

Interim report on the Dóchas Centre

By the Inspector of Prisons

Judge Michael Reilly

October 2013

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By the inspector of Prisons Judge Michael Reilly
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Presented to the Minister for Justice and equality pursuant to Part 5 of
the Prisons Act 2007

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Inspector of Prisons

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Chapter 1

Introduction

- 1.1 Since my appointment as Inspector of Prisons in January 2008, I have paid particular attention to the Dóchas Centre (hereinafter referred to as the “Centre”).
- 1.2 The Centre is the principal prison in this Country for women prisoners. It is a purpose built Prison which was constructed in 1999 to accommodate 85 women. In 2012 a newly refurbished building was opened to accommodate a further 20 women.
- 1.3 The Centre is part of the Mountjoy Prison Campus. It is governed by a Governor with a management team. The Mountjoy Prison Campus Governor has overall oversight of all prisons within the Campus including the Dóchas Centre.
- 1.4 I visited the Centre on numerous occasions both announced and unannounced. These visits took place during the ‘working day’, at night and at weekends. When necessary I sought advice from relevant experts.
- 1.5 During my visits I spoke to all members of the management team, to prison officers, to prisoners, to those who supply services to the Prison such as doctors, teachers, probation officers, to visitors to the prison and to others that I met.
- 1.6 I also spoke to many people outside the Centre who had knowledge of, or an interest in, the workings of the Centre. Many people spoke to me in confidence.
- 1.7 I had unrestricted access to all parts of the Centre. I also had unrestricted access to all records held in the Centre.
- 1.8 I took time to observe the day to day workings of the Centre.

- 1.9 When matters of concern were raised with me I checked the veracity of such concerns through a number of sources. Therefore, where I have raised matters of concern in this Report, I am satisfied that such matters are real issues.
- 1.10 In a number of my Annual Reports I referred to concerns that I had relating to the Centre. These concerns related to overcrowding, management structures, parameters for prisoners and certain staff issues. I also had concerns relating to the fabric of the Centre and what might be termed ‘housekeeping’ issues.
- 1.11 I found that certain practices had crept in which had the effect of changing the culture and ethos of the Centre. It could be said that the Centre had, to a degree, lost its way. **This is not to say that prisoners were unsafe or that management and officers, contracted service providers and others were not, in the main, sympathetic to the needs of the prisoners.**
- 1.12 I worked closely with the management of the Centre, with the Mountjoy Campus Management and with the Irish Prison Service in an effort to resolve the concerns referred to in paragraph 1.10.
- 1.13 I am satisfied that the practices referred to in paragraph 1.11 have been arrested and that the Centre is regaining its former ethos. However, this is a work in progress and a full evaluation of same can only be made after some reasonable time lapse. **Therefore, because of the positive response of the prison management, the campus management and the Irish Prison Service I have decided that this Report should be in the form of an Interim Report.** I will defer submitting a comprehensive report on the Centre to the Minister for approximately six months from the date of this Report. I will continue my inspections of the Centre. These visits will be both announced and unannounced and will take place during the day, at night and at weekends.
- 1.14 In my comprehensive report referred to in paragraph 1.13, I will, in addition to revisiting all issues referred to in this Report, deal with all aspects of the Centre including, *inter*

alia, the provision of services to the prisoners, the operation of the school, the visiting procedures, the healthcare of the women, the many innovative schemes provided in-house or by external agencies and any other relevant issues.

- 1.15 In Chapter 2 of this Report I outline my concerns referred to in the first two sentences of paragraph 1.10 and the measures already taken by the Centre to address such concerns. In Chapter 3, I outline my other concerns relating to the fabric of the Centre and what might be termed housekeeping issues. I also outline the measures already taken by the Centre to address such concerns.
- 1.16 As I have already stated in paragraph 1.3 the Centre forms part of the Mountjoy Prison Campus. As such it is entitled to expect such support as is necessary to enable it function to its optimum. The Campus Management Team supported by the Irish Prison Service must ensure that the Centre has adequate resources to enable it fulfil its mandate and live up to its vision statement.
- 1.17 When supporting the Centre the Campus Management must ensure that such support is given in a way that is sympathetic to the ethos of the Centre as significantly different considerations apply when dealing with women prisoners. **I would like to emphasise that in this context ‘support’ must be ‘helpful’ rather than overly authoritative.**
- 1.18 The Dóchas Centre is the flagship women’s prison in this State. As it is part of the Mountjoy Prison Campus any deficiencies in its operation reflect on the whole Campus.
- 1.19 In paragraphs 2.1 to 2.38, I draw attention to the unacceptable overcrowding of the Centre. This is the **single greatest problem** associated with the Centre.
- 1.20 There are complex reasons as to why the women prison population is increasing.
- 1.21 The reduction in the women prison population is not a matter solely for the Irish Prison Service. The answer is not solely to build more accommodation. This is a problem that

