

IRISH PRISONS INSPECTORATE

MOUNTJOY PRISON

AND

DOCHAS CENTRE

MOUNTJOY INSPECTION: 20th - 31st
JANUARY 2003

Role of the Inspector of

Prisons and Places of Detention for Ireland

The Office of the Inspector was established by an order signed by the Minister for Justice Equality and Law Reform on the 21st February 2002. There is a statutory provision in the forthcoming Prisons Authority Bill for the establishment of a Prisons Inspectorate. The following are the terms of reference for the Inspector of Prisons and Places of Detention.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

To -

- (a) Inspect and report, as the Inspector considers appropriate, to the Minister on prisons and places of detention under the aegis of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.
- (b) Report in particular on conditions in those institutions and on the regimes in place for prisoners and detainees.
- (c) Investigate and report on any specific issue referred to the Inspectorate by the Minister.
- (d) Submit to the Minister an Annual Report on the activities of the Inspectorate.

GUIDELINES:

In carrying out an inspection of any prison or place of detention the Inspector will, in general terms, have regard to such matters as:

- (a) the quality of the regime;
- (b) the attitude of staff and inmates
- (c) health, safety and well-being of prisoners
- (d) the conditions of the buildings
- (e) questions of humanity and propriety;
- (f) any general pattern which may indicate possible inadequacies in the management of the prison

As the terms of reference provide, the Minister may also request the Inspector to investigate and report on specific issues or incidents connected with the running of any prison or place of detention. Furthermore, the Inspector may raise issues of concern, arising out of an investigation or an inspection, either with local management, the Director General of the Prisons

or the Minister. To facilitate the Inspector in carrying out his functions, he may consider complaints from prisoners but only to the extent that such complaints are relevant to the functions of the Inspector. The Inspector will, not later than four months following the end of each calendar year, submit a written report to the Minister on his activities during the year.

It is intended that the annual report will be published. The Inspector will also furnish the Minister with such information relating to his activities as the Minister may require from time to time.

The functions outlined above will also apply to any child detention centres and remand centres designated by the Minister under Section 150 of the Children Act, 2001.

These terms of reference may be further refined in the forthcoming Prisons Bill in the light of the experience gained in the interim. The Inspector will also be entitled to report and make recommendations, in the light of experience gained, on the contents of the legislation which will eventually make statutory provision for the Prisons Inspectorate.

Any enquires or comments about the inspectorate should be directed in the first instance to:

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DOCHAS CENTRE

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Appendix I

REPORT ON VISIT TO MOUNTJOY PRISON

COMMENCING THE 20th JANUARY 2003 TO 31st JANUARY 2003

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 On the 20th January 2003 to the 31st January 2003 an inspection of Mountjoy Prison was carried out by the Inspectorate Team which consisted of:

Mr. Justice Dermot Kinlen	Inspector of Prisons and Places of Detention
James Woods	Special Advisor Prisons Inspectorate
Martin McCarthy	Prisons Inspectorate
Prof William Binchy	Consultant
John Smyth	Consultant
Dr. Owen Carey	Consultant
Louise McAuliffe	Consultant
Seamus McArevey	Consultant

- 1.2 The purpose of inspection is to identify issues and take note of any areas of concern or good practice which may pertain.

Date: Mr. Justice Dermot Kinlen
Inspector of Prisons and Places of Detention

2. BACKGROUND.

- 2.1 Mountjoy Prison and the womens' prison known as the Dochas Centre are located on the North Circular Road, at Phibsborough, Dublin 7. The main prison (Mountjoy) was opened in 1850 while the newly built Dochas Centre was opened in 1999.

- 2.2 Mountjoy, when built, was viewed as the most modern prison of its time and offered the latest thinking in prison design & purpose. The principle penal treatment of that time was known as the "Separate System" which was based on the theory that each prisoner should be kept apart from each other, as otherwise, they would become more criminal as result of mingling together. This thinking resulted in the prisoners working long hours alone in their cells making shoes, tailoring, mattress making, weaving, etc. When outside their cells in the exercise yards, they had to walk paces apart from each other and could not communicate with one another.

- 2.3 Mountjoy is the most historic prison within the system and is well known throughout Ireland through song and story. However, in October 2001 some of its history was removed, with the transferring of the remains of the volunteers who were executed and laid to rest within the prison walls during the war of Independence, being reinterred in cemeteries outside of the prison.

2.4 Since the mid 1980s plays have been performed within the prison and members of the public can attend with proceeds from same being donated to various charities.

Mountjoy prisoners under the guidance of Prison Officers have for years being involved in various charity work both within and outside of the prison. An example of some of their work outside of the prison is the refurbishment or construction of community centres, scout halls, etc.

2.5 It is the main committal prison in the State for sentenced males aged 18 years and upwards, but it also holds a small number of remand, trial and debtor prisoners. Mountjoy Prison has been extremely overcrowded throughout the 1990s but with the opening of Cloverhill Prison where almost all of the remand / trial prisoners are now held relieved some of the overcrowding problem and this has been enhanced further with the opening of the new prison at the Midlands for sentenced prisoners. There is no in-cell sanitation facilities within the main prison except in B Basement and the Medical Unit. There is in cell sanitation in the separation unit which is now unoccupied. The emptying of chamber pots still exists after each period of lock up. When opened in 1850 it had in-cell sanitation but this was removed in the 1940's. Chaplaincy, Educational, Medical, Dentistry, Probation & Welfare services are provided in the prison.

DOCHAS CENTRE (Female Prison)

- 2.6 It is situated on the Mountjoy Prison complex at North Circular Road, Dublin
7. The new women's facilities replaced the old women's prison which was located in a wing of St Patrick's Institution adjacent to Mountjoy. The new facilities are a wonderful improvement on the accommodation which existed previously, but unfortunately they are overcrowded, which effects the ethos and regime of the new centre.
- 2.7 It was opened in 1999 and it comprises of six individual houses plus pre-release and the Healthcare Unit. The houses and facilities are designed in such a way as to form part of the external boundary wall of the centre with open air exercise areas within the centre of the buildings. The open air spaces consist of walkways with flower beds and seating and a special surface covered football/basketball yard. This design also allows for maximum natural light into the rooms. The sleeping accommodation comprises of single rooms, some of which have inter linking rooms to accommodate for mother / baby facilities. Each room has a toilet, wash hand basin and shower. Each house has a kitchen cum dining room and sitting room facility with tv and video, and reading material. However, most of the occupants of the houses use the general dining room facilities for main meals and use the kitchen area of their houses to make tea / coffee etc. The centre is operated on the policy of a graduation theory from an assessment house at the beginning of their sentence to a mid term house and finally to a pre-release house with each stage of the move adding further privileges such as less lockup time. If someone misbehaves, they can be

returned/downgraded as part of their punishment. One of the dining rooms operates as both a dining area and a visits area. T.v's are installed in all the rooms.

- 2.8 The total room capacity of the centre is 81 consisting of 78 single rooms & 3 cladded rooms. It holds remands, sentenced, trial, debtors, etc. women from age 18 years upwards.

The normal medical, chaplaincy, welfare educational services are also available to the women detained there.

3. STATISTICAL INFORMATION.

(Mountjoy male prison.)

- 3.1 The total cell capacity of the prison is as follows:-

268 Single cells.

59 Double cells.

16 Four person cells.

9 Padded or stripped cells.

352 Total. **(Bed capacity 450.)**

- 3.2 (There is an additional 107 cells in A Division and 32 cells in Separation Unit not included in the above accommodation as both of these areas are unoccupied.)

Prisoner information.

(On date the information was compiled 10/1/2003.)

Total number in custody.	436
Total on daily temporary release. (Not included in total numbers.)	(46)
Total number sentenced.	433
Number for trial.(2) Debtors (1).	(3)
Number serving sentences up to 12 months	87
Number serving sentences of over 12 months and up to 2 years.	122
Number serving sentences of over 2 years and up to 4 years.	79
Number serving sentences of over 4 years and up to 7years.	76
Number serving sentences of 7 years and up to 10 years.	42
Number serving sentences of more than 10 years.	13
Number serving life sentences.	14

Staffing. (Mountjoy male prison.)

- 3.3 There is a total staff of 501 which does not include teachers, doctors, psychiatrists, chaplains, psychologists, dentists, dietician, optician, drug treatment specialists, etc.

Dochas Centre. (Women's prison.)

3.4 Single rooms	74
Spl Observation rooms	4
Cladded rooms	<u>3</u>
Total	81

Prisoner information. (On date the information was compiled 16/1/2003.)

Total number in custody.	87
Total number on temporary release. (Not included in total numbers.)	(46)
Total on remand.	24
Total for trial.	4
Total number sentenced.	59

3.5 **Breakdown of Sentence**

Number serving sentences up to 12 months.	17
Number serving sentences over 12 months and up to 2 yrs.	16
Number serving sentences over 2 yrs & up to 4 yrs.	10
Number serving sentences over 4yrs & up to 7 yrs.	10
Number serving sentences over 7 yrs & up to 10 yrs.	3
Number serving sentences over 10 years.	1
Number serving life sentences.	2

3.6 **Staffing. (Dochas Centre).**

There is a total staff of 88 with 2 members job sharing and 2 members on temporary transfer.

(The above staffing does not include teachers, chaplains, probation and welfare, doctor, psychiatrists, counsellors, etc.)

4. GOVERNOR'S BRIEFING

Male Prison

4.1 On the first day of our inspection we met with the Governor and his senior staff. He outlined that there were 454 male and 93 women prisoners in custody on that day. The Dochas centre is designed to hold 81 but as seen from the numbers presented, it was holding 12 over capacity which puts additional strain on the facilities there. Offices and cladged cells had to be converted into room accommodation to accommodate the extra numbers. In fact, just before Christmas the numbers rose to 103. This is a most unsatisfactory arrangement. There is no other accommodation available for the women within the centre and the Governor stated that it may be possible to convert the locker room and offices over the front gate of the building to make room accommodation for the prisoners. If this were done it would create an extra 25 to 30 rooms. The locker rooms and offices would have to be relocated.

I recommend that this work be carried out in view of the overcrowding at the centre.

4.2 The Governor outlined that the A Division (wing) and the Separation Unit was closed for the commencement of the refurbishment of the prison. However, no such work has started. He stated that a multi disciplinary group which included personnel from Education, Chaplaincy, Medical, Probation and Welfare, Prison Officer Association, psychology, outside agencies (some of whom provide services to prisoners). Senior Prison staff etc as well as Head of Estates Management, Head of Human Resources, Head of Operations in

I.P.S. Headquarters along with two O.P.W. Architects, (one of whom was a senior architect) and worked full time on the project. They produced an outline plan for the refurbishment / rebuilding of the entire complex which included Mountjoy, St Patrick's and the Training Unit. The plans were on the basis of a "hub" model with all of the services and facilities feeding into it. In this way, one kitchen, one laundry, one reception, one educational area, one medical area etc. would service the entire complex, (with the present arrangement, all of these services are duplicated within each institution). The buildings were planned in such a way as to be located around the perimeter of the complex with open spaces in the centre thus allowing for maximum natural light into the cells and buildings. It also had a water feature running through the middle of it. The plans were rejected on costs grounds and to-date, as far as he knows, no new plans have been drawn up. The Governor is still awaiting information on same from the Estates Management Section at Headquarters. The prison was opened in 1850 and it is in dire need to be replaced or refurbished. The indication for the future would be a knock and build policy rather than refurbish what is there at present. Mountjoy Prison is one in a group of three prisons considered the worst in the country in relation to the condition of the buildings.

- 4.3 T.Vs have been installed in the Medical Unit and in the B Basement, but because of the cost of wiring and piping each cell, it is not proposed to extend this facility to any other area until the Governor is made aware of the redevelopment plans from Prisons Headquarters. There is no in-cell sanitary facilities except in the Medical Unit and B Basement.

- 4.4 There is good in-house psychiatric services provided to the prisoners by psychiatrists from the Central Mental Hospital, Dundrum. However, there is difficulty in getting prisoners transferred as inpatients to the C.M.H. due to shortage of available beds at the hospital. The Governor outlined that he was a member of a committee that was looking at this problem at present and they hoped to have a Service Level Agreement signed by all parties i.e. The C.M.H., the Eastern Region Health Board Authority, & the Prison Service very shortly, which hopefully, will help the situation. This of course is dependent on the financial input required to provide this level of service.
- 4.5 The educational facilities are limited due to the cramped space but the teaching staff were doing a good job with the facilities they had. The same applied to the workshop areas especially the D basement area which is extremely cramped and unsuitable as a workshop. However, the staff and prisoners there turn out great work and the computer area is a great success despite the poor conditions.
- 4.6 The Inspector raised the matter of staff problems and in particular staff alcohol problems. The Governor outlined that there are a lot of young staff attached to the prison and they were very much into sport, therefore alcohol abuse was not a big problem. There is a very small percentage identified as having a problem with alcohol. He outlined that there were 92 staff seeking a transfer at present but this was very much related to staff wanting to work in a prison close to where they reside.

- 4.7 The Governor outlined that they had 160 male and 30 female prisoners on a methadone maintenance programme. This programme is growing without the necessary supports, and it should be highlighted, that if a similar number were attending an outside clinic it would have all the back-up services such as counsellors, psychiatrist, doctor, welfare, nursing, clerical etc. It is being run on a “shoe string” within the prison with members increasing all the time. There is a problem in getting some of those who are on the programme transferred to another prison as Wheatfield is the only prison that provides an outlet for prisoners who are on methadone/maintenance. Cloverhill provides methadone maintenance to remand prisoners who are already on the programme at time of committal. This is going to lead to serious problems very soon and Mountjoy will shortly not be able to cope with the volume.
- 4.8 There is no information accompanying new committals into the prison and the staff are depending solely on the prisoner disclosing accurate information concerning themselves on arrival. This is most unsatisfactory, particularly in this age of computers when such essential information may be available to the other services such as the gardai, courts and probation & welfare who may have already dealt with the person.
- 4.9 There is no assessment, induction or sentence management programmes in operation within the prison. While all of the prisoners may not benefit from an assessment or indeed want to partake, an induction course is useful and helpful for at least to inform them of the geography of the place and to enlightening them as to the facilities and services provided.

- 4.10 The Inspector outlined the assessment / induction process in operation in Edinburgh prison when he visited there and felt that the Irish Prison Service could learn a lot from them.
- 4.11 Four multidisciplinary group meetings take place every month, two for the main prison and two for the Dóchas centre. The chair rotates monthly to demonstrate that all services are of equal importance and to promote a genuine team approach.
- 4.12 The governor finally outlined the difficulties encountered in managing a very old prison and the need to have it refurbished or rebuilt. He assured the Inspectorate team of his and his staff's full support and co-operation in visiting or inspecting any part of the prison. He also provided the inspectorate team with a large office for the duration of the inspection and all of the facilities that went with it, which were very much appreciated.

5. MEETING WITH VARIOUS GROUPS

Meeting with Chaplains.

- 5.1(a) The Inspector met three chaplains. They had a number of suggestions. The chaplains explained that there is a serious sanitation problem with overflowing receptacles leaking down in B division to the basement. They complained of the smell of sewage and jeyes fluid at the end of the basement. On inspection, the outlet at the area mentioned appeared to be blocked and a considerable depth of dirty liquid (soapy water, jeyes fluid and other materials floating in it) lodged there. This was directly underneath the steps at the end

of “B” wing where most of the prison population have to pass by on the their way to and from the shower area.

