

**A report by the Inspector of Prisons
Judge Michael Reilly into the circumstances
surrounding the death of Prisoner B
On 8 March 2015
while on Temporary Release from Limerick
Prison**

***Please note that names have been removed to anonymise this Report**

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**A report by the Inspector of Prisons Judge Michael Reilly
into the circumstances surrounding the death of Prisoner B
on 8 March 2015 while on Temporary Release from
Limerick Prison.**

Presented to the Minister for Justice and Equality pursuant to
Part 5 of the Prisons Act 2007.

Judge Michael Reilly
Inspector of Prisons

27 May 2015

Preface

The deceased was a 28 year old female at the date of her death.

She is survived by her mother and siblings.

As part of my investigation I met with the deceased's mother and other members of her extended family. I wish to express my sincere condolences to them on their sad loss.

I would like to point out that names have been removed to anonymise this report.

My Report is divided into 8 sections as follows:-

1. General Information
2. Status in the Prison
3. Meeting with the deceased's family
4. Deceased's contact with the Addiction and Psychiatric Services in the Prison
5. Renewable Temporary Release
6. Addressing the concerns of the family
7. Findings
8. Comment

Judge Michael Reilly

Inspector of Prisons

27 May 2015

Inspector of Prisons Investigation Report

General Information

1. The deceased was a 28 year old female from the Munster area. She is survived by her mother and siblings.
2. The deceased was committed to Limerick Prison on 23 July 2013. Her remission date was 23 March 2015.
3. The deceased had a significant history of drug abuse.
4. The deceased had engaged with the therapeutic services both in the community and in prison.
5. The deceased was granted temporary release to the Community Return Scheme on 14 January 2015. She completed the voluntary work element of the conditions of her release.
6. The deceased died of a suspected drug overdose on 8 March 2015.

Status in the Prison

7. The deceased was an Enhanced Level Prisoner while in Limerick Prison.
8. She was well liked by both prison staff and her fellow prisoners.

Meeting with the deceased's family

9. I met with the deceased's mother and other family members.
10. They outlined her significant history of drug taking from a relatively early age. They explained that she had been committed to prison on a number of occasions in the past.

11. They explained that she had been granted temporary release in the past and that on a previous occasion she was hospitalised in Limerick University Hospital following a drug overdose.
12. They explained that the family had brought her back to Limerick Prison on 15 June 2014 following the episode referred to in paragraph 11. They told me that they had been told at the hospital that “*her heart had stopped twice*”. At this stage she was ‘*unlawfully at large*’ having broken a number of the terms of her temporary release. They further explained that when she was returned to the prison they (the family) handed a discharge letter from the hospital to officers in the prison and suggested to the prison authorities that she should remain in prison and “*do all of her time*”.
13. They explained that while on temporary release referred to in paragraph 12 the deceased’s father and grandfather died and that these tragedies affected the deceased.
14. The family expressed certain concerns that they wished me to investigate. Their concerns were as follows:-
 - a) Did she need follow up medical treatment after her hospitalisation referred to in paragraph 12 as they were unaware of the contents of the hospital discharge letter also referred to in paragraph 12?
 - b) What medication was she taking when she was discharged on temporary release on 14 January 2015?
 - c) Why was she not held in prison to serve her total sentence as opposed to granting her temporary release?

Deceased’s contact with the Addiction and Psychiatric Services in Prison

- 15 The deceased was in contact with an addiction counsellor. She met with the counsellor while in prison on a regular basis.
- 16 The deceased had contact with a psychiatrist while in prison following the death of her father and grandfather referred to in paragraph 13.

- 17 In the interest of privacy I do not intend giving further details of the deceased's contact with the addiction and psychiatric services.
- 18 On her release on temporary release, referred to later in this report, the deceased attended bereavement and drug counselling services in the Bedford Row Family Project in Limerick.