must be addressed by many agencies such as the Courts, the statutory and voluntary agencies. The questions of homelessness and the lack of diversionary options for certain women who come into conflict with the criminal justice system are matters that should excite debate in civil society. **Therefore, I suggest that my comments referred to in paragraphs 2.29 to 2.37 should be taken seriously.**

- 1.22 In this Report I have not alluded to the serious problem of drugs in the Centre. The drug problem in the Centre mirrors similar problems in the community. The management of the Centre is acutely aware of this problem and is proactive in its endeavours to stop the supply of drugs. I will refer to this issue in my comprehensive report.

Chapter 2

Major Concerns

Overcrowding

- 2.1 There are two women's prisons in this State – the Dóchas Centre (the subject of this Report) and the Limerick Women's Prison. The Limerick Women's Prison is accommodated in a separate wing of the main Limerick Prison.
- 2.2 As I have already stated the Centre was opened in 1999 with a capacity for 85 women to be accommodated in single rooms. All rooms have an adjoining bathroom containing a shower, a toilet and a wash hand basin.
- 2.3 When opened the Centre was divided into 7 houses. One house was designed as a step down facility for women coming near the end of their sentences. This house is divided into a number of apartments designed to mirror accommodation in the community. Due to the overcrowding of the Centre this house is now used for normal prison accommodation purposes. Part of this house is used as a mother and baby unit. Mothers are allowed keep their children from birth to one year.
- 2.4 In 2012 a building, adjoining the original Centre, was refurbished and opened to accommodate a further 20 women. Accommodation is provided in one, two and three bedded rooms. This accommodation is bright and appropriate. The women in this house have their own kitchen and recreation rooms.
- 2.5 The maximum number of prisoners that should be accommodated in the Centre should now not exceed 105.
- 2.6 Limerick Prison has accommodation for 24 women.
- 2.7 **Therefore, the maximum number of women prisoners that should be accommodated in the Irish Prison System should not exceed 129.**

2.8 The Dóchas Centre has consistently operated way in excess of its maximum capacity. On 8th July 2010 there were 150 prisoners in the Centre when its maximum should have been 85. On 19th June 2013 there were 141 prisoners in the Centre when the maximum should have been 105.

2.9 There has been a dramatic increase from 1990 to date in the numbers of women committed to prison. The following will illustrate this point:-

1990 – 155 committals

2005 – 402 committals

2012 – 2092 committals

2.10 Overcrowding in any prison has a negative effect. In the case of the Dóchas Centre this negative effect is characterised by, *inter alia*,:-

- Women doubled up in their rooms.
- Arguments between women being a constant feature.
- Services and regimes not being adequate.
- Houses which were traditionally ‘privileged houses’ no longer acting as such.
- Women accommodated in recreation rooms where they have no privacy and no lockers for their clothes.
- Tension throughout the Centre where the slightest thing can spark a major altercation.

2.11 There are of course negatives when women are committed to prison. These are well documented elsewhere. A significant number of women who end up in the Centre have experienced childhood sexual abuse, abuse in their adult life, indifference and neglect. Punishment is not a new experience for them. Imprisonment for these women dramatically increases the likelihood that they will lose their homes and their relationships with their families and their children. They can also lose their mental health

in the process. The children also suffer by reason of such fractured relationships and broken homes - many ending up mirroring the experiences of their mothers.