5.1(b) They say too that there is overcrowding in the basement cells with up to four bunks and maybe a fifth person on the floor at times. In this area there could be up to 6 or 7 people locked up for 23 hours per day. When they were allowed out they went out together, so they never got away from their immediate group. On the other hand they are placed there for their own protection from other prisoners, so to have them mix with other prisoners could be placing their safety in danger.

5.1(c) They state that there are complaints from inmates about the doctor always being accompanied by a medic officer. They also expressed concern about the medical care that prisoners had to talk in the presence of other medical staff and that they would prefer, naturally, to talk to their doctor on a one to one basis. Against this idea, the security aspect has to be pointed out. Doctors might insist on having physical support although it might be possible to have some sort of screening whereby the other staff are within sight but out of hearing.

5.1(d) They were also concerned about proper food. While they accepted there was a varied diet they said that certain dishes were not popular but chicken, mushroom rice and pies were their favourite. The introduction of curry to the Irish diet is of recent origin. They suggested that there should be a survey of

the waste to show what is popular and what is not. This could lead to an unbalanced diet if they only eat what they most enjoy.

5.1(e) Other complaints were made about property such as photos getting mixed up and not being received.

5.1(f) The installation of t.v's in the medical unit and B basement is of great use as it is support and company for the prisoner. However, it is not intended at present to extend this programme to other parts of the prison and the main reason given is the cost of wiring and piping. However, they pointed out that a portable television is capable of receiving National stations without such wiring and piping. The Inspector pointed out that in Spain the policy was for each prisoner to purchase their own tv and therefore it is their own property. They can take same with them on their departure. Also if they owned the set it would not be vandalised.

5.1(g) They complained that there was a great lack of information on the grievance procedure. The Inspector pointed out that one could appeal to the Governor or the Visiting Committee or indeed by writing to the High Court. The prisoners don't seem to be aware of all of these methods. (Not accepted by the Governor).

5.1(h) The inspection team were informed by the chaplains and staff that there were cockroaches in the prison and infact this was witnessed by members of the inspection team. A pest control company is employed to keep pests under control and spray the infested areas regularly. However, it appears

they cannot be eradicated because they increase and multiply so fast. The condition and age of the buildings with cracks and crevices throughout results in the cockroaches being able to live there without being able to be reached with the pest spray.

MEETING WITH PRISONERS

5.2(a) Sanitation

Sanitation in Mountjoy is the most pressing and obvious issue requiring resolution. It was the first concern of the prisoners whom we met. They described the health dangers graphically. No opportunity to leave one's cell to go to the toilet after 10 p.m. Pots so smelly that prisoners use other receptacles, such as milk cartons, which are not always disposed of safely; limited access to showers; broken showers; sewage being discharged from leaking pipes into the recreation yard. The sheer indignity of being denied access to toilets was clear from what the prisoners said, compounded by a sense of inequity relative to the conditions in other prisons and the basement area of Mountjoy.

The need to resolve this situation forthwith is obvious. The prison in its present condition may well involve the State in a breach of Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights. Arguments about the age of the prison cannot excuse the State. If Mountjoy is physically incapable of sustaining a basic sanitation system, its continued use as a prison simply cannot be justified. The problem has been allowed to fester for decades, so

the State, in the Inspector's view, is by now estopped from attempting to raise objections based on financial considerations.

Prisoners' Health

5.2(b) *Drugs*

The drugs issue dominated discussions. Prisoners expressed serious concern about the manner in which methadone was administered. They said that it involved prisoners queuing in public, the administration sometimes being accompanied by insults from the prison officers, sometimes being refused arbitrarily or vindictively and the methadone was watered down. [See medical Unit response re this complaint at page 28]. The prisoners stated that it was ridiculous that prisoners must have heroin in their urine samples before being considered for the methadone programme. In this way, it encouraged illegal drugs into the prison in order to comply with the requirements. This was a catch 22 situation, if they were caught with the illegal drugs they would be punished, yet they must have heroin in their sample. Management outlined that drug addicts are an extremely demanding and manipulative group who are constantly seeking ways and means of getting around the system and they find a refusal for additional medication beyond what the doctor prescribes hard to accept. The changing of the amount of prescribed methadone and its watering down is dealt with in another part of the report (page 28)

Prisoners said that the numbers permitted on the detox programme were too small. Some prisoners complained that it was stopped too quickly e.g for failure to give a urine sample where that failure might be excusable. It was accepted by everyone we met that drugs are widely available in the prison. They suggested that a swab test should be applied instead of the present urine sample method.

My response to the drugs issue is to marvel at its awesome character. The steps necessary to make drugs very difficult to get into the prison - restrictions on physical contact between prisoners and their families, extensive intrusive body searches and so on - carry a hugely negative price in terms of their impact on the dignity and morale of prisoners. Yet the price of letting drugs into the prison is also significant. It frustrates the chances of prisoners getting off drugs, it creates extra health risks and one may presume that it is associated with acts of violence, intimidation and aggression with some prisoners seeking to dominate the internal supply and distribution system.

HIV

5.2(c) Prisoners complained about the inhumane way in which diagnoses of HIV have been given to prisoners, without counselling. (Management say counselling is provided by the Probation and Welfare Service both pre and post tests) Doctors make HIV diagnosis announcements and return prisoners straight back to cells. There were also concerns about the risk of transmission resulting from the frequent blockage of toilets.

Specific complaints were made against a named doctor who, it was said, was reluctant to touch prisoners and did not look at them directly. The presence of prison officers during consultation between the doctor and prisoner about the prisoner's medical problems was felt to violate the prisoner's privacy. Old prisoners say buggery was unknown, but not so now. Officers say most is consensual. However, there have been criminal cases about sexual assaults on prisoners. This increases the risks of various venereal diseases.

Access to Dentist

5.2(d) Prisoners complained about long delays in accessing dental treatment. It was said that root canal treatment was given only to prisoners serving a certain minimum period which was believed to be five years. (The prison is not aware of prisoners being refused dental treatment because of the length of their sentence but this of course is a matter for the dentist).Any discrimination in treatment entitlements based on status as a prisoner would be contrary to International Human Rights norms. If dental treatment is commenced in prison arrangements should be made that it is continued on release. (of course some of the prisoners may not have been attending a dentist on the outside)

Other Health Concerns

5.2(e) They complained of not receiving a physical examination by the doctor who appeared afraid to place his hands on them. Strong complaints were made by prisoners of standards relating to clothes, sheets, duvet covers and mattresses. It was said that underclothes were changed only once a week,

that used duvet covers and sheets were given to prisoners when they arrived at the prison, that mattresses were years old, having had many prisoners with drug conditions or HIV sweat into them, that mattresses were not changed and that duvet covers were changed only once a fortnight.

A prison officer also stated that prisoners in the holding cell had to use mattresses that had been used by others and had not been cleaned.

The health concerns associated with these practices are obvious and unacceptable.

Racism

5.2(f) There was general agreement from the members of the educational team and the chaplains that racism is a feature of the prison. Some of the prisoners contested this, hesitantly; others said that racism was rampant.

No one claimed that prisoners had been victims of racially motivated attacks but it was accepted that prisoners were subjected to taunts and insulting and demeaning names by prisoners and by prison officers. One of the teachers said that a prison officer had summoned a black prisoner by calling him

“chalky white” and that prisoners often referred to black prisoners as “choco”.

It is probably no more or less than what is found in the general community.

However, it should not be tolerated. Staff should be frequently reminded that it is offensive and illegal.

The Inspector felt that our evidence on this important issue was far too limited to come to any clear conclusions. We did not meet any prisoners other than members of the Irish settled community. The research which has been

conducted in Wheatfield Prison outlines the level of racism in that prison, so the Inspector considers that Mountjoy would be no different to those findings.

Suicide

5.2(g) Prisoners claimed that the prison authorities could not be believed when, after a prisoner committed suicide, the authorities invariably said that his cell had been checked within the previous fifteen minutes. They said that checks were far less frequent than this and that the red light could be left unanswered for hours.

One assumes that the authorities will contradict this claim strongly. I am not sure on how I can most effectively resolve the conflict on this important issue. Perhaps a computer reading on cell call recordings might help and management would support such suggestion.

Visits

5.2(h) Prisoners made criticisms of the system for visits. They claimed that conditions in the visiting centre used to be “dire”, with syringes lying around. Whilst the conditions had improved, the roof still leaked and the visiting counters were dirty. The contrast with the Dochas Centre’s facilities was highlighted. Concerns were expressed about the requirement to identify six visitors. They feared that those named on the computer could be picked up on their employer’s computer. It was said that this number was too few and that stigma and suspicion could fall on those named when these lists became part of the computerised system. It was also claimed that the Governor had promised an extension of 15 minutes for visiting-time but that this had not yet

occurred. They also suggested that there should be private family visits which could be offered as incentives to well behaved prisoners. On inspection of the visiting area there was no evidence of the leaking roof or of syringes about. The level of hygiene within the area was satisfactory.

Food

5.2(i) The prisoners complained about the predictability of the food. They complained that the food was cold by the time they reached the top landing and that they had to pass the toilets on their way to their cells with the food on an uncovered tray. They outlined that the "A" Division was much better with the stairs to the upper landings halfway down the wing and away from the toilets. They felt the authorities should have closed "B" wing and not "A" wing. They did not seriously criticise its quality or nutritional content but gave hearsay accounts about poor hygienic practices in the kitchen. However, on inspection of the kitchens on three different occasions during our inspection, there was no evidence of poor hygiene practices and in fact they have certificates of hygienic awards proudly displayed on the wall.

Tv in cells

5.2(j) The lack of television access in cells (save for the basement and Medical Unit) was the source of sustained criticism by prisoners. I have to say that this appears to be an entirely legitimate complaint. Access to television will of course provide entertainment; it will also provide for the possibility of a wider understanding of the world and interest in what is going on outside the prison.

With literacy levels among prisoners very low, television will offer the best means of keeping connected with the wider world. It has a beneficial soporific result particularly in the evening.

In the year 2003, technical objections to the installation of television should be looked upon with considerable suspicion. If these objections have validity, portable televisions should be permitted. One prisoner said that the reason given for not permitting portable televisions was that this might lead to acts of lethal violence by prisoners who did not have a television.

I would suggest that the reasons for the lack of provision of televisions should be closely scrutinised. Unless they are unanswerable, I recommend televisions should be permitted. However, on raising this issue with the Governor and other senior managers, they outlined the problems involved and the need for updating the generator. They were not opposed in principle to t.v in cells.

Communications

- 5.2(k) The prisoners complained that a telephone call to their solicitor or to the Samaritans was taken from their family telephone call allowed for that day. They also outlined that the calls to their solicitor were cut off after six minutes and that the time allowed was unrealistic. (Calls to the Samaritans are free and separate from the call list according to the Governor)

A complaint they raised related to being searched on return to their cell from a solicitor's visit and of the officer reading the documents being exchanged

between the solicitor and themselves. The mail is both slow in and out of the prison. A letter out takes approximately two weeks. They object to all mail being censored.

No specific dates or times were given in relation to these complaints and therefore it would be difficult for the authorities to investigate. However, they are serious complaints and I recommend that the Governor have the practice as outlined investigated to establish if such is correct and if found to have foundation to rectify accordingly. (It is contrary to the regulations to read correspondence between his/her legal representative and the offenders)

Education

5.2(l) In our discussion with prisoners, there was a general agreement that the educational services were good, so far as they went. The school, the drama and the sports facilities were praised. One prisoner complained that those wishing to study for a degree with the Open University were pressed into the sociology course, even if their preference was for arts. Another prisoner complained of delays, caused by prison officers, in starting educational work in the morning. Although school opens at 9.00 a.m. It was said that prisoners sometimes might not actually reach the room until 9.45 a.m.

Visiting Committee

5.2(m) The prisoners stated that they had no belief in them. They stated that if they approached them concerning a problem and if the problem was awaiting a High Court application they will not get involved. They stated that they would

be told to see their solicitor. They also complained that they did not operate an appeals process in relation to punishment imposed by the Governor.

5.3 MEETING WITH THE EDUCATIONAL STAFF

Education

5.3(a) The two members of the educational team whom we met impressed us as dedicated teachers imbued with a deep and generous educational philosophy. They said that the Governor supported all their initiatives, which included developing wide contacts between the prisoners and people from outside prison. They said that the prisoners perceived members of the educational team as confidants. Literacy levels were low but, even with those who lacked literacy skills, much could be done. The emphasis was on an interdisciplinary approach, extending into the arts, including music and film documentary.

5.3(b) The members of the educational team were of the view that racism is rampant among prisoners and staff. They said that it was not allowed in their courses. Their policy was to integrate traveller prisoners with prisoners from the settled community but they found that the traveller prisoners tended to resist this.

5.3(c) In the main male prison there are 25 teachers plus a head teacher who provide educational classes. Some of the teachers may also provide classes in other prisons. It is noted that of the 25 teachers, 5 of them are assigned to literacy, but those 5 also teach other subjects.

5.3(d) The examination results for 2002 show that a total of 11 prisoners participated in the junior certificate 9 of them took one subject, while the other 2 took two subjects each. 4, took one subject each in their leaving certificate, two were involved in the (NEC) distance learning courses. FETAC (further education and training awards council) awarded 34 prisoners with certificates, mostly in communications foundation courses, while a few of the 34 received them in computer literacy, computer application and health related fitness. In the cookery examination (grade one advanced cookery) 4, sat the exams while 2 sat the Royal Irish Academy of music Grade one and Grade two exams. In the computer examination Mous & Pitmans 6 prisoners participated. The daily average number attending educational classes was 66 and educational classes are available 11 months of the year. The educational facilities are closed for the month of August.

5.4 MEETING WITH MEDICAL STAFF/ MAIN PRISON AND MEDICAL UNIT

5.4(a) The Inspectorate visited the area under the circle which house the doctor's rooms, pharmacy, files storage, etc. This was a stiflingly warm area. With what appeared to be inadequate ventilation and absent natural light, for the most part.

We spoke with the Medical Orderlies and they explained that there were only two nurses allocated to nursing duties in the Main Prison, neither was on duty on the day we visited. The bulk of the care is still provided by the Medical Orderlies.

The medical orderlies showed us the ledger into which patients names are entered, requesting to see the doctors and those of new patients. There were up to thirty patients seen in each daily session by the doctor. The doctors alternate weeks within the prison complex, i.e between the facility in the Medical Unit and the Main complex.

All patients are seen, and examined, by the doctors work within 12 to 24 hours of committal to prison. Usually a much shorter period elapses. All patients have an initial medical history taken and confirmed by the Medical Orderlies on arrival.

The Medical orderlies explained the system of methadone administration, monitoring, and urine checking. They explained that a doctor with special qualifications is available each Friday to monitor the system and see patients who request dose adjustment or who are having problems. This is supplemental to the Prison General Practitioner complement.

With almost 160 patients been given Methadone, it makes Mountjoy, by far the biggest clinic of it's type in the country. The medical orderlies commented on the absence of dedicated security staff, staff to monitor the giving of urine samples, secretarial, and specialist nurse back up that accompanies all outside clinics. Staff rejected any allegation from other Prisons that charts were mislaid, pointing to the comprehensive filing system that occupies most of their working area. There is a computerised Medical Records system available, but not used by the doctors. There appears to be an industrial relation problem concerning their use.

The services of a Pharmacist to prepare the medication and the removal of the pharmacy from its present location would be welcomed by staff.

The Medical Orderlies felt insecure as to their future role within the system with the introduction of nursing Grade Officers. The hygiene maintained by staff, in trying conditions were admirable, but the false ceiling concealed mouse droppings, indicating ongoing rodent infestation, despite the many attempts to contain such infestation.

