

**Minister Fitzgerald,
Department of Justice & Equality
94 St. Stephen's Green, Dublin 2.**

**We, the undersigned members of
Loughan House Visiting Committee,
have pleasure in presenting this, our
Annual Report for 2014.**

The following are the Members who served on the Committee during 2014:

Mrs. Kathleen Richey (Chairperson)
Mr. Patrick Boyle
Mr. Andrew Cullen
Mr. Peter Cutcliffe

The Committee held a total of 12 meetings throughout the year, all of which were well attended.

Mr. Liam Reilly and Mr. Edward Mullins served as Governors and Ms Geraldine Carrick as Assistant Governor during the year.

Number of Offenders in Loughan House

Loughan House remains a transfer Place of Detention it received precisely 190 offenders on transfer, mainly from committal prisons. By and large, there was compliance with periods of temporary release, while two prisoners absconded in 2014

Visits by the Committee

During the year, other than for scheduled meetings, committee members visited unannounced and in rotation as per their panels. The House, Grounds and environs of the Prison were at all times found to be in very good condition. Members signed themselves in, in the book provided, and checked to see if there were any prisoners with specific requests to meet with them. As part of their tour of the prison, they would speak randomly with offenders and not in the hearing of others.

Visits to Offenders from family & friends

The main visits hall is spacious and family friendly facility. A second child friendly room is also available. Visits are very important to the Offenders - there is a recognition amongst them that regulations are quite flexible in Loughan House, in relation to time allowed for the visit etc. - this

is important we feel as, with the below average frequency of a public transport service, some visitors do not get to visit as often as they would otherwise like to.

Kitchen / Catering Dept.

The Kitchen continues to earn the high regard reported by both the prisoners who receive their meals there and the external auditing agencies. The staff are professional, highly trained and motivated. The Kitchen employs 12 inmates on a rotational basis which provides great opportunity for offenders to learn the art of catering. The 28 day menu cycle provides for nutrition and a healthy diet. Those with special dietary requirements are well catered for, be they vegetarian, vegan, and diabetic or having specific allergies to certain food types. City & Guilds training was introduced for Inmates in 2013 and is ongoing.

Education Unit

The Education Unit retains its pivotal function in Loughan House and it's work is well deserving of the support given to it by prison management. Head Teacher Ms. Brenda McMullen continues to lead a dedicated team, who are proactive in reaching out to offenders and meeting their changing educational needs which this year included *Literacy, Numeracy, Maths, English, ESOL, ICT, Woodwork, Music, Art, Home Economics, PE and Outdoor Pursuits*. Students report a high level of satisfaction with the subjects on offer, with various levels of expectation and ability being facilitated. Educational tours/projects such as to *The Arigna Mining Experience, The Sculpture Project in Manorhamilton* and *The Eagles Flying Project* proved both popular and beneficial. The fact that such high levels of participation in School activities and classes are being attained on a voluntary basis speaks volumes about the work being done at the Education Unit.

Work Training Workshops

Training Workshops provide training in relevant disciplines such as Industrial Cleaning, Tiling, Car Valeting and mentoring prisoners to start their own business. The WTO Officer's who take charge of these workshop display a great interest in furthering the interests and accomplishments of the inmates.

Library Services

The library facility has been moved to a more suitable location in Pine Lodge. It is well stocked and is opened three times per week by the part-time librarian. The introduction of an Inmate as Library Assistant has been a huge benefit to the Library Service to Inmates.

Laundry Services

The Prison Laundry is Operational onsite under the supervision of a Work Training Officer and is working extremely well and of great benefit to Inmates.

Probation & Welfare Services

Senior Probation Officer Margaret Prendergast provides a very good service to Loughan House, meeting the needs of both the Offender and the Public. While she can only attend here on a part-time basis due to professional commitments elsewhere, there are also two Probation Officers Ms.

Bridget Myles and Ms. Olivia Boyle working in Loughan their work is seen as most valuable and is indeed appreciated.

Addiction Counseling Service

Catherine Lyons and Louise Kelly continue to work closely with inmates on a one-to-one basis and they also organise the visiting of such help-groups as Alcoholics Anonymous. Given the challenges faced by those in addiction, we value the efforts of the addiction counselors immensely - hoping that many will find here, the help they need to return to a more fulfilling, dignified and less destructive lifestyle on release.