2.12 I do not want my comments in paragraph 2.11 to be construed as a suggestion that women should never be imprisoned. Of course there must be women's prisons. My remarks must be taken in the context of paragraphs 2.13 to 2.37.

2.13 Many women are committed to prison on short sentences usually for petty/nuisance offences. The following figures supplied by the Irish Prison Service for women committed to prison in the years 1990, 2005 and 2012 explain this point in stark detail:-

Year	<3m	3<6m	6<12m	1<2y	2<3y	3<5y	5<10y	10+	Life	Unspecified	Total
1990	54	18	53	25	3	0	0	1	0	1	155
2005	221	80	58	23	11	7	1	1	0	0	402
2012	1736	171	121	23	23	11	7	0	0	0	2029

I have included a breakdown of the above figures in **Appendix A** of this Report.

2.14 It is clear from the above table that the vast majority of women committed to prison are sentenced for less than 12 months, with the majority of these, sentenced for less than three months. It is also clear that the tendency to sentence for less than three months has greatly increased in the period from 2005 to 2012. In 2012 those committed for less than three months accounted for 83% of all committals.

2.15 Homelessness is a huge issue for women prisoners. Many women will already have experienced instability in accommodation and have had transient housing histories while in the community, while others will have lost their accommodation shortly after their imprisonment, as a direct result of imprisonment. **Therefore, a significant number of women who leave the Dóchas Centre have no accommodation or at best have temporary accommodation.**

- 2.16 Alcoholism and addiction to drugs is common amongst a significant cohort of women prisoners. Many women have suffered physical and sexual abuse. Many have mental health problems.
- 2.17 A significant number of women in prison come from the marginalised side of society. Some have little education and others have poor coping skills.
- 2.18 There are extensive rehabilitative programmes and courses available for the women prisoners in the Centre.
- 2.19 Activities for women prisoners in the Centre include catering, sewing/embroidery, hairdressing, laundry, industrial cleaning, gardening, computer/print and waste management. The women also participate in education, in gym activities and in a vast number of different personal development, addiction counselling and parenting programmes.
- 2.20 When women are sentenced to short terms of imprisonment it is difficult for those who provide rehabilitative programmes to make any worthwhile progress with the cohort of women described in paragraphs 2.15 to 2.17 as the time span for any worthwhile intervention is too short. **This statement is not to be taken as a suggestion that sentences for the marginalized should be increased.**
- 2.21 I have talked to women in the Centre who would fall into the categories referred to in paragraphs 2.15 to 2.17 and the majority are just looking for help, any help, to try to – “get off these bloody drugs”, “get my children back”, “get a place of my own”, “get a job”, “turn my life around” and, significantly, “get away from the abuse that I have suffered from him”. This latter quote refers to abuse by a spouse/partner or some other person exercising power over the woman in the community. In some cases these may be pious aspirations but not in all.

- 2.22 If a woman has not been able to avail of the rehabilitative programmes or engage with the services in the Prison, which are designed to help her reintegrate into society, because of the short sentence that she is serving, the inevitable result will be that she goes back to the society that she has come from where drugs, alcohol and chaos in her life again becomes the order of the day. Petty crime feeds this chaos. The circle continues.
- 2.23 In paragraph 1.21, I stated that the reduction of the prison population is not a matter solely for the Irish Prison Service. The Irish Prison Service and the management of the Dóchas Centre have been proactive in seeking avenues to reduce the numbers.
- 2.24 The Irish Prison Service strives to keep numbers in the Centre at as near to safe and manageable levels as is possible. They do this by the judicious use of temporary release.
- 2.25 As part of the Irish Prison Service's Strategic Plan, 2012-2015, the Service has committed itself to work in partnership with the Probation Service and other stakeholders in the statutory, community and voluntary sectors in order to develop a strategy for dealing with women offenders. As part of this and, recognising the particular issue of homelessness for women on release, the Irish Prison Service has engaged with a number of key statutory agencies, including Dublin City Council and the Probation Service, in order to put in place a targeted response in relation to homelessness for women.
- 2.26 I understand that the engagement between the Irish Prison Service and the agencies referred to in paragraph 2.25 is, in part, concentrated on the provision of a Centre in the greater Dublin area which would target women with specific needs and would provide:-
- Supported accommodation.
 - Intensive case management (temporary and long term).
 - Specialist addiction and mental health support, with primary care teams.
 - Day services with drop in and structured programmes, including training and educational programmes.