Medical examination room, beside the chiefs office "B" base.

5.4(b) This is a bare room with a desk and chair. It has no facilities for the purposes for which it is intended and should be adapted, by the addition of an examination couch and wall mounted equipment, blood pressure monitor etc. It should be then used exclusively for examination and consultation purposes. Management state that this room is not exclusively for medical use and is required as an interview room by other agencies.

Medical Examination room, "C" wing.

5.4(c) This was clean, bright, and fitted with hand basin, desk, chairs, hand dryer, and examination equipment. The rooms on either side are used for storage and dressing respectively.

Medical unit

5.4(d) This was accessed via the stairs. Prisoners have the facility to be brought by lift to the surgeries in the Medical Unit. We reviewed the doctor's surgeries, visiting consultant's examination room, record and dressing rooms. The psychologist's room was in use. We spoke with a member of the Nursing Staff, who outlined their duties and impressions. There were 4 nursing staff in the Unit.

Any question of manipulation of Methadone dosage was ruled out. The differences in texture and taste reported by prisoners is explainable by varying pharmaceutical companies' preparations, of what must be legally the same dose of methadone (1mg/1ml) [see page 16 re prisoners complaints] We inspected the chart and filing systems and viewed the ledger. The nurse outlined the patient profile of the Medical Unit. For example 20 or more patients are on "triple therapy" in the Unit, compared with only one patient being so treated in the Main Prison block.

We inspected the cladded Cell on the top floor of the Unit. It was unoccupied and appeared quite old. The absence of a patient activated alarm was commented on. We inspected the kitchen, of the Medical Unit which was pristine. We inspected the prisoners' visiting arrangements, again these were bright and clean.

5.4(e) We held a working lunch with the two part time General Practitioners who provide the cover to the Mountjoy Main Prison and Medical Unit. They were critical of the existing facilities, agreeing that ventilation, etc was poor and

there was inadequate file storage area. Their suggestion, that a temporary surgery area, with (1) examination rooms for General Practitioners, Psychologist, Psychiatrist (2) Treatment room for nurses (3) File storage area (4) Secretarial area (to house the "Medical desk") and obviously staff rooms, changing facilities, showering facilities, etc to be situated on the site of the presently defunct "old kitchen" area. This would appear to be a blindingly obvious solution to an intolerable working environment, at least as a stop gap measure.

The question of paramedical staff was discussed. Dietetic services are provided in conjunction with Dietetic Service of St. James's Hospital, and are adequate. The Optician service is adequate. The Dental service is adequate. A problem arises in the length of time in which it is required to see a dentist. The waiting period is two to six weeks depending on demand. This means those prisoners with dental pain have to see the doctor to expedite their appointment. The use of a dental nurse to provide a triage service to the prisoners, one or two mornings a week was considered to be a good idea. There are problems with access to physiotherapy and occupational therapy services. At present a prisoner has to be referred to a hospital, see a consultant and be referred to physiotherapy. A part time physiotherapy service was felt by the doctors to be a useful adjunct. The doctors raised the question of secretarial services and filing of records. At present the nearest equivalent to a secretarial services is the "medical desk" officer who is responsible for the making of appointments for prisoners to visit the various clinics. The doctors pointed out that this officer was often taken off this duty and placed on other duties. The officers rotate this position, which is

frustrating to the doctors, as no sooner has someone learned the ropes, than they move on to another posting.

As an initial move, this post should be structured in such a way that the officer is not taken off at any time. In the future, a properly trained medical secretary should be employed. As a temporary measure, the Inspector suggested looking at the possibility of employing the doctor's own secretarial staff, or getting someone with the relevant experience to provide temporary cover.

Findings

Main Prison

5.4(f) In an ideal world, with unlimited resources, the prison should be pulled down, wing by wing and rebuilt with full facilities for all occupants both inmates and staff. Allowing for the age and physical condition of the main prison building, there is a good sense of team spirit amongst the medical orderlies. The Medical Orderlies have a genuine concern about their role in the future of the prison medical service provision. These concerns should be addressed by the Irish Prison Service in Headquarters and a way found to redeploy the skills they have accumulated in the service.

The development, as suggested above of a surgery complex on the site of the old kitchen should proceed forthwith.

Medical Unit

5.4(g) All areas in the Medical Unit appeared clean and well maintained. The main prison was adequate, but commensurate with the age of the building, and is very obviously, in recycled cell accommodation.

Overall

5.4(h) One gets the feeling of a high level of service, by insufficient staff in infra structurally poor situation. The on site documentation displayed showed adequate note keeping. The implementation of computerised medical records should be a priority. The service would appear to be geared very much to crisis response.

Perhaps the introduction of Nursing grade officers will allow for the development of health education, quality improvement and mental health, substance misuse and infectious disease protocols for both staff and prisoners. There should be provision of health information, specifically and more generally - in written, oral and where possible multicultural aspects. Nursing staff should be encourage to develop in house and external research, as indeed should medical orderlies if they so wish.

The planning of future psychiatric services must take in the concerns of the prison in line with a collaborative approach to service developments.

The provision of a dedicated Health Care Manager, as envisaged in the report on "Prison Health Care services" should be immediately implemented.

[See page 47 of May 2001 publication.]

In the future, provision of Specialist, Consultant led clinic for Hepatitis and HIV infected patients should be incorporated into any care plan. This would greatly facilitate the inmates, and correspondingly, reduce the Hospital outpatient load.

General Practitioner Services.

5.4(i) It is an impossible task for any General Practitioner to provide quality services when they have to work under the physical constraints of the main prison. However, the two General Practitioners are providing an adequate service, despite the infra structural deficiencies. As with the report on Prison Health Care Services, consideration of linkages with local Area Health Board structures, Department of Academic General Practice and the involvement of the Irish College of General Practitioners and the Prison Doctors Association in establishing an Academic curriculum within the service would be a helpful move. Two full time General Practitioner equivalents, which is the agreed provision for Mountjoy, should allow for the recruitment of an extra GP, possibly from an Academic Dept who might facilitate such a development. Some other doctors think a full time prison doctor is a negative move.

5.5 MEETING WITH PSYCHOLOGIST

5.5(a) The Inspectorate met the psychologist attached to Mountjoy Prison who is the senior and only psychologist. He deals with the male prison. There is no psychologist in the female prison. As a matter of urgency the Inspector would recommend that the staff be increased to at least two in the male prison and one in the female prison. The one psychologist hopes that a part time psychologist will be introduced before the end of this month. The service entails six sessions of three full days of face to face individual work with offenders. Also the psychology service participates in fortnightly multi disciplinary prison meetings, scheduled health care meetings, suicide awareness meetings and reviews of offenders including parole board reviews.

The senior psychologist has also the responsibility for the supervision of a psychologist post in St. Patrick's Institution and for the new proposed part time psychologist in Mountjoy. The senior psychologist also has responsibilities in relation to a wider committee work and policy development associated with the Irish Prison Service.

As a comment, the Inspector notes that practically every problem has committees either sitting on it or about to sit on it or committees that are in the past. There should be millions of reports. It would be interesting to know how many of these reports became activated into reality. A buzz word belonging to the Service is "prioritise". I suppose it is slightly different from "the matter is receiving attention".

5.5(b) The core work of the psychologist service is to provide individual therapeutic services to offenders involving long term therapy with provision of counselling and crisis counselling. He states that resources to date have not allowed for the development of the service or input into development of offending behaviour programmes, mental health problems, drug and alcohol treatment or additional staff training initiatives. There does not seem to be any forensic psychologist in the Prison Service.

5.5(c) The psychology service should also be involved in prison officers training and development. The prison officers are really the closest to the prisoners. They are intelligent people and could play a greater role if they fully understood the psychology of various problems associated with the prisoners.

5.6 MEETING WITH THE POA

5.6(a) The Inspector met officers of the POA. They complained bitterly that there

was a lack of meaningful strategy and that there was no uplifting focus on what they were supposed to be doing. Headquarters send out orders.

They complained that there is no sign of a long term management plan and that the management do not seem to learn from past mistakes. That when a

prisoner comes in that there is no information available to his guardians.

They know nothing about the prisoner. There is no proper induction or assessment programme.

The POA are never consulted. Millions of Euros are plunged into the system, particularly during the last five years, but everything is decided by the Prison

Service, H.Q or the OPW or there is no strategic plan for anything. (The

Governor states "The POA are involved and consulted, on a large number of issues within the prison")

5.6(b) They spent a fortune on the computer system (prisoner records information

system) PRIS but it was not and is never used to its full potential. It is

incapable of doing what it should do. It is not yet linked to the Courts system,

the Garda or to Pulse. It is so inefficient that paper records are still

preserved. They have to be. They state that it was a system rejected by

Scotland and modified for Ireland. Some P19's are not recorded. It provides

false records. Many staff do not know how to work the system. There should

be manual overrides to control it but there is not.

5.6(c) There was a plan to put a new gate at an enormous cost right up to the window where we were sitting. It was not needed by anyone or requested indeed by anyone but the person in the IPS said it was necessary for large trucks. This is simply not so. This new entrance is now in limbo.

As regards waste disposal in “B” division the urinal and excrement overflows onto lower floors. The toilets for staff is accommodated in a portacabin.

There is prime land at the entrance and it is derelict. The present “temporary” canteen for staff is a one storey building and they are putting additional floors on to it. All of the offices could be placed there as there is much less space available in the main prison.

5.7 MEETING WITH THE STAFF EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME OFFICERS

5.7(a) The inspectorate met with officers engaged in the Employee Assistance Programme who act as staff support officers. We were informed that the staff welfare service which is based at Park House, The North Circular Road, Dublin is staffed by two full-time officers. The main part of the service is made up of voluntary support staff officers who are the principal providers of the Employee Assistance Programme in each prison.

5.7(b) They gave a description of the role of the staff support officer, as they see it, which is as follows:

1. To assist fellow staff members who were experiencing difficulties, either professionally or personally, and the provision of confidential guidance and information service.
2. To assist management in rectifying problems without recourse to disciplinary procedures.

Some of the tasks involved in the job were described as:

- (a) Helping a colleague to accept and acknowledge the very existence of a problem or difficulty.
- (b) Providing personal support to staff by acting as an informed friend and being a willing listener.
- (c) Providing appropriate and useful information to staff and their families.
- (d) Offering advice guidance and direction.
- (e) Negotiating with the Governor and/or the Prison Service on behalf of a staff member.
- (f) Pointing in the direction of appropriate professional help.
- (g) Self education by way of new information, circulars and resources.
- (h) Debriefing after a critical or violent incident.

There are four different methods of referral to the programme, self referral, management referral, union referral, and concerned friend referral.

5.7(c) An advisory committee was established, comprising of representatives from the Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform, the Prison Officers' Association, Prison Governors and Staff Welfare Service to guide and advise on the programme.

The officers were satisfied that the programme in principle was good but it certainly required a lot of fine-tuning. They felt that the service was not advertised, promoted, or marketed properly by the prison management, or the Irish Prison Service. They said that there was a great lack of information concerning their role and work and that a team leader plus regular meetings would be very beneficial to themselves.

They also expressed disappointment at the failure of the Advisory Committee to respond to a draft report of 5th October 2001.

5.8 MEETING WITH “HEADS OF SERVICE.”

5.8(a) The inspectorate team had a meeting with the heads of service responsible for the day to day operations (mostly senior staff on the floor). of the prison. They were asked to outline the difficulties they encounter in the management of the prison and any suggestions or recommendations that they might like to make concerning the improvements to the prison.

5.8(b) The Inspector spoke of driving instructions for prisoners and felt if the prisoners who steal cars could drive them properly that other road users may be safer. The Inspector went on to relate about his experiences in St Patrick's when he was a member of the visiting committee there. He thought that the mechanical shop and the driving instructions given there, at that time, were

excellent. Many got driving jobs as result, even to the level of International truck driving. It was outlined that no driving instructions takes place within Mountjoy prison and that there were no facilities for such to happen. If such were to be set up, it would create a new post and additional costs.

Furthermore, if such instructions were to be given, it would have to happen outside the prison as there were no roadways suitable within the walls. This would raise security issues for those selected for the driving course. The Inspector stated that mechanical training in the care of cars and driving instructions should be provided in all prisons where there is an educational service. If a new grade or some such excuse is used to delay it, that is not satisfactory.

5.8(c) In-cell sanitation, demolition of the entire prison, renovations of the prison were major concerns to the group. There were many views and opinions expressed but all agreed of the need for major structural alterations to be carried out. It was felt that the cells were too small to put in-cell sanitation into them, the cell windows were too small to allow for natural light, the cell doors were too narrow and the height of the doors were too low for modern standards. They also felt that the foundations needed engineering examination to clarify if they could withhold major alterations to be carried out. When asked if the prisoners and staff could rebuild A wing it was stated and agreed by everyone that they could do a cosmetic job but it would not be the correct way of approaching it. It would be a further waste of money.

5.8(d) The supply of electrical power to the prison was raised as a concern and the urgent need to update the current generator. This led to discussions concerning the installation of televisions into prisoners' cells in the main prison. It was felt that such additional drain on the power may not be possible and if the TVs were all switched on at the same time, say after evening recreation on return to their cells, the power would not be sufficient and could result in the entire prison being plunged into darkness. The question of battery operated televisions was then discussed. It was pointed out that it requires a large number of batteries to operate a TV and that the charge in them only lasts up to 3 hours. It would then require battery chargers to be installed. If up to 400 prisoners required 6 to 8 batteries each to be recharged, it would involve major operational problems.

5.8(e) Fire and fire escapes were discussed and the Inspector outlined his dread of fire as result of his experiences of dealing with the Stardust disaster and also his other personal experiences of hotel evacuations. The question of the evacuation of the entire prison taking place was discussed and the difficulties encountered in doing so. This had never happened but the Inspector felt that it should be kept in mind and done if at all possible.

5.8(f) The conditions for staff was raised and it was felt that they are deplorable. The staff's toilets are in a portacabin. The conditions for the prisoners in regard to sanitary facilities are also awful but staff still have to supervise and observe the prisoners when they use the toilets. The prisoners conditions were the staffs' working environment.

5.8(g) There was concern raised regarding the number of prisoners that were coming onto the methadone maintenance programme. The fact that inter prison transfers were difficult to implement as result of such programmes not taking place in some of the other prisons was also raised. It was felt that if the numbers on the programme kept increasing at the same rate as had been in the past six months that Mountjoy would not be able to cope with them. They also felt that the necessary support for such numbers was not available within the prison.

5.8(h) The group were of the opinion that Mountjoy needed to be knocked and replaced as it had all the problems of a building that was over 150 years old. There were areas being used for activities and workshops that were never intended for such use and were completely unsuitable. The medical, educational, work / training, showering, laundry areas are all scattered around the various buildings and most of them are in spaces that are far too small for such activities or services.

No one in the prison seems to know of any future plans. The Inspectorate contacted the Irish Prison Service Headquarters in Clondalkin and received the following information. "Refurbishment work at Mountjoy Prison including in cell sanitation is being assessed at present. A feasibility study is being carried out and a decision will be made on completion of same".

Arising from this reply from Irish Prison Service Headquarters a further letter was forwarded enquiring as to who was carrying out the assessment, who is conducting the feasibility study and the date of completion of both studies. It

appears strange to the Inspectorate that such a study was not carried out prior to the plans being drawn up to refurbish Mountjoy. Surely such research was carried out before deciding on suitable plans, and if it were, what is the reason for present assessment and feasibility study?