Healthcare

Nurse Officers provide day service from 8am to 8pm and, while there is a nurse officer available almost every day, efforts are made to meet any shortfall by using agency staff. Dental Services operates once per month. While this service has been cut from weekly visits and is seen as a steep cut to services, the Committee recognises the pressures being placed on resources in every area of each Department. Nurse Officers perform their duties solely in the Healthcare area and are not required to perform operational duties. The work of the Nursing staff, in conjunction with that of the visiting G.P, leaves the Committee in no doubt that every effort is being made to assist offenders with their medical needs. Where medical requirements cannot be met in Loughan House, such as psychiatric evaluation, these needs are sometimes met by transferring the prisoner to Castlereagh Prison or Midlands Prison for the benefit of best medical assessment/intervention. We support and encourage the consideration of Temporary Release, where suitable and practical, for medical appointments and procedures.

Chaplaincy

Fr. Charles O’Gorman attends Loughan House, both to meet with offenders and to say mass, which is available both weekly and on Holy Days. The Spiritual / Religious needs of all prisoners are respected and encouraged, regardless of their origin or beliefs. There is no evidence of racial, religious, sexual or other discrimination at play in Loughan and indeed, none has been reported to us in our encounters with offenders.

Grounds / Environs of the Prison

Compliments are extended to the inmates who work both outside and inside the prison, keeping the area clean, tidy, presentable and welcoming. A word of thanks to the management and to supervising staff also, for making such work possible. The work being undertaken has extended outside of the prison environment, with tidying-up, creation of flower-beds etc. in Blacklion and Manorhamilton earning credit for Loughan House.

Integrated Sentence Management ISM

ISM is a method for managing prisoner’s sentences and their time spent in prison. The aim of ISM is that from the time prisoners are committed to prison to the time they return to the community, each prisoner will have a plan developed by all the prison services and agencies

along with the prisoners themselves, to help make the best use of their time in prison and to assist with their re-integration into the community. WTO James Keely is the co-ordinator of this program in Loughan House.

External Work/Training Programs

There are a number of work and training programs in progress during 2014. Throughout the year 8 inmates were in classes in South West College in Enniskillen subjects include Catering course, Gym Course, Computer Science, Business Services and Refrigeration Course and Computerised Book Keeping.

A number of work parties also continue to take place, where Inmates carried out community work at

- The McNeane Resource and Amenity Centre
- Glen Centre Manorhamilton
- St. Cecilia's School
- St. Michaels Primary School
- Blacklion National School
- Bawnboy National School
- Belturbet National School
- Ballisodare National School
- Drumkeeran Animal Welfare Centre
- Drumkeeran Church
- Irish Prison Service Headquarters in Longford.

Charitable Work

The two charitable initiatives Bóthar and Bikes for Africa launched in 2013 are going well. The scheme in which calves donated by farmers, schools and community groups from all over the country will be taken to where there will be reared by Loughan House inmates at the prison's on-site farm for the next two years. Once they are mature enough and in calf, they will be flown to needy families in developing countries in Africa. The first shipment for these animals will take place in early 2015. The Bikes4Africa scheme where old bikes have been donated by people from all around the country through the network of 70-plus Rotary clubs. Thanks to Ms. Ethel Gavin, Mr. Liam Reilly and Mr. Edward Mullins current Governor, the Irish Prison Service is partnering with Rotary to refurbish the donated bikes. The project provides prisoners with an opportunity to give back to the community and learn new skills. It teaches them about bike technology and repair as they service, clean and recycle the bikes in the newly constructed Bikes4Africa workshop in Loughan House prison. The latest shipment has brought the number of refurbished bicycles to 1,000 bicycles. Inmates have helped in the fundraising efforts for the North West Hospice in Sligo. The most recent project involved the growing of 3,000 shamrock plants and 2,000 sunflower plants.

Overview

Loughan House remains a very valuable and worthwhile facet of the Prison Service, both for the offenders who have been deemed suitable for transfer here and for those aspiring to prove themselves suitable - it is an incentive for better behavior and for taking responsibility for one's own sentence management. Staff are courteous and helpful and the relationship between Officer and Offender is different and better than that which would be possible in a bigger, closed institution. This relationship, we feel, is a contributor to the fact that self-harm and suicide attempts are not prevalent in Loughan House. All services are of a high quality, from the Gym to the Education Unit to the Tuck shop - the very low level of complaint to this body of any issues/problems being experienced by offenders is testament to a smooth-running institution which is fit for purpose.

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