Renewable Temporary Release

- 19 The deceased was granted temporary release on two occasions during the currency of her last sentence.
- 20 Her first period of temporary release was in September 2013. She failed to observe the terms of her temporary release and was returned to the prison on 15 June 2014 as referred to in paragraph 12.
- 21 At a review meeting on 15 October 2014 attended by staffs from the various therapeutic services, the Governor of Limerick Prison and a representative of Irish Prison Service Directorate, the application by the deceased to be considered for the community return scheme was discussed.
- 22 The deceased's application was further discussed at a review meeting on 19 November 2014 where it was noted that – "*the prisoner was undergoing assessment for CRS*".
- 23 The deceased was assessed as suitable for the Community Return Scheme. The matters taken into consideration when assessing her suitability included, *inter alia*, that:-
- (a) She had a post release address – that of her mother and that she was welcome at that address.
 - (b) She agreed to perform two days unpaid work on a community service site in her community.
 - (c) She was not subject to a PSSSO.

- (d) There were no threat issues highlighted by any of the services.
 - (e) She was deemed medically suitable for the Community Return Scheme having obtained a level of stability around her polydrug use having engaged well with the addiction services while in prison.
 - (f) She had previously successfully completed a community service order.
24. The deceased was approved for weekly reviewable temporary release to the Community Returns Scheme on 7 January 2015 for a period of 6 weeks to participate in the Scheme.
25. On 14 January 2015 the deceased was granted reviewable weekly temporary release to participate in the Community Return Scheme.
26. The terms of her weekly reviewable temporary release included, *inter alia*, that:-
- (a) Shall reside at given address.
 - (b) Agree not to change address.
 - (c) Engage in 2 days unpaid work (Community Return Scheme) as directed by the Probation Service.
 - (d) Sign on daily at a nominated Garda Station except on those days that she was engaged in the unpaid community return work.
 - (e) Sign on at Limerick Prison on a weekly basis.
27. The deceased was granted weekly periods of temporary release on the conditions set out in paragraph 26 up to 25 February 2015 by which date she had completed that element of her temporary release that related to participate in the Community Return Scheme.
28. The deceased abided by all terms of her temporary release and was complimented by her supervisors for her participation in the scheme.
29. On 25 February 2015 the deceased was granted a further period of 7 days temporary release subject to the same terms as heretofore but without the

obligation to participate in the Community Return Scheme. She abided by the terms of this temporary release.

30. On 4 March 2015 she was granted a further period of 14 days temporary release subject to the same conditions. She was to sign on at Limerick Prison on 18 March 2015.

31. The deceased died on 8 March 2015 of a suspected drug overdose.

Addressing the concerns of the family

32. In paragraph 14, I set out the concerns of the family as raised with me at my meeting with them. In this paragraph I endeavour to answer such concerns. For ease I adopt the same numbering sequence as in paragraph 14.

- a) I examined the deceased's medical records and particularly the hospital discharge letter. There is no reference in such letter to any medical or therapeutic requirements to be followed by the medical or therapeutic personnel in the prison following the deceased's discharge from hospital as referred to in paragraph 12.
- b) The deceased was on medication when discharged on temporary release on 14 January 2015. For privacy reasons I do not intend giving details of such medication in this Report but will inform the family of the details of such medication prior to the publication of this Report.
- c) For the reasons set out in paragraphs 21 to 30 the deceased was deemed an appropriate person to be released on temporary release to participate in the Community Return Scheme.

Findings

33. The deceased had for many years been a user of illicit drugs.

34. She had engaged with the medical and therapeutic services both in the prison and in the community to address her addiction.

35. It was a correct decision to grant the deceased temporary release to engage in the Community Return Scheme.
36. The deceased engaged with the Probation Service in carrying out her obligations under the Community Return Scheme by participating in same for two days a week for 6 weeks.
37. The deceased abided by all terms of her temporary release.
38. While it is a matter for the Coroner her suspected cause of death was a drug overdose.

Comment

The deceased's family would like me to acknowledge the concern shown to her by all members of the prison staff in Limerick Prison. **They would particularly like me to acknowledge the kindness of Officer A who telephoned the deceased prior to all her appointments with the therapeutic services during her period on temporary release to ensure that she did not miss any such appointments. This went beyond this officer's normal duties.**