Note:- A communication was received from Prison Service Headquarters on 24th March 2003 outlining the recommendation contained in the feasibility study with regard to "A" wing and "D" wings. The communication stated that such study was conducted on the personal request of the Minister. The report is being examined by the Minister, The Interim Parole Board and Prison Management and the Inspector will not comment on same until he knows the result of their examination

5.9 MEETING WITH INDIVIDUAL GROUPS

5.9(a) The Inspector met some staff who had requested to see him. The Inspector pointed out that he does not hear individual cases as they had other means of discussing their grievances and that they also had a union representing them, whom he already had met. The staff stated that the union's views were not necessarily theirs and felt they had complaints which were worth raising.

5.9(b) An outline of some of the matters raised consisted of health and safety issues and the prison regime. The poor sanitary facilities for prisoners and staff and the closure of the Separation Unit, which had been fitted with in cell sanitation only a short time before closure. Lack of showering facilities for prisoners and only one change of underwear. The transfer of prisoners at random based on crisis reaction plus the issue of dirty bed clothing to new arrivals, especially

aliens arriving late at night. They were in favour of t.v in the cells. The condition in which B Basement prisoners were held and the lack of exercise in open yards was also outlined. They urged the use of drug sniffer dogs and a back up clerical staff to augment the medical services for prisoners. They outlined that all the improvements were geared towards the prisoners and nothing for staff. The staff toilet facilities were a disgrace, just a portacabin in an open area. No huts for officers on outside patrols during bad weather conditions and poor canteen facilities. [Management state that cabins are provided for staff on outside patrols].

Prisoners smoking hash and nothing been done about it by the authorities, but staff had to inhale it when they were confined in recreation halls. (The Governor states “the smoking of cannabis is not tolerated by the prison as is reflected by the number of disciplinary reports dealt with and the severity of punishments imposed”).

5.9(c) Rats were present on the grounds. No facilities for staff involved in grounds cleaning or involved in very dirty work for washing and showering before each break of duty. It was placing the staff involved in danger of contacting diseases as no proper protective clothing was issued to staff involved in such dirty work. They also complained of no staff training after the initial training on joining the service. No counselling services available for staff who suffer trauma as a result of being involved in serious incidents such as a suicide and are not supported by the authorities. (The Governor states that “Suitable clothing and showering time is in place for staff involved in grounds, cleaning

or dirty work. Officers do receive training throughout their service. Counselling is provided to staff on request following traumatic incidents”).

5.9(d) Most of the issues raised are already covered within the report. On inspection of the staff toilets, which are located in a portacabin, we found that they were clean tidy and acceptable. Canteen facilities are provided by an outside caterer. Conditions in “B” basement sanitary facilities for prisoners etc is already mentioned within the report.

5.10 MEETING WITH PROBATION AND WELFARE

5.10(a)The Inspectorate met the Probation and Welfare Officer who outlined that temporary releases are assessed by a local Welfare Officer. The Head of the Service thought that every welfare officer should have a broad experience and therefore persons involved in prisons were normally only there for three years. Frequently they were young and relatively inexperienced.

5.10(b)In the view of the Inspector, if after induction and training an officer feels that she/he would like to work in a prison they should be encouraged to do so. While undoubtedly they should have a broad training once fully exposed to the different aspects of social work then that their abilities should be assessed. It would be desirable to have very experienced people in the prison service for a longer period than three years.

5.10(c) He suggested that all services should be at one stop in prison. This is an excellent idea. We saw it in Edinburgh in their superb induction centre. Every prisoner arriving is assessed by an experienced prison officer but also by a medical and support agencies and is exposed to all (i.e organisations like the Samaritans, Alcoholics anonymous, Narcotics anonymous, Gambling anonymous, Home advisors, Probation Service, Chaplaincy). That is not an exhaustive list but it would be a good idea for a proper induction centre which could also be open to the resident prisoner who want to avail of these services.

5.10(d) He felt that the probation service should interact with the psychologist as it was of great benefit to get differing perspectives. They also run alcohol awareness sessions. The Inspector is aware of the benefit of these meetings. He also spoke of the methadone support group and their work in conjunction with the Merchant Quay project (i.e Franciscan work with drug addicts). They try to motivate prisoners who want to be drug free.

6. TOUR OF INSPECTION

“A” DIVISION

6.1(a) The first section we entered was the A Division which no longer is used for cellular accommodation but at the circle end of the division there is an area used as a methadone distribution station . This consist of a very small waiting room and a urine sampling station, fitted with mirrors. A door leading from this area brings one to the distribution station which also holds the filed records of those on the programme and the results of urine samples from the

laboratory. A photograph of the prisoner is placed on the methadone record sheet to ensure the correct prisoner receives the prescribed medication. The methadone is issued through a serving hatch in the wall adjacent to this room for security purposes.

At the opposite end of the A Division from the circle, there are five showers which are solely for those who use the gym in the "A" recreation area.

Fabric Workshop

6.1(b) A door leading from one of the recreational halls led us into a fabric workshop which makes jeans, cords, gym clothes bags, curtains, etc for use within the prison service. There were 21 prisoners working there and the workshop is a recognised FETAC training area, however, as yet no prisoners have received any certificates. The officer in charge stated that the lack of permanent staff in the workshop was the reason that no certificates have been achieved to date.

Metal Workshop

6.1(c) Next on the tour was the metal workshop which had 12 prisoners working at manufacturing gates, making steel window grids, plus other items for use within the prison. This workshop also manufactures some items on order from the public. This is also a FETAC training workshop and six prisoners working there have received merit certificates. The officer in charge stated that he had 18 prisoners in training but that the daily average was between 12 to 14. There was a great work "buzz" within the shop and everyone appeared very busy.

Recreation and Exercise Areas

6.1(d) We entered one of the two video/TV recreation halls which was being painted by the prison trade staff. The area was reasonably clean and fresh. We proceeded to the second t.v/recreation exercise area where 48 prisoners were either watching t.v, playing table tennis or snooker or walking around an adjoining exercise yard. We were informed that these prisoners do not work or attend education classes, but a few of them may attend the gym. We were also informed that most of them were drug addicts. We examined the toilets which were just off the recreation hall and found them to be in a poor hygienic state. They appeared not to have been cleaned for some time. There were lights installed in the toilet area but none of them were working on the day of our inspection. The wash hand basins were also in a most unhygienic state and none of the hand dryers were working.

Visiting Area

6.1(e) On entering from "A" Division there is a room which is used to search prisoners on their return from the visiting area. Prisoners can be searched at random. On the morning of our inspection 13 prisoners had been searched and nothing illegal had been found according to the records. The visiting area consists of three identical large rooms with a wide table placed down the centre. There is a barrier of approximately 12 inches high running down the middle of the tables and two officers observe the visits from a high seat at both ends of the rooms. CCTV is also in operation. The visitors sit on one side of the table while the prisoners sit on the opposite side. There are a

number of private visiting rooms for professional visits. There is also a room fitted with a screen from table top to ceiling which prevents any contact between either sides. Communication is via holes in a steel grid in the table top. Prisoners who have smuggled illegal substances/articles are placed on "screened visits" for a period as ordered by the Governor. Parents of prisoners are generally not placed on screened visits, unless they have been found smuggling or attempting to smuggle illegal articles into or out of the prison.

RECEPTION

6.1(f) The officer in charge explained the process of committing and discharging prisoners and outlined that all committals are seen first by the medical orderly or nurse. Their particulars, marks or scars and clothing are recorded. They have a shower and are issued with prison clothing and then brought into the main prison cell building. The exact same procedures applies when a prisoner is being discharged. The showers, wash hand basins, toilets and urinals were all in good condition. A small number of prisoners work in the reception laundering the clothes, which are used within the area. An x-ray machine is used to check clothing and parcels left in for prisoners. The reception was built in the past 20 years and is more modern than most other parts of the prison.

B BASEMENT

6.2(a) There were 36 prisoner held there at the time of our inspection, one of whom was awaiting transfers to the main prison block. This is a segregated area

where prisoners deemed to need protection are held. They may be segregated at their own request, or as a result of fighting with other prisoners, or for their own protection for failure to deliver on drug deals, or for the nature of their offence. We were informed that there were 7 different factions there at the time of the visit. The area consists of 4 single cells (one of which needed repairs and was out of order) 9 four person cells and 2 cladded cells. All of the cells except the cladded had in cell sanitation and also had t.v's installed. There were 2 showers, 2 toilets, 1 wash hand basin and 1 hand dryer installed on the landing.

The cladded cells had the walls cladded as well as cladding or protection covering on the floors. There were no in-cell sanitation within them and both had call button bells inside them which activated a red light outside the cell door. The windows were covered with perspex sheeting. One of the cladded cells was occupied when we visited.

There are two exercise yards attached to the basement area, one is reasonably large in which football could be played, while the other one is very small and not suitable for games. This base area has been renovated in the past 10 years and the in cell sanitary facilities were installed at that time.

Overcrowding within Basement Area

We were shown a cell which contained four prisoners. The holding cell we were told by the prison officer in charge, frequently contains several prisoners on account of overcrowding. These conditions conflict with paragraph 49 of

the (CPT) Standards of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

“B” Division

6.2(b) We then proceed to B1 landing (ground floor) where there were 33 prisoners held. The toilets, slop out receptacles, urinals, wash hand basins, hand dryers and drinking fountains are located on both sides at the end of the landing. The rubbish (waste) bins are also placed immediately outside both of the toilet/wash areas. None of the drinking fountains or hand dryers were working. Tiles were missing off the walls of both the toilet and wash area. Both of the slop out receptacles (hoppers) were blocked, one with dirty water and the other with empty or partially empty milk cartons. The toilet bowls and urinals were very dirty and the floors of both toilet areas were wet with coloured liquid. The refuse sacks in the bins were overflowing and there was a coloured liquid seeping out from the bottom of the sacks. There was a smell from the area and the level of hygiene was poor.

The staff outlined that there was a problem getting prisoners to clean the areas and that there was no extra gratuity for such work. They stated that prisoners in work shop training areas got extra gratuity for their work. The Inspector strongly recommends that some extra recognition should be offered to those who clean the toilet areas. On a return visit some time later to the toilet area of B wing to take photographs, there was a big improvement in the hygiene levels compared to the previous visit.

“B2”

6.2(c) We then went to the 2nd level landing (B2) where 30 prisoners were held in 30 single cells. The toilets, urinals, hoppers, (slop-out receptacles) wash hand basins, hand dryers and drinking fountains are located on both sides of the landing at the end of the wing. Three of the four hand dryers were not working. The drinking fountain was not working either. Rubbish bins were placed close to the toilet areas. Tiles were broken and missing off the wall. There was water on the floors of both areas and one of the wash hand basins was leaking. The toilets and general area was in need of cleaning and the overall hygiene levels were in need of improvement. The landing walkways were reasonably clean but the paint work and overall view of the area was drab.

“B3”

16.2(d) We visited the top floor landing where there were 36 prisoners held in 31 single cells. There was one unoccupied cell. The landing walkways were reasonably clean. The toilets, urinals, wash-hand basins, hoppers, hand dryers and water fountains are placed on both sides of landing at the end of the wing. The toilet areas on each of the landings are directly over each other. Consequently when there is an overflow from either the toilets or wash areas on B2 or B3, the overflow reaches the ground floor area marking or staining the walls where the overflow ran down. The hand dryers were not working and again the overall cleanliness of the toilet/wash areas left a lot to be desired. The floors were wet, tiles missing off the walls, a smell emanating from the area and a need to have the toilets well cleaned. The age of the

building is very evident, especially around the whole toilet areas. Vandalism by prisoners appears to be a problem with outlets from wash hand basins being damaged resulting in water overflowing on to the floor. A prisoner using a wash hand basin stated that the prisoners smash everything and that the trades staff are constantly working at the toilets carrying out repairs.

C DIVISION

“C1”

6.3(a) We were informed that there were 32 prisoners held on this landing consisting of 3 single cells, 9 double cells, 3 four person cells and 2 special cells. However, there could be bunk beds placed in some of the cells at times if so needed. There is a room at the circle end of the landing which is used as a dressing station for the dressing of prisoners abscesses, sores, etc but not for emergency dressings which would be dealt with in the surgery. There are two pool tables placed in the centre of the landing and are used by the prisoners during recreation period. There are two strip cells at the end of the landing with a mattress on each floor and no padding on the walls or floors. There is no in-cell sanitation except for two cells which are used by prisoners who either have a medical problem or are incapacitated. The toilets, slop out receptacles and wash area is also at the end of the landing. These areas are tiled with stainless steel sheeting covering the pipes leading to the wash hand basins. Some of the steel sheets are missing and some of the tiles are broken. Refuse bins are placed immediately outside the wash/toilet area. The overall hygiene of the area is poor with black marks between a lot of the tiles and the toilet bowls in need of cleaning. There are

hand dryers installed which don't work. When staff were asked if there were cockroaches in the area, they outlined that they saw them there at times and that an outside company had been in to spray the area recently.

“C2”

6.3(b) We then visited C2 landing where there were 45 cells plus 2 special cells.

Most of the single cells had double occupancy. The special cells consisted of a wooden frame (box type) with mattress on it and no other furniture. A cockroach was observed in one of these cells. There was no padding on the walls or floor. They both had push button call bells inside them. The toilets, slop out receptacles, urinals and wash hand basins are located on both sides at the end of the landing. The rubbish bins are also located there. There is also a toilet, a shower, 2 wash hand basins and hand dryer (not working) placed a little further up the landing from the end. They are used for those occupying the strip cells or for an old person who could not travel the distance to the general showers in the separation unit. The landing was quite clean but the toilet areas could be more hygienic. There were black marks of dampness on the ceiling of the toilets and water leaking down the outside of the pipes from the landing directly overhead.

“C3”

6.3(c) On our visit to C3 we found 2 prisoners painting the toilet/wash areas which are located on both sides of the landing at the end of the building. The vents (electrically controlled) in the toilets and 4 hand dryers were not working. Bins were placed outside the toilet/wash area. The landing was clean and

the toilet/wash areas were the cleanest of the “C” division. There was a good effort at keeping the area clean but the age of the building was very evident. There were 38 single cells in use with one single cell out of order and awaiting the trades staff to carry out repairs to it.

“D” DIVISION

6.4(a) We then entered ground floor area of D Division (D1) where there were 31 prisoners held. The officer in charge informed us that the cell capacity was 32. There is an exercise yard just off the landing and there were 62 prisoners there at the time of our visit. The staff informed us that the prisoners in the yard were from both “C” and “D” divisions. On the entrance to the yard there were 2 phones for prisoners use and they were constantly occupied throughout our time there. Some of the prisoners in the yard were engaged in football while others were walking around and the rest of them were sitting in groups. It appears there is not sufficient work/work training or education to occupy all of the prisoners so the balance of those who do not partake of the work/school activities spend their unlocked time in the yard. The toilets are located at the end of the landing and there is a gate on the entrance to one of the toilets which was locked. On asking the officer as to why it was locked the officer explained that the other toilets on the opposite side of the landing was for the use of those out in the yard. By keeping the gate locked it means that it would be clean for the prisoners who reside on the landing when they return to their cells and that it would then be opened on their arrival. The toilet blocks consisted of toilets, urinals, wash hand basins, hopper, drinking fountain, and hand dryers. One of the hand dryers was not

working. The area was reasonably clean but there was a lot of water on the floor as result of leaking wash-hand basins. The church of Ireland/Presbyterian church is also located on this landing. Directly outside the exit gates refuse sacks were stored and a smell was emanating from them. These sacks should be removed and disposed more frequently.

