s Outreach and community-based Addiction Counselling services and the possibility of other options for those looking for and in the process of change.

TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES POST RELEASE

Social Enterprise Initiatives feature as an intrinsic aspect of our core community-based programme in the context of preparation for work through experiential learning and certification. Initiatives include

1) Compass Crafts – playpark and garden furniture
2) Continuing development of Garden Café initiative
3) Horticulture Growing Initiative

Compass Crafts-At our work shop which is based at Churchfield a new range of Bespoke early years furniture and garden products are currently being developed by our participants under the direction of our work shop manager & Carpenter. The craftsmanship is of an extremely high standard.

Our Team engage with participants through a structured time managed programme with practical and educational skills alongside therapeutic interventions and support. Compass Crafts focus on a product range that will be within the skill set and capability of our client group. The range includes garden furniture, creche furniture, play park, small garden and household items. It is important to strike a balance between setting achievable goals for the participants and expanding their skill set.

Garden Café -The Garden Café Cork which is widely regarded as Cork’s Greenest Café is situated on the grounds of Cork Foyer (formerly Assumption Convent Cork) and is located in a beautiful Victorian style glasshouse, It offers spectacular views of Blackpool and is open daily from Monday to Friday each week. This is a unique initiative which provides training and mentoring in a live Café environment to men and women who are interested in progressing to employment in the catering industry. Training is provided both informally through immersion in the context of ‘On the Job’ experience and formally through certified training/ Participants can combine the educational aspect of the programme with gaining practical experience through mentoring while working in the Garden Café.

“I was given access to additional services helping me to get back on my feet. The Community Employment Scheme for the Garden Café has given me hope on a personal and professional level”. -Garden Café Community Employment participant.

Horticulture – Growing Initiative The first years in a garden are always difficult in an organic based system. The process of creating workable soil, sowing and nursing young plants, transplanting, care and weeding, and harvest for each crop requires hard-work, planning, responsibility, commitment and resilience.
Our goals in terms of growing were to complete the second year of the Cork University Hospital pilot programme, provide a regular supply of salad leaves to the Garden Cafe and trial a Vegetable Box Scheme. We were successful in achieving these three goals and we also provided vegetables to a restaurant throughout the year. From these experiences we have learned a lot in terms of time and scale of what can be maintained and delivered with the resources that we have.

“Overall, we have received fantastic feedback about the produce from the garden from those we have supplied and aim to make the produce more accessible in 2019” - Horticulture Team Leader
Conclusion and Acknowledgements

Clearly the operation of Cork Prison is very much a team effort, led by senior management and supported by a very experienced and committed prison staff, along with a number of Professionals, Individuals, Voluntary, and Community organisations who contribute to the wellbeing and Rehabilitation of prisoners.

The overall focus in Cork Prison is on the life management of Prisoners with mentors available to support Prisoners in the areas of accommodation, training, Social Welfare, medical cards, education, employment, substance abuse programmes, physical and mental health, helping prisoners to address the root cause of their criminal behaviour etc.

With the various professionals both statutory and voluntary etc. as outlined in this report available within the prison and in the community, managed by the prison from custody into the community should help prisoners to sort out their lives, particularly those who may be interested in changing their lifestyle.

Sincere thanks to Governors Dawson and O’Brien and prison staff for all their help and support in 2018.

Thank you to all those individuals and agencies who contributed to this report, which shows the wide range of services available to prisoners in Cork Prison and in the Community.

Thank you to the Visiting Committee Secretary, Owen Molloy for his ongoing support throughout the year.

Thank you to Nikki O’Donovan for assistance in printing and binding of the report.

To my fellow Committee members Dermot O’Connell, Tomas Ryan, Anthony Donnelly, Jerry O’Sullivan, and former member Diarmuid Drenann for their interest and commitment.

We would also like to thank the Management and Staff of Arbour Hill Prison for their welcome and hospitality during our visit in June 2018.

Robin Murray
Chairperson
Cork Visiting Committee 2018