“D2”

6.4(b) On D2 landing there were 49 prisoners which is the total number that can be accommodated there. Some of the cells were doubled to accommodate this number. The landing was clean and the toilet areas were located at both sides of the landing at the end. One of the hand dryers was not working. The toilets, wash hand basins, and “hoppers” were at a satisfactory level of hygiene. The floor of one of the toilet blocks was quite wet but had a special mat type covering over it.

“D3”

6.4(c) This landing had a population of 49 contained in 47 cells. Again the toilet/wash areas were at the end of the landing and were quite clean. One of the wash hand basins had the outlet broken and the water from same was flowing onto the floor. There was a mat type covering on the floor of the toilet area. The same problem applies with this division as with the others. The toilet areas are located over each other and any overflow from D2 or D3 eventually reaches the bottom floor on D1 leaving a stain or mark on the walls as it flows. However, this division was much better than the others in this regard.

CARPENTRY, WOODWORK, WOODTURNING AND WINDOW ASSEMBLY WORKSHOP

Woodwork

- 6.4(e) Starting with the woodwork shop with the Officer in Charge being an Industrial Supervisor. This workshop can take 18 trainees maximum but on the day of our inspection he had 9 prisoners. Each receive an extra €12 per week for working in this shop. There is a FETAC certification on completion of various courses provided they reach the required standard. Prisoners selected for this workshop are serving at least three year sentence. This is due to the time required to train them to certification standard.

Carpentry Woodwork Etc

- 6.4(f) This workshop makes items for use in the general maintenance of the prison. They also manufacture articles for use by charity organisation such as garden furniture, garden seating, trellises, etc. They manufacture wooden window frames and fix perspex into the frames and attach them on the inside of the cell windows. This allows for the prisoners to have control of air flow into and out of their cells by opening or closing the perspex sheet as they require.

Woodturning

- 6.4(g) In the woodturning area they get pieces of raw timber from the green disposable area of St. Anne's Park. They cut out the required articles from these pieces of wood, then hand turn it, sand it and polish it to become the finished article. Flower pot holders, chalices, salad dishes, etc are the common articles made within the shop. In the course of this woodturning

work there is a high level of training involved for the prisoners in the use of hand and power tools in the development of their skills.

Recreation Area

6.4(h) There are two rooms with t.v and snooker tables and chairs. Prisoners can recreate here or go out into an adjacent open air exercise yard. The area is quite small with low ceilings and not very suitable for this facility. There were toilet facilities within this area which were in a poor state of hygiene. It comprised of two toilets, two urinals, two wash hand basins, hand dryer, not working, extractor fan, not working and an extremely bad smell from within the toilet area. Some of it is due to the age of the prison and the fact that it is below ground level. However it should be improved.

Fabric Workshop & small laundry.

6.4(i) This area is operated by an Industrial Supervisor and an Assistant Industrial Supervisor. They are involved in the production, sewing and packaging of towels for the entire prison service. Fabric material arrives in very large round bales, out of which towelling lengths are cut. The sides of these lengths are hemmed by machinists. They are then pressed and bundled for delivery to the various prisons via the stores. They prepare approximately 10,000 towelling items per year.

They also carry out repairs to jeans, shirts, coats, etc that are used within the prison. They are fully occupied at present in manufacturing articles/materials for the Special Olympics, such as towels, cushion holders that medals for presentation will be placed, etc.

Up to 20 prisoners are employed in the area which is also a FETAC operated training workshop. Certificates are awarded if the work meets the required criteria.

In an area off the main workshop, a small laundry is operated. It caters for all the needs of the prison regarding white coats for medical, kitchen and bakery staff and laundering table clothes, tea towels, etc for the administration area. They launder, press and iron 30,000 items per year within this very small area. It is amazing the volume of work that is conducted within this area of very poor facilities regarding space, ceiling height, storage, etc. The staff and prisoners appeared really to enjoy the work and were striving to meet their targets especially for the Special Olympics. There was a good atmosphere and great banter between them.

The Computer Workshop

6.4(j) There were two officers in charge of 20 prisoners within this area. There were rows of computers along the walls, and each computer was in use by a prisoner who was operating at a level which was applicable to his own progress.

The officers involved are very dedicated and enthusiastic regarding reaching the required standard with the prisoners and were delighted with the various certificates that they had achieved.

The workshop is also recognised as an examination centre. This helps considerably in the overall running and status of the training given.

Generally there is a waiting list for this course with more applicants than computers or space to fit them. The area is very cramped and poor overall conditions for this worthwhile work but they are all making the best of what is available. This is excellent rehabilitative work. It should be expanded and properly housed.

Concrete Workshop

6.4(k) We also looked at the concrete shop which makes garden patio slabs, concrete plant holders in various designs, etc. and this workshop is very impressive. They can take up to seven prisoners maximum and there were four work hands there at the time of our visit. Prisoners who work in this area qualify for the €12 per week industrial wages.

Laundry & Shower area

6.4(l) The laundry and shower area is located on the ground floor of the separation unit. The rest of the building is unused. The small laundry here has four washing and 6 drying machines. It is operated by two officers who have two prisoners working with them. Prisoners are escorted from the main prison building across an open air area into the shower area and return the same way. They bring their towels, sheets, pillow cases, tea towels with them.

They change their shirts, underwear, and socks there. They are given a clean set of replacement clothing in exchange for the set they bring with them after having a shower. Towels, sheets, pillow cases, shirts and underwear are changed once per week while the duvet covers are laundered every two weeks. Some of the clothing is sent to an outside laundry on a weekly basis.

Showers

6.4(m) The showers consist of two rooms with 10 showers in each and a changing cubicle opposite each shower with a walkway between both. The whole area is in need of renovation. The paintwork needs repainting and some of the seats in the cubicles are broken. There are some tiles missing off the walls of the showers, and some of the showers cannot be turned off, resulting in hot water constantly flowing. Prisoners are allowed one shower per week and may get more if they are involved in gym work or involved in work where a shower facility is available.

The inspector recommends that prisoners get a change of underwear, shirt and socks at least twice per week. That the showering facilities are updated and repaired and that prisoners get at least two showers each per week.

CONNECT Project

6.4(n) There are three courses per annum run by the CONNECT project. Each course takes a period of twelve weeks. There are 12 prisoners involved in each group. We met with group No 14 which on the day had 11 prisoners.

There was an initial application of 86 prisoners to get on this course but only twelve were successful due to the limited amount of places available.

During conversations with the prisoners involved in this group, they identified that there was no drug free wing in Mountjoy Prison. There are undoubtedly a high percentage of prisoners held in the prison who have a drug problem.

They said that drug abusers who wanted to kick the habit couldn't possibly achieve this within Mountjoy because every wing has an illegal drug problem.

Part of the course may entail giving up drugs but this is almost impossible.

The Inspector recommends that a drug free wing/area be provided in the prison.

The CONNECT project develops linkages between the situation in custody, the training, educational, counselling opportunities etc available in prison and progression to employment or training/education in the community on release from custody. It is based on the prisoners own rehabilitation through vocational training and guidance and the prisoner has his/her own input into each stage of the project. It involves the services of the various agencies working both within the prison and outside, in order to deliver the services, supports, and professionalism necessary for its success. If all the personnel and agencies involved are not working in tandem this then impacts on the projects deliveries.

The Dentistry

6.4(o) The Dentistry is a stand alone unit. There are two identical fully equipped treatment rooms. There is another room with x-ray equipment. The dentistry is used by both Mountjoy and the Dochas Centre prisoners. The x-ray facilities are also used by prisoners from other prisons who are referred to the Mountjoy dentistry. The Dublin Dental hospital provide the staff and on the day of inspection one dentist and one dental nurse were on duty. There were six female patients being treated that day. There is a separate room which holds the dental records on file. There is a staff toilet which was in good condition. The main toilets are for the use of the prisoners. All of them have wash hand basins and are in reasonable condition. There is also a waiting room for the patients, which has a steel door, and the patients are locked within whilst awaiting treatment.

TUCK SHOP

6.4(p) The tuck shop is located in the circle area. When we visited it there was a queue of prisoners waiting outside the door to enter and place their order for items such as cigarettes, sweets, chocolates, biscuits, newspapers, toiletries etc. They can purchase the items from their own private cash or from their gratuity. The staff have them sign off the cost of items purchased on a sheet and the items are handed out over a counter to them. The shop was reasonably well stocked but the overall size of it left it very crowded with staff & prisoners in such a small area. The staff have a computer reading of each prisoners account and know how much each can spend. No actual cash exchange takes place, it is all done by a paper/computer trail.

The Kitchen

6.4(q) The kitchen is extremely impressive. It provides approx 1850 meals per day. It employs 18 prisoners but at the time of inspection there were 13 working there. Four of the prisoners are on a 12 week training course which will result in a FETAC certification for them if they fulfil the requirements. Six prison officers from Portlaoise Prison were also doing a training course there on the day of inspection. All prisoners working in this area must be medically approved prior to commencing work there. The kitchen has won innumerable awards in hygiene and good quality food for the past number of years. The kitchen is subject to hygiene audits by outside experts every six months plus the Excellence Ireland Organisation also conduct unannounced audits approximately every six months. There is a great work ethic about the kitchen and all within wear their white clothing with caps. It is run very well, very clean and great pride being displayed in their work.

The Bakery

6.4(r) The bakery employs 8 prisoners and they provide bread and buns for all the Dublin prisons. They work seven days per week in the production of brown and white loaves, buns, doughnuts, bracs, burger buns and apple tarts when requested. Overall they produce approx 5,000 items per day. Like the kitchen, it is extremely impressive with a very high standard of quality and hygiene, which is supported by the amount of awards that they have received. The workers in the bakery must have medical approval before they are allowed to work there. The certificates awarded to the bakery from Excellence Ireland are proudly displayed for the years 1997, 1998, 1999,

2000,2001 and 2002 with a triple award for 2001 and 2002. The kitchen and bakery were extremely impressive as were the officers in charge and indeed the trainees and prisoners who work therein.

Control Room

6.4(s) The inspectorate visited the control room which is operated 24hrs per day monitoring the CCTV plus the operation of the hand-set phones and the general overall securities operation of the prison. A new digital recording system was installed prior to last Christmas which replaced the tape method of recording. This has proven to be very worthwhile with excellent clear pictures from same. This centre also monitors the various alarms within the prison.

Visitors Waiting Room

6.4(t) In the entrance lobby there are two hatches, the first for registration and the second for taking out locker keys or handing in bags, phones etc. Once registered, visitors are given a numbered docket and proceed into the centre. The officer in charge at registration contacts the communications office within the prison who locates the prisoner concerned. The visitors are then called to the visiting area within the prison. The visitors' centre is a good sized room with about twelve tables and fixed seats, a counter for serving free tea, coffee or milk. There is a play area with toys for children. The toilets were clean and hygienic. There are rules of procedure posted for the care of children in English and French. Information wise, the centre is well equipped. Numerous pamphlets re health, social issues, drugs, Hep C, etc are clearly

displayed in wooden pockets on the walls. The centre also provides further information to visitors upon request. The manager stated that this is often the only source of information available to families and friends of prisoners. No organisation outside the prison provides such information. The manager suggested that leaflets should be made available in the courts re “what happens next” information. This is a good idea.

The operation of the centre was explained by the manager Margaret Milligan. It is run in conjunction with the visitors centre at St. Patrick’s Detention Institution. She stated that staff reductions were imposed pre-xmas 2001 and this came as a terrible shock to her. Regarding downsizing last Christmas, no prior negotiations took place with the Irish Prison Service Headquarters. Subsequently the staff were presented with Cloverhill vacancies. There are 4 Childcare workers, 2 full time, 2 part time (1 -3 days) and (1-2 days) 1 Full time Project Worker (who talks with families and makes tea etc.) 2 Community Employee workers and 12 unpaid volunteers. The manager would like one more full time and two more part time care workers. Ms. Milligan estimates the numbers of visits at 500-600 per week, three persons, excluding children, being the maximum number allowed per visit, making a total of about 1000 persons in all.

The visitors’ centre took on a life of its own in the prosperous years and has exceeded its purpose; Consoling and counselling visitors in the average twenty minute waiting period is impracticable. The centre started out as a

basic service which escalated. Arrangements for visits are generally satisfactory.

The Inspectorate team also spoke with some visitors to the Centre. They had no complaints concerning the centre although they were reluctant to discuss the facilities as they were not convinced that the Inspectorate personnel were not journalists. One of the visitors expressed a concern regarding his brother getting a stab of a syringe within the prison and having to go to hospital for tests as a result. He was angry at the lack of information given to him by the prison authorities as to how he got stabbed.

Visiting Committees

- 6.5 In Mountjoy, as in other prisons, there is no real knowledge or appreciation of Visiting Committee. In Spain there are independent judges who visit the prison several times a week. There are three judges full time, dealing with problems in the six prisons in or around Madrid. The Inspector has always felt that this a weak area in prison administration and was very conscious of it during his over twenty years on visiting committees. They should be involved in the updating of their effectiveness.

7. HEALTH & SAFETY

Fire aspects

- 7.1 The inspectorate had a meeting with the senior staff members responsible for health and safety issues with particular emphasis on the fire plans, fire

fighting / prevention equipment, fire evacuation procedures and staff training in fire drill. An official from Dublin Fire Brigade (Fire prevention section) carried out a separate inspection.

7.2 There is a fire plan in place since May 1998 which was approved by the fire engineer of the Board of Works. The Chief Trades officer also has a “Fire & General Registrar” registrar within which is recorded the dates and times of the various inspections carried out of the equipment plus checks on the emergency lighting, emergency exits, fire drills / evacuations etc. The Chief Officer also maintains records of staff training in fire prevention, evacuation practices and breathing apparatus familiarisation drills. The records kept by both of these officers are very good , up to date and appear accurate.

7.3 The prison is surrounded by two water mains, one for domestic purposes while the other one is for fire fighting / prevention use. There are a total of 25 water hydrants installed both within the walls of the prison and also at strategic locations outside of the prison. The water pressure is 69 lbs which can be increased to 120 lbs by turning on the water pumps. There is a wet riser in the circle of the prison which leads upto the 3rd floor level and has three outlets from same. There are 12 hose reels (3 on each wing) which extend to the full length of the landings. These hose reels are checked monthly. There are over 300 fire extinguishers within the buildings, located in various areas, each labelled with colour coding and checked monthly by the trades staff. There is also an “outside” firm which has a yearly contract to service the extinguishers and to certify that they are in proper working order.

7.4 Emergency exit lighting signage is installed within the main prison buildings, but, where they can be reached by prisoners, there are problems keeping batteries installed within them. The prisoners vandalise them, remove the batteries and use them for their radios in the cells. This is a serious problem in the event of a fire with no lighted sign to direct people out of a smoke filled building. The inspectorate recommends that wire covering or other such materials should be placed over the covers of the lights so that prisoners cannot get access to them to remove the batteries. The other problem highlighted was the insufficient electrical power to the main prison and in the event of an emergency the power could go down and the building could be left in the dark.

Again this is a serious situation and the inspectorate recommends that a new upgraded generator should be installed as a matter of urgency.

7.5 A smoke extractor system is installed in the B basement and Medical Unit which is automatically linked into the fire alarm. This system allows for the intake of air and extract of smoke. These are the only two areas within the prison that has such a system. There are colt fence fittings installed in the roof over the wings which entails special roof flaps that open in the event of smoke reaching them. They can also be operated manually by turning on a switch in the circle area of the prison. This system is fan assisted with the fan installed in the gable of the building. While this is not a fire extraction system, it is very useful in the clearing of a smoke filled area.

- 7.6 A number of staff receive familiarisation/fire drill training each Saturday morning. The training instructions are given by a person who was attached to the Dublin fire brigade training school. These instructions include the use of reels, hoses, and fire extinguishers. They also include familiarisation in the operation of breathing apparatus equipment, particularly the putting on and taking off of the special protective clothing, face mask and the use of the oxygen container. This “donning and doffing” of the breathing apparatus equipment is very useful, but, more intense training is required in this area, which the staff state cannot be given due to staff shortage. The inspectorate considers this training to be so important that some ways or means should be found to bring it up to date and recommends accordingly.
- 7.7 The records show that two fire evacuation practices took place in June and July of 2002 in the D division of the prison. Both of these were in the morning time and both were on an individual landing. (not a complete wing or division). However, the medical unit and the separation unit had full evacuations carried out in 2000. (The separation unit is no longer in use.) No evacuation practices have been undertaken in A, B, C, or B basement areas. The management point out that to do so in these areas would be extremely difficult, due to the type of the individuals held there. It may cause a serious security / control problem if undertaken. The management also state that to carry out such a practice fire drill during evening or night time tours of duties would cause major concern from a security aspect. The staffing levels are not as high at those times as they are during the day. The prisoners are not informed at committal stage or anytime throughout their sentence of the

possibility of a fire within the buildings, or of any evacuation procedures that they may have to follow. There are no fire evacuation instructions placed in the prisoners' cells or elsewhere.

7.8 There are no emergency stairs to the 2nd and 3rd landings of the main prison in the event of a fire. However, if a fire did occur, the central stairs which is used daily to these landings could be used, if it were safe to do so. A second means of exit is via the small gates which divide off each landing at the circle end and usher the prisoners to another landing. (These small gates remain locked throughout the day.) The spiral stairs could be used for staff to escape but it is not suitable to allow prisoners use it, even in emergency. The landing walkways, the cell walls including the ceiling of the cells are of slate, brick /cement material, the cell doors are steel plated on the inside so it is the cell furniture, clothing or fittings that are flammable. There are no signage displayed for fire evacuation points, emergency exits or assembly points in a safe area. The inspectorate recommends that these signs should be erected as soon as possible.

7.9 There are "fixed extinguisher systems" installed in the kitchens and the bakery. In the event of an emergency, the entire power can be cut off by pulling down a main ring. The new administration building / stores area has smoke detectors and emergency exits installed, all exit signage clearly marked and lighted. There are smoke detectors installed in all of the cells in the medical unit but nowhere else. The emergency lighting and exit emergency signage all appear to be working in the medical unit. There are

water sprinklers installed in the padded cells in the medical unit and in the separation unit. There are “break glass” fire alarms installed throughout the prison and in the event of these being activated, a siren sound alarm rings at the circle entrance as well as displaying as a red light on a panel in the control room and on a panel in the circle area.

7.10 The hydrants and fittings are compatible with the Dublin Fire Brigade engines. The fire brigade personnel from Phibsborough have had several meetings with management at the prison. They are familiar with the layout of the prison, locations of the hydrants, hoses, reels, exits and entrances and have also brought the fire brigade engines into the prison. The large fire tender (with turntable) cannot gain entry at the front gate but can gain entry by the rear gate. The other fire tenders which they normally use have also been brought into the Dóchas Centre, but again the large one cannot gain entry there. Some of the fire brigade personnel have been present at the evacuation practice within the prison. On one of the call-outs to the fire service, the response time from Tara St Fire Station to the front gate of the prison was 3 minutes and the distance from Phibsborough Fire Station to Mountjoy is a lot shorter, therefore trained fire brigade personnel can be on hand very quickly.

7.11 Some of the other areas of concern within the main prison were the D workshops, the reception area and the office / tea room over the front gate.

- (i) In the D workshop, if in the event of a fire, the ceilings are very low and therefore smoke would fill the area very fast. There is no smoke extractor fitted in this area. There are two exits from the area but there is a considerable amount of work material (towelling & fabric) stored there which leaves very little space within the workshop and the passageway to the exit. There is also some timber stored within the carpentry workshop area which also adds to the problem.

- (ii) In the reception area, again the ceiling is very low and there is no smoke extractor fitted. The entire area is at underground level. It also contains both prisoners' personal clothing and prison clothing which is required for the operation of the area. Washing machines and dryers which are high risk fire appliances. The entire reception area is so designed that there are passageways, corridors, cubicles and storage spaces throughout the building. In the event that the area were to become smoke filled, it would be extremely difficult to find the exits even though there are three from the building.

- (iii) The office / tea room over the main gate has just one entry / exit which is by a wooden stairs. In the event of an emergency, and if the stairs were blocked or smoke filled, it may be difficult to gain access or exit from the area.

7.12 There are three other locations i.e. medical area under the circle, the general office area building and the bakery in which there are two means of exits from them all. However, for security reasons, just one exit in each case is used daily and the key to the 2nd exit is kept in the key safe. In the event of an

emergency and the 2nd exit required to be opened, the person in charge of the keys would need to be fully aware of the correct key and its location. The safety of those within these areas may depend on the alertness and knowledge of the person in charge of the keys, but for security reasons, the matter appears to have to remain as is at present.

THE DÓCHAS CENTRE

INSPECTION

27th - 30th January 2003

8. GOVERNORS BRIEFING

- 8.1 On 27th January the inspectorate met with the Governor for a briefing concerning the operation of the Dóchas Centre. The briefing was conducted by the Governor in charge who is responsible for the day-to-day running of the centre. The Governor of Mountjoy has the overall responsibility of both the main prison and the Dóchas Centre.
- 8.2 The Dóchas Centre was opened in 1999 having moved from its original location beside St Patrick's Institution. In fact it was a wing of St Patrick's with its own independent entrance and regime. There was constant shouting and banter going on between the female prisoners and the young boys who were detained in St Patrick's. It was a most unsuitable location.
- 8.3 The new centre offers wonderful improvements in the conditions and indeed the regime from the old prison. The design of the centre consists of 6 individual houses, plus the pre-release house and the Health Care Unit (HCU) with a courtyard and a grass area in the centre for prisoners to walk around. Seats are located at various points around the grassed walkways. The houses are two storey high with one of the houses being three storey high. They refer to the living accommodation as rooms, not cells as in the old prison. There are no steel bars on the room windows and apart from the security at the entrance, once inside the buildings, there is nothing to indicate that one is in a prison. It is more relaxed and the prisoners are given more responsibilities to take decisions themselves on the running of the various houses. The prisoners are not handcuffed when being escorted, not

even to court. The emphasis in the centre is to operate it as close as possible to living in ordinary accommodation outside of the prison and to operate the various houses in the same way as one would manage their own home in regard to cleaning, cooking, laundering etc. The regimes within the centre is on training and development and these activities are structured as close as possible to a normal working day. The staff are encouraged to wear civilian clothing rather than uniforms to create more of a relaxed atmosphere.

However, the local branch of the union are opposed to this change. The result of this is that some staff are wearing uniforms while others are in civilian attire. This seems an unnecessary potential cause of friction amongst the POA, certainly no officer should be penalised by the union for not wearing uniform in the Dóchas.

- 8.4 The centre was originally planned to accommodate 60 prisoners, but at the early stages, it was found that more spaces were required and an additional house to hold 18 prisoners was added. This gives a total of 78 with 3 cladded rooms. On the day of the briefing there were 96 in custody. The Governor outlined that prior to Christmas she had 103 in custody. The cladded rooms are never used for security or control reasons and a prisoner can only be held there on medical instructions and for supervision. However, because of overcrowding they are used as “ordinary” rooms when there is simply no accommodation anywhere else. There are times when up to three prisoners have to sleep in them. There are offices on the corridors of the houses and they also are converted into accommodation for prisoners when the numbers exceed the available space. These offices are used almost on a permanent

basis for accommodation. Overcrowding is a major problem. It also effects the entire running of the centre.

8.5 Homelessness is another problem and the Governor has experienced prisoners being granted temporary release who refuse to leave as they had nowhere to live. Efforts were made by the St. Vincent De Paul Society to provide accommodation locally in the community. This met with stiff opposition from the neighbourhood residents. There is a house on the North Circular road operated by PACE which takes referrals. Another house, in a different area, is being prepared at present by the St. Vincent De Paul and will accommodate six prisoners on release. It is hoped that it will be open in the next three months.

8.6 Aliens (female) who are refused entry into the country, are arrested and lodged in custody in the Dóchas Centre until arrangements are made to have them deported. Most of the time they arrive at the centre unannounced and late at night. This causes difficulties in arranging accommodation for them plus the possibility that they may not be able to speak English.

8.7 A 16 year old girl was committed from the courts the previous night having been sentenced to 3 months. There was a note accompanying the warrant outlining that she was unruly and could not be accepted in any of the other special schools. At the time of her committal there was no single room available for her and she had to be placed in the cladded room with three other much older prisoners. The Governor outlined that the centre was not

suitable for that age group and that there were no provisions within the buildings to keep her separate from the others. The mixing of a juvenile with adult prisoners was not good for the welfare of the juvenile and is condemned by the High Court (Blayney J). The following day the Governor arranged to have the 16 year old placed in a room on her own.

8.8 Two of the houses operate as drug free areas and anyone found violating the rules are removed and placed in one of the other houses. There has been no psychology services provided for the prisoners for the past two and a half years. Psychiatrists from the Central Mental Hospital provide a service two afternoons per week. A community nurse attends the centre for 6 hours every week and the doctor attends every day. The prisoners attend the dentistry in the male prison but it is hoped to open their own dentistry in the next few months. The last of the equipment required for same is being installed at present. A health care team which includes the Probation and Welfare officer meet every Wednesday morning. There are five nurses and one medical orderly attached to the medical unit. Other medical needs such as optician, dietician etc are brought into the centre as required and the prisoners are referred to outpatient hospital facilities when the need arises.

8.9 The services of Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous Counsellors are used within the centre. The Samaritans also attend but there is no dedicated telephone for the prisoners to telephone them. They can telephone them on the ordinary line. It was stated that the Connect project is

working very well within the centre and there are great contacts with outside agencies.

The Governor stated that they have to be constantly on the alert for illegal drugs getting into the centre and that cannabis rather than heroin is the most common type found. They have also found "E" tablets from time to time. She praised the work being carried out by the Chaplains who perform tasks that are more in the welfare field than the chaplaincy role.

8.10 There is a Senior plus two Probation and Welfare Officers attached to the Centre. The Probation & Welfare officers are doing good work, but are under pressure, so Prison Officers have to perform in this role at times too. It is the Governor's opinion, that female prisoners have many more problems than their male counterparts, or at least they express their difficulties more in the area of abuse, partners, children, homelessness, childcare, etc. and therefore the welfare work is an important aspect of the centre.

8.11 The Governor was asked if there was racism within the centre, and she outlined that they had experienced some among the prisoners. This is monitored closely within the houses and is a matter for discussion at the activities meetings from time to time. They try and meet the needs of all Nationals and treat all minority groups or individuals equally. Most of the foreign nationals mix quite well with Irish prisoners and partake of the same activities. Sometimes they have more problems in getting the prisoners from the travelling community accepted among the other prisoners. She explained

that she never observed or received a complaint regarding the staff and racism but that does not necessarily mean that it is not happening. Considering the attitude of people on the outside to this subject.

8.12 The question of communication with foreign prisoners who were unable to speak the English language was raised. The Governor outlined that they would place such people with someone from the same country (if they had someone) who could translate. They also receive assistance from interpreters who are employed by the Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform. They receive great support from the language section of Dublin City University who also operate a befriending group and they visit the centre regularly.

8.13 The Governor stated that there was an officer assigned to us to assist with our inspection and that any help or assistance that we require will be forthcoming. An office was placed at our disposal with tea /coffee making facilities. The inspectorate team very much appreciated the co-operation and help afforded to them.

9. ENTRANCE TO CENTRE

9.1 At the entrance to Doches there is “a vision statement” on the wall which reads: “We encourage personal growth and development in preparing a safe environment. We are committed to addressing the needs of each person in a healing and holistic way. We actively promote close interaction with the wider community.”

10. MEETING WITH VARIOUS GROUPS

Meeting with Medical staff

10.1(a)The surgery in the female prison is well designed, spacious, bright, clean and uncluttered. The Pharmacy was excellent, and the arrangement of medication in blister packs seemed an excellent provision and certainly, in the context of the small number in the Female Prison (cf 75), works well. The waiting area was clean, spacious and bright. The cladded rooms were reviewed. The alarm bell was within the cells. A inmate invited us to see her room, which was bright and comfortable. Ordinary domestic cleaning equipment was available freely. In room sanitation was discrete, with privacy available.

Findings

10.1(b)The Medical area showed the benefits of preplanning. The nursing staff gave an impressive display of their work and showed that nursing works well in prison situation.

Meeting with Teachers

Educational facilities

10.2(a)Our visit concentrated on the educational facilities as well as meeting some of the teachers There were very many positive features. The physical facilities that we saw - such as the kitchen where the women were being taught cooking and the gym - were of generous size and appeared well-equipped. The computer room was also impressive, though the teacher there observed that the computers, now in their fourth year, were getting old.

The Dochas Newsletter, to which we were told the women make a significant contribution, is a lively and impressive publication.

10.2(b)The educational programme has many positive features. These include the outdoor pursuits (including wind surfing, mountaineering, abseiling and canoeing), art exhibitions and visiting writers. There appeared somewhat less emphasis on academic study than in Mountjoy Prison. We were told that perhaps one woman a year would study for a third level degree. There could well be good reasons for this difference: the overall levels of literacy and academic progress among the women may possibly be lower than among the men; of course their numbers are far fewer and the average periods of detention may be less conducive to contemplating embarking on a long term educational commitment. In spite of these possible differences. The Inspector had the impression that the educational philosophy in the Dóchas Centre is somewhat more traditional than in Mountjoy male prison. Of the twenty-three subjects on the educational programme, none has a distinctively academic character. For example, there is no course on society, literature, philosophy, politics, history or women's studies. There may be room for some expansion of the programme in this direction.

10.2(c)The daily average number of women who attend educational classes is 18-20. In 2002 ten women sat one subject in their junior certificate. One prisoner sat one subject in the Leaving Certificate and one sat open university exams. Others achieved certificates in hairdressing, sewing, options,

industrial cleaning, computers, first aid, parenting, craftwork, office work, catering, baking etc.

10.2(d) All new committals are interviewed by the head teacher and classes operate for 11 months of the year. The educational class closes for August. Literacy is listed among the list of 23 subjects available. Literacy classes are held on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday mornings, and are on a one to one basis for the women. Tuesday and Thursday mornings are spelling classes for the literacy group however, from the reports received we could not establish exactly how many teachers were involved or how many students participate. The education centre also holds debates, art exhibitions, information days and occasional writers workshop weeks.

Meeting with Probation and Welfare

10.3(a) The Inspectorate met the Probation and Welfare officers and they outlined their role. They want to spend more time trying to encourage prisoners to address their offending behaviour, to face up to the consequences and to think about victims. They feel that they cannot devote enough time to this because they are obliged to meet all new prisoners when they arrive. This position, they have suggested, could be designated elsewhere i.e make it the role of the prison officer. They are frustrated as there is a lot more that they could do. The Probation and Welfare Officer is one of the first people that a prisoner meets when they enter prison. They are the prisoners' source of information. There is no pack as such available to prisoners when they enter prison but a booklet with all the relevant information is in the pipeline.

Prisoners will be supplied with all they need to know. This will be very helpful and should be “prioritised”.

Drugs

10.3(b) Again most of the prisoners here are on drugs. Approx 30% of the prisoners are on methadone maintenance. They state that it is very easy to pass drugs into this centre.

Racism

10.3(c) Racism is present in the centre. Some of the Foreign Nationalities will avail of the education facilities while others will work hard in the centre at cleaning etc, and as a result, will be allowed to live in the more lenient houses where they can avail of later bed times and freer access to other areas. The Irish prisoners are mostly hooked on drugs and so the racist comments develop. No training has been given to Probation and Welfare officers on how to deal with racism. South Africans take up every educational opportunity and do well. Irish drug addicts are basically jealous.

Bullying

10.3(d) The Welfare staff stated that verbal bullying, pressurising others to return with drugs when they go on courses or courts outside the centre and bullying with regards to sexual orientation is present.

Juveniles

10.3 (e) It is an inappropriate place for juveniles. It is very worrying that 15 and 16 year olds are being placed in the Dóchas Centre. Last October a 15 year old girl entered the centre. A 16 year old was held there on the day of our visitation. Courts should not send them here. The Inspector objected. The child thanked him the next day when she got a room of the own. She should never him been sent there.

Overcrowding

10.3(d) This is a huge issue, there are not enough single rooms. Probation and Welfare officers suggest that there is no point creating more spaces, as the more you create the more that will enter. They say that the real problems are not being addressed i.e the revolving door and why prisoners keep returning? This should be resolved.

Departure and Homelessness

10.3(e) The Probation and Welfare state that on average a prisoner will serve three years in prison before they return to the community. However, there is no place for them to go. There is no accommodation available to them. There is a lot of homelessness. They are often let out at in appropriate times with no services available to them.

The Inspectorate considers that the Probation and Welfare Officers have a role in both release planning and with accommodation agencies.

Mental Health

10.3(f) More resources are required for treating the mental health of the prisoners.

In many cases the Dóchas Centre is not the place for them. Many prisoners have mental and emotional problems and need help. When they are released there should be a link with the medical services outside. It should be arranged that someone is with them when they leave.

Security

10.3(g) Generally, the prison is safe but Probation and Welfare Officers even though not physically assaulted, can be the subject of verbal assault. Often the PWO has to go and find the prisoner herself. However, the prison officers are trying to accommodate them and efforts have been made for the prison officers to bring prisoners to their offices in the afternoons. However, the PWO would prefer them to do this in the mornings.

Smoking

10.3(h) Prisoners are no longer allowed to smoke everywhere. Under a Chiefs order effective from the 13th January 2003 there are designated smoke free zones.

Counselling

10.3 (i) There is no psychologist in the Dóchas Centre so the Probation and Welfare Officers provide counselling to the prisoners. Rape counselling can be provided in the centre by an outside counsellor one afternoon per week at a cost of €90. The Probation and Welfare Officer considers this is not sufficient

for the proper treatment of prisoners. Some prisoners are brought outside for counselling. It would be less costly to bring counsellors into the centre. Many of the prisoner have experienced both physical and sexual abuse.

10.3(j) The Inspectorate considers that there is sufficient staffing level of Probation and Welfare Officers for the Centre. Perhaps if areas of responsibility and roles of the Probation and Welfare Officers were more clearly defined it may help, not alone at this centre, but throughout the Service, as there appears to be some confusion as to who does what?

The Inspector's view is that the Probation and Welfare Officers would be very much the linkage between custody and the various other agencies within the community. The agencies being fellow social workers, treatment centres, accommodation management, etc. Prisoner sentence management plus other social requirements would be envisaged as the Probation's responsibilities within a custody setting. However, it could be worked out in more detail and may lead to a better overall service to the prisoners.

MEETING WITH CHAPLAINS

10.4 The Inspector met the R.C. and the Church of Ireland Chaplains who outlined that the primary problem in Dóchas Centre was the overcrowding. They say that there is no trained counsellor and no psychologist attached to this centre. All the above are considerable concerns to the Inspector. The Chaplains were also concerned at the lack of resources. The Courts may recommend that a prisoner should get treatment but the full necessary "back up" does not

exist. The R.C Chaplain is a trained Counsellor, but, does not think she should engage in counselling, as there would be a conflict of interest. They do their best to provide support but admitted it is inadequate. There is also a Presbyterian and Methodist Chaplain who provide religious services to the centre as required.

MEETING WITH LOCAL BRANCH OFFICERS OF P.O.A (DOCHAS)

10.5(a)The Inspector met with the local branch officers of the P.O.A. They agreed the place was clean and excellent and that the ethos was fine. The accommodation is grossly overcrowded and they told the Inspector about a sixteen year old who was in a room with three others. (This in fact was the case on the night of committal only, and she was removed to a single room the following day). This is contrary to a ruling made by Mr. Justice Blayney outlining that such young persons should be kept separate. The recommendations of Mr. Justice Blayney are now ignored. They said the 16 year old now mixes with other prisoners without any constraint (let it be remembered that there are many lesbians and drug addicts among the prison population in this female centre).

10.5(b)In the healthcare unit they complained of overcrowding with sometimes up to five people in one room. They wanted training on a more regular basis for control and restraint (C&R). They said they had instructors but they need time to get instruction. There was training in drug counselling and certification if successful but now its gone. The officer who was given instructions in industrial cleaning is transferred.

The management never consult with the prison officers association before changes are made. (Management dispute this and say they operate a partnership policy). They pointed out that the gate and entrances were a high security risk and badly needs to be redesigned and revamped.

10.5(c) They said illegal drugs were rampant. There is intimidation and bullying.

Some prisoners can have “a new best friend” who use them as drug providers. They state that they have difficulty in deciding what to do in the event of them observing illegal drugs being passed as there are no guidelines for them to follow. They want to be told in writing what they are to do in those circumstance. They insist it must be in writing. [Management refute this allegation and say there is a very clear policy on illegal drugs which is covered extensively in staff training]. Random searches are carried out, CCTV is observed in the visiting room and those found passing illegal drugs are placed on screen visits for a period of time.

10.5(d) They complained about internal communication. There are not enough radios for all the staff. They complained about no support for staff who experience difficult situations and hear horrific stories from prisoners. They require a counsellor but non is available. They also outlined the difficulties for married staff within the service and where both parties are stationed in different locations. Relocation is not addressed by I.P.S. Headquarters.

10.5(e) The Inspector is aware of the overcrowding and of the 16 year old being required to be kept separated. He is also aware of the drug problems which

is dealt with in another part of the report. The other items raised is very much a matter for the Irish Prison Service Headquarters.

Young Women at Risk

- 10.6 The Inspector was seriously concerned about the position of a 16 year old girl who had recently been sent to the Centre by a District Judge. The fact that she is in a room with three other women, about whose propensities there were uncertainties, added to the Inspector's concerns. More fundamentally, no one can defend a system of administration of justice which involves sending a young person to an adult prison (whatever its title may be) because of difficulties in controlling his or her behaviour.

Racism

- 10.7 As was the position in Mountjoy Prison, there was acknowledgement that racism occurs at the Dóchas Centre. Again the evidence was anecdotal and hearsay in character. It certainly requires staff training and Management's frequent intervention to prevent and if possible to eradicate it

11. THE INSPECTION

The Control Room

- 11.1 The control room is a two person operation that deals with the opening and closing of the main entrance gates, the processing of visits, the holding and labelling of mobile phones, receiving and returning large bags or parcels from visitors. The CCTV monitoring station is located within the same area. On a security issue the doors leading into the control room were unlocked. We

thought this was unusual considering the sensitive nature /security aspect of the control room.

The Reception area

- 11.2 There are two showers and one toilet with wash hand basin in this area, all in very good condition and very clean. There is a laundry where six women workers operate. Only two of the six women are on industrial wages. At present only one is in receipt of same as they await a permanent replacement for a woman who had just been released. There is a locker room for the storage of women's clothing and property plus a store room which acts as an overspill. In the laundry area there are two industrial washers and two industrial dryers plus a small washer and a small dryer of a domestic nature, an iron and ironing board. There are also two holding rooms within this area.

Visiting Facilities

- 11.3 There are five visitor cubicles. They consist of two professional visit cubicles which has adjustable screening. This means the screen can be lifted up off the table when professional visits are taking place and it also allows for the exchange of papers between the legal person and the prisoner. The other three screened visiting cubicles does not allow for any contact between visitor and prisoner. The prisoners placed in the screened cubicles are generally there as a result of them attempting to smuggle illegal substances or articles into or out of the centre.

Dining Hall/Visiting Area

11.4 On the ground floor area there is a dining hall which doubles as a visits area. There are a number of tables with chairs fixed to the floor. It is fitted with air conditioning. Within this room there is a play area for children which extends outside. We were informed that the area outside is temporarily closed for security reasons with regard to prisoners access to illegal drugs. The toilet in this area had to be closed also for the same reasons. Within the visiting area is held the records of visits and it is connected to the visitors waiting area by phone. The area is patrolled by an officer when visits are in progress, but the officer is not seated at any particular table, which allows for quite free and open visits between prisoner and visitor. However, the area is covered by CCTV. The visits in this area have to be completed by 12.20 and 4.20p.m to allow for the area to be prepared for dinner and tea as it also doubles as a dining area as previously mentioned.

Grounds Cleaning

11.5 The cleaning duties on the grounds are operated by a male and a female prisoner. They are issued with protective clothing. A high standard of cleanliness and hygiene is evident throughout the grounds and walkways. There are two prisoners involved in the industrial cleaning which is operated under the auspices of the Connect project.

Healthcare Unit

11.6(a)The healthcare unit is located on the 2nd floor directly over the medical unit.

In the healthcare unit there are four ordinary rooms and three cladded /

special rooms. It was originally intended that this area would be used solely for women who were on medical supervision, but is now used as ordinary accommodation due to overcrowding. On the day of inspection, two of the rooms contained four women in each. The cladded rooms were also occupied with one prisoner in each of the two while the third one had three occupying it. One of the women in the cladded room was on medical supervision awaiting a transfer to the C.M.H later that day. One of the ordinary rooms examined had four women occupying it. There were two single beds and the other two women had to sleep on mattresses on the floor. Sometimes that extends to three women on the floor plus one in each of the single beds. There is a toilet, shower, wash hand basin in three of the rooms and toilet facilities within the strip room but no shower. Again the intention for the use of this room was for the medical supervision of a possible self harm person. There is a room, which was formerly the gents toilet, that is in the process of being transformed into a small recreation room. It is totally unsuitable and unsatisfactory but the officers in charge stated that it is better than nothing!!

11.6(b) In this area, prison officers have to deal with women with psychiatric problems. The officers point out that they are not qualified or trained for this type of work. It is unsatisfactory to place officers in this situation as indeed it is for the patient. Perhaps at least one of the qualified nurses from the health care area downstairs could be deployed to this area which may help the situation. The three cladded rooms are covered by CCTV which are

monitored in the nurses station in the health care area. There is also an alarm push button within each room.

11.6(c) An invalid toilet, shower, bath, and six lockers are contained in one room on the first floor of the healthcare unit. There is an intercall or emergency button close to the bath. Room number 2 within this area was revisited because of an eruption by a prisoner held there on our first visit. A lot of damage was done within the room on the previous day. The room was totally re-instated. This, we were told, would be the policy of the Dóches Centre, especially considering the demands on space. The only change to this policy would be, if there was a criminal investigation by the Gardai. The Inspectorate were told that the woman in question was now receiving psychiatric care.

Rowan House

11.7 The Inspection continued which led us to the two houses off the small yard known as Rowan House and Maple House. Rowan house is a two storey building. There is a very impressive and fully equipped kitchen on the ground floor, which is laid out with a washing machine and dryer, microwave, cooker, fridge, iron, ironing board and basically everything that is required within a kitchen. There is also a small dining area. Upstairs and over the kitchen area, there is a recreation room for the use of all within this house which has a tv video bookshelves, coffee table etc and well laid out. The rest of the centre was very clean and well kept. There is an officer's station/room just off the recreation room. The rooms are locked at 19.30hrs. Each room in this house is occupied by one woman. There is a toilet, wash hand basin, shower and tv

within each room. There is also an intercom system for emergencies. It is a two way system, in that the occupier can conduct a conversation with the officer on duty from her room . There are three exits from Rowan House not all of which are accessible by the women for security reasons.

Maple House

11.8 We moved along an interconnecting corridor which brought us into Maple House. There are five ways in and out of this house again not all accessible to the women for management reasons. There are ten rooms, one to five on the ground floor and six to ten on the first floor which is similar to Rowan House. There is an office in this area which has been converted for use as accommodation. It houses up to a maximum of three prisoners and is totally unsuitable. This again is due to overcrowding. The design of these two houses are very similar. There is a recreation room with an officers station. The kitchens in all of these houses are very impressive. They are fully equipped, fitted with presses etc.

Laurel House

11.9 We visited Laurel house which is basically of the same design as the previous houses. Rooms one to five on the ground floor with kitchen, dining area fully equipped as previously stated. Upstairs rooms six to ten with recreation room with tv and video very comfortably kept and an officers station . Intercom system to all the rooms with a facility for two way conversations. There is an over ride on the system, that is, if the officer is not at his/her station or

unavailable, the call from the room is automatically diverted to the central control room.

Hazel House

11.10 Hazel House has twelve rooms consisting of one to six on the ground floor and six to twelve on the first floor. There is also an office in Hazel House which is being used for temporary accommodation. This of course is due to the overcrowding situation, and is totally unsuitable, with up to three women held there in a very small area. Kitchen, recreation, and officer station as per the other houses. Lock up in this house is 19.30hrs.

Elm House

11.11 Elm House has twelve rooms one to six on the ground floor and six to twelve on the first floor. The kitchen and recreation as per the others with tv, video and comfortable surroundings. Monday to Thursday rooms are locked at 22.00hrs and Friday, Saturday and Sunday at 00.00hrs. We inspected a room in this house, it was in very good condition, kept clean and well maintained by the occupant. There was a single bed with in room shower, toilet and wash hand basin.

Cedar House

11.12 Cedar House has three floors unlike the previous buildings which were all two storey. The ground floor has rooms one to six, with a kitchen/dining area as per the others. The first floor with rooms seven to twelve and the second floor rooms thirteen to eighteen. The recreation room is on the second floor

with Tv, video and very comfortable surroundings as in all the houses. The front door lock up is 19.30hrs in this house.

Phoenix House

11.13 The phoenix house is a two storey building and functions differently to all the other houses. This house is used as the pre release/temporary release accommodation. It holds women who are no threat to themselves or others or no security risk. They infact have the key to the main door. On the ground floor there is a bedsit, self contained, which was designed for one person. On the day of inspection there were three adult women plus one baby, all non Nationals, held there. It is totally self contained with a kitchen and dining area. It was noted that there was a fourth mattress and on inquiry we were informed that at times up to four adults may be held in there . Access to the main house was through an additional locked door. The Keyholders are the occupants plus the supervising officer. There is a kitchen dining area on the ground floor and two rooms, each with ensuite facilities. The first floor has two rooms one of which is a double. There is a recreation room which is comfortable and quite clean. There are also two bedsits which are totally self contained designed like a bed sit/apartment style accommodation.

The Kitchen

11.14 Food services at the Dóchas Centre is communal style. The dining rooms has seating capacity for 100, which incorporates tables and chairs that are constructed as one and are fixed to the floor. The design of one of the dining

rooms is similar to that of the Intel computer company located in the west side of Dublin City. The area can be described as modern and vibrant in colour.

Meal Times

Breakfast 08.00h - 08.45h

Lunch 12.30h - 13.30h

Tea 16.30h - 17.15h

Staffing

The daily staffing complement comprises of:

1 Industrial Supervisor (I.S)

1 Assistant Industrial Supervisor (A.I.S)

2 Leonardo Trained Inmates

5 inmates who are pursuing an in - house European catering training or qualification (Leonardo). When the Assistant Industrial Officer is on leave, he/she is replaced by a relief officer.

The Communal Dining Operation

11.14(b)The Catering Department at the Dóchas Centre operate communal dining for the women. Communal dining in Irish Prisons is quite rare and it is viewed as a potential trouble area. Generally in most of the prisons the prisoners eat their meals on their own in their own cells.

It is a self service procedure offering hot and cold food to the women. The kitchen staff also provide special diets if prescribed by the doctor or

vegetarian diets as requested. All the inmates working in the kitchen area automatically pursue a recognised in-house catering course.

An example of the 28 days' cycle menu is available at Appendix 1.

The Inspector was well impressed with the Dóchas Centre kitchen and dining facilities which operate to a very high standard. The conscientious approach from the Industrial Supervisor in charge and all his workers is reflected in the number of awards which the centre has achieved. Some of the awards achieved are as follows:

- (a) Excellence Ireland Industrial Award 2002 catering section
- (b) Excellence Special Merit Award 2001
- (c) Industrial Special Merit Award 2001
- (d) Special Merit (Tidy Towns) Award 2002

12. HEALTH & SAFETY

Fire Aspect

- 12.1 The Dóchas Centre is a new building and therefore has been built and fitted with fire safety regulations in mind. The inspectorate had a meeting with the Chief Trades Officer who keeps excellent records on daily, weekly, monthly, bi-monthly, six monthly and annual checks carried out at the centre in relation to all aspects of fire safety. He also maintains good records in relation to the various fire prevention / fighting equipment that are located all around the buildings. The fire escapes, fire alarms, emergency lighting, extinguishers, mains and hydrants, breathing apparatus equipment, evacuation procedures

etc. are all recorded, and signed by the person with authorisation and qualifications to carry out these checks.

- 12.2 There are at least two means of entry / exit in each of the buildings. There are two water mains supply to the centre, one for domestic purposes and the other for fire / prevention/fighting use.
- 12.3 Each of the buildings are fitted with a hose reel which extends to the full length of the landings. There are eleven hydrants surrounding the building which are compatible with the fittings of the fire brigade. The fire brigade personnel have been on familiarisation tours of the buildings and have had the regular fire tender inside the centre on a few occasions. They have been in the centre recently when called to a room fire. The large fire tender (turntable type) cannot gain access to the building as there is not sufficient room inside the gate to get the tender turned. There is a plan of the building outlining the layout of the various houses and buildings, entries, exits, hydrants, hose and reel locations etc. available for the fire brigade personnel at main gate on arrival.
- 12.4 There are “bungs” in the room doors and in the event of a fire within the room the “bung” is removed and the nozzle of the hose reel is placed in the “bung” which will spray the room with water. Fire extinguishers are coloured coded and placed strategically around the buildings. There is a contract placed with an outside company for annual checks to take place on the extinguishers and a certificate is issued when those checks are carried out. They are also

checked monthly by the trades staff and repaired or replaced as required.

The same system applies with the emergency lights and they are replaced or repaired as needed. The fire alarms are also checked weekly.

12.5 There is a smoke extraction system in all of the buildings. It is the colt ventilation model which is fan assisted and linked into the fire alarm system. It is a smoke detection model (not heat) and has no air input. It has proven to be effective and has cleared a smoke filled corridor and rooms within 2 to 3 minutes after a room fire had been extinguished. There are water sprinklers in the three clad rooms but nowhere else in the building. There are “cut off points” in the kitchen and by hitting the button the entire power to the area is cut off immediately. There is also a canopy (powder) fire prevention screen over the cooking area of the kitchen, which is serviced by an outside contractor, and in an emergency, this canopy can be opened and it sprays the entire cooking area. There are signs placed around all of the buildings outlining instructions that are to be carried out if in the event of a fire and the assembly point in which that particular buildings’ occupants are to assemble.

12.6 Six fire evacuation exercises were carried out by staff in the past year. In the previous week to our inspection, a workshop section was evacuated as result of a smoke filled workroom. The fire brigade also responded to this emergency call but their services were not required as the staff dealt with it themselves. (This evacuation went very well, with prisoners, teachers and staff accounted for in a safe area in a very short time). It was a smouldering object in a bin which did not develop into a fire but caused considerable

smoke. Staff familiarisation training in breathing apparatus operations (donning & doffing only) have been taking place over the past twelve months. It is noted that less than 50% of the staff have received this familiarisation training. The more advanced training requirement in this area has not been carried out. It was stated that staff shortage was the reason for not carrying out the training.

- 12.7 The Inspector recommends that more staff receive the “donning & doffing” familiarisation training and that the more advanced refresher training in this area should also be carried out as a matter of urgency.

13. RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That the locker room and offices over the front gate of the Dóchas Centre be converted to prisoner room accommodation and that the existing offices and locker room facilities within this area be transferred to another location.
[Page 8, 4.1]
- (2) That the main prison be replaced not refurbished as a matter of urgency but that in the meantime, the sanitary systems within the prison to be brought up to an acceptable standard. This work should start immediately but should be phased by commencing work in the vacant wings. [Page 12, 5.1(a) & 15,5.2(a) Page 106]
- (3) Televisions be provided in all cells as soon as possible. [Page 21/22 5.2 (j)]
- (4) The Governor to investigate if the alleged practice of reading documents between legal representatives and prisoners when on professional visits to the prison is correct and if correct, to rectify same. [Page 22, 23, 5.2 (k)]
- (5) That the outside contract placed for pest control within the prison be increased to eradicate and further control the pests particularly mice and cockroaches. [Page 27, 5.4 (a) and Page 52, 6.3 (a)]
- (6) That push button alarm call bells are installed inside the cladded cells in the medical unit. [Page 28, 5.4 (d) and Page 107]

- (7) The development of a surgery complex on the site of the old kitchen should be proceeded with if the existing buildings are not going to be replaced.
[Page 29, 5.4 (e) & Page 30, 5.4 (f)]
- (8) The future role of the medical orderlies should be addressed by the Irish Prison Headquarters. [Page 30, 5.4 (f)]
- (9) The appointment of a Healthcare Manager as recommended in the report on “Prison Health care Services” 2001 at page 47 should be implemented.
[Page 31, 5.4 (h)]
- (10) The appointment of two additional psychologists (one for the male prison and one for the Dóchas Centre) [Page 32, 5.5 (a)]
- (11) That the electricity supply generator for the main prison be upgraded or replaced as a matter of urgency. [Page 39, 5.8 (d) & Page 67, 7.4]
- (12) That management, if at all possible, carry out fire evacuation exercises in all parts of the prison that is occupied. [Page 39, 5.8 (e) and Page 68, 7.7]
- (13) The cleanliness and hygiene of the toilet/wash areas within the prison especially the “A” recreation area, “B” wing and “D” workshop/recreation areas to be brought up and maintained at an acceptable standard
[Page 46, 6.1 (d), Page 49, 6.2 (b) and Page 56, 6.4 (h)]

- (14) That the prisoners who perform cleaning duties within the toilet areas should get some extra recognition offered to them. (i.e industrial allowances)
[Page 49, 6.2 (b)]
- (15) That the refuse waste bags being stored at end of the landings and at some of the exits from the wings of the prison be removed more frequently to a disposable area. [Page 49, 6.2 (b), Page 51,6.3 (a) and Page 54 6.4 (a)]
- (16) That general shower area, be refurbished and brought up to a reasonable standard. [Page 59, 6.4 (m)]
- (17) That prisoners receive two changes of underwear, socks, shirt, etc per week and have a shower at least twice per week. [Page 59, 6.4 (m)]
- (18) The provision of a drug free area/wing within the main prison.
[Page 60,6.4(n)]
- (19) That a wire covering or other such material be placed over the emergency exit light fittings so that prisoners cannot remove the batteries from them.
[Pages 67, 7.4]
- (20) That staff receive more comprehensive training in the use of breathing apparatus. [Page 68, 7.6]

(21) That signs are erected outlining fire evacuation points, emergency exits and assembly point areas and fire evacuation notices be placed in all cells.

[Page 68, 7.7 and Page 69, 7.8]

(22) That an information leaflet / booklet be made available to all new committals to the prison. [Page 82 10.3, (a) and Page 110]

(23) That the entrance to the control room of the Dóchas Centre be kept locked for security reasons at all times. [Page 89, 90, 11.1]

14. CONCLUSIONS

The inspection of Mountjoy was an enlightening and disturbing experience leaving two strong impressions. The first was of a system so old and seriously defective as to warrant immediate transformation or replacement as a matter of basic respect for the dignity and human rights of the prisoners and officers. The second was of many good people working in it. It is a prison with the best of motivation and dedication but thwarted by a system that is completely unacceptable.

The prison displays a building that is 150 years old and is in dire need of replacement. The sanitation facilities within it are deplorable and it is a disgrace that chamber pots (or indeed other types of receptacles e.g milk cartons) are in use with the “slop out” as part and parcel of everyday life. This is most degrading for prisoners and indeed for the staff who have to work there. The sooner Mountjoy is knocked and rebuilt or sold and a new prison built elsewhere, the better.

The drug culture among so many of the prisoners is frightening. Approx. 160 of them are on methadone maintenance programmes while more are on detoxification courses. Their whole life style appears to be dominated by illegal drugs and all that is associated with that lifestyle, such as smuggling them into the prison, violence, intimidation, aggression with other prisoners and staff etc. This also leads to the various health problems associate with it. While maintenance programmes are operated in the prison, the need for back

up staff to support these programmes is urgently required along with some designated “drug free” wing or area.

The regime within the prison is of two extremes. One is of work training, education, connect project, work within kitchens, bakery, workshops, workparties, etc doing a very good job. While on the other hand, a large number of the population has no work or education or training and just spend the day walking around exercise yards or sitting around recreation halls. This is soul destroying. The Inspector is also aware that some of these don't want to get involved in any of the activities and are chronic drug addicts. It was noted that the gym on the “A” Division was not in operation on any of the three occasions that the Inspectorate went to visit it. We were told on each occasion that the officer was taken off to do something else due to staff shortage. The atmosphere within the prison very much reflected the two different groups i.e the ones who were engaged and busy were quite cheerful and chatty while those who were idle had more complaints and were more demanding.

The Irish Prison Service and local management should attempt to introduce some work or activities for those prisoners who are not engaged in activities.

The special (cladded) cells in the medical unit have no call bell inside the cell to contact staff or seek help. There is a bell outside the door in the toilet/shower area but the prisoner has no access to it except when using these facilities and he would be supervised during those periods. There are different views concerning the location of the bell. However, taking all views

on board, I think it essential that he can contact staff at all times while detained there and I recommend that the bell is placed inside the cell (I understood that all such cells were to be phased out throughout the Prison Service as the Minister has announced. I would support the Minister's views they are inhumane and degrading).

It is noted that 105 prisoners were placed in the cladded or strip cells in the past three months with the average time spent there being 1 - 2 days. (The longest time spent there was six days). Records show that they were visited every day while there by the Governor, Doctor, Chaplain and sometimes also by the psychiatrist. 369 prisoners were placed on disciplinary (misconduct) reports in the previous three months, of which 161 forfeited remission of sentence and 94 of which forfeited evening recreation for longer than four weeks. 69 of the disciplinary reports were for smuggling or attempting to smuggle illegal substances (drugs) into the prison and as a result, 50 of those were placed on screen visits for a prescribed period.

The staffing levels at the prison operate at 33 under the approved posts and when escorts are taken into consideration this increases considerably, some days as much as 100%. The average number on daily sick leave is 17.31 while 3 of those staff are on continuous sick leave for more than six months. Staff work on average 7,882 hours per week while 3% of the staff work no overtime. 92 members of the staff have applied for a transfer to other prisons while no staff disciplinary hearings (misconduct) took place during the year. Some staff training and development took place during the year but a lot

more is required. Staff shortage was the reason given for not been able to complete more training.

Our inspection found that the majority of the staff were good, hard working caring and enthusiastic about their jobs. They gave the impression that they were willing to become involved in the rehabilitation of prisoners and anxious to deliver programmes, etc. However, we also encountered a small number of staff who displayed little enthusiasm for their role and appeared to have a resentment towards any betterment in the facilities or improvement for the prisoners. The working environment and working facilities for staff is not good, but despite these facts the staff morale overall appeared reasonably good.

THE DÓCHAS CENTRE

SUMMARY

The visit to the Dóchas Centre provoked a response quite different from that which the visit to Mountjoy Prison engendered. The reasons are obvious: one moves from a seriously overcrowded regime operating in buildings more than a century and a half old to modern (albeit overcrowded) regime in new premises with state-of-the-art facilities. This is not to suggest that everything in the Dóchas Centre appeared satisfactory. There are aspects which give rise to some concern.

The layout, cleanliness and hygiene of the centre is very good. Painting has taken place within some of the buildings since our last visit which has

improved the appearance considerably. A big percentage of the women are drug addicts with a daily average of approx 25 of them on methadone maintenance programmes. The centre has established great contacts with the various agencies organisations, boards, employers, etc within the community and large number of them visit the centre and give of their expertise. A lot of these contacts are made as a result of the Connect Project being operated within the centre. A new dental service is due to commence shortly for the women which will eliminate them having to go into the male prison for treatment.

It is noted by the Inspectorate that no written information outlining entitlements, facilities, services, etc, was available to new women on committal. This is supposed to be rectified shortly.

The womens' conduct appears quite good as in the previous three months there were 54 on disciplinary reports (102 reports) of which 2 forfeited a loss of remission and none of them forfeited evening recreation for longer than 4 weeks. Ten of the reports were for smuggling or attempting to smuggle illegal substance (drugs) into the centre of which 7 were placed on screened visits as a result. Nobody was placed in the cladded room for security reasons, however, 29 were placed there on medical grounds in the previous 3 months. The records show that they were visited daily by the Governor, Doctor and Chaplain while held there. The longest time spent there was 5 days while the average time was 24 hours.

The staff are predominately female, however, there are a considerable number of male staff attached to the centre. The average daily absence on sick leave is between five and six with one member of staff on continuous sick leave for more than six months. There is approximately 1000 hours overtime per week worked within the centre and just over 2% of the staff work no overtime. There are 29 staff seeking a transfer request to other prisons at present. Staff turnover for the year saw 22 new arrivals, 20 transfers granted and no resignation or retirements. No disciplinary staff (misconduct) hearings took place during the year.

Overall, it is a well run centre. It is a tremendous improvement on their previous accommodation. It is a pity that overcrowding is still a problem, even with the new buildings. The holding of very young girls within the centre where they mix and live with older women, who have had a lot of convictions and prison experience and who maybe drug addicts or lesbians or both is just unacceptable. Special schools are provided for girls of that age and they should be placed there irrespective of the circumstances.

A small concern the Inspector has arising from the inspection is the co-ordination of the various staff working within the centre. The placing of self interest among the various staffing groups above that of the betterment of the centre and of the prisoners held there may effect the regime in the long run.