Such a Centre should have priority access for women from the Dóchas Centre. A pathway such as this from the Dóchas Centre to the community would have a positive effect on reducing the numbers in the Dóchas Centre. I endorse this concept. The opening of such a Centre must be a priority for all agencies concerned.

- 2.27 I have pointed out that overcrowding in our women's prisons and especially in the Dóchas Centre is the greatest deterrent to the Centre operating as it should. I have made the point that a significant majority of women committed to prison are there for short sentences. I have also pointed out that such women have problems in their lives which cannot be solved by short terms in prison, and, by not being solved, such women continue to return to prison, again in the majority of cases for petty crimes. **However when such women come before the Courts the Judges do not have many alternatives when it comes to sentencing.**
- 2.28 The first and obvious alternative is that, when up and running, the Centre referred to in paragraph in 2.26 could be used by the Courts as a place where women might be diverted rather than committed to the 'last resort' - prison.
- 2.29 I have spelled out in detail the problems which are, in essence, the homeless problem faced by many women on leaving the Centre and the fact that a high proportion of women are committed to prison for short sentences for petty crime which in most cases is associated with their chronic circumstances.
- 2.30 The solution to these twin problems cannot be addressed by the Irish Prison Service or the management of the Dóchas Centre. Equally, they cannot be addressed solely by the Minister for Justice and Equality or by his Department.
- 2.31 State agencies and statutory bodies have an obligation to address the question of homelessness. They must be proactive in ensuring that all women prisoners who leave either the Dóchas Centre or Limerick Women's Prison have adequate, suitable and permanent accommodation. By this I do not mean bed and breakfast accommodation for

a short period of time. All relevant supports must also be put in place for such women by such agencies. For its part the Dóchas Centre must ensure that the relevant agencies are notified well in advance of the release of women who are potentially homeless.

2.32 **No woman on release from prison should be homeless. In this regard an excuse that accommodation is not available is not acceptable.**

2.33 I have already stated that Courts should have a diversity of options for dealing with those women who are, at present, sentenced to periods of up to one year.

2.34 Any change to the current procedures will require fresh thinking on the part of all relevant agencies if Judges are to have this diversity of options. Problem solving Courts along the lines of Community Courts advocated by the National Crime Council should be one option to be considered.

2.35 State agencies, statutory and voluntary bodies, NGOs and civil society would all have a part to play in formulating and, in various respects, operating the range of options which should be available. Such options should be formulated in such a way that they attract public confidence. Some women in the Centre have told me that they consider the Centre to be a 'safe home' for that period of time that they spend there. Therefore, it is important that this security should be mirrored in all diversionary programmes envisaged in this Chapter.

2.36 This is a debate which must be undertaken immediately. It must be conducted in an unemotional manner.

2.37 **If this debate does not take place or if the deliberations from such debate are negative the *status quo* will remain and this would be unacceptable in any civilized society. In this connection time is of the essence.**

2.38 I am satisfied that if the numbers in the Dóchas Centre can be reduced to a maximum of 105 the Centre can live up to its vision statement.

Management structures

2.39 Prisons are no different to any other organisations. They must have management and command structures.

2.40 The Dóchas Centre has a management structure, namely, the Governor, the Assistant Governor, the Chief Officer, ACO's, the managers of services, the Class Officers and the officers.

2.41 The management structure as outlined at paragraph 2.40 must operate efficiently in its dual role as a management structure and as a command structure. When operating as such the Governor should have time to 'manage' the important aspects of the Centre. The Governor would have oversight of all aspects of life in the Centre. Middle management would also have an important part to play in this regard. **No one person can do everything.**

2.42 When I first looked at the Dóchas Centre in 2008, I was satisfied that the ethos of the Centre as set out in its vision statement was mirrored on the ground. Over time I discerned a change of emphasis from regarding women as a special category of prisoner to one where all prisoners, male and female, were regarded as a homogeneous group.

2.43 In paragraph 1.11, I stated that certain practices had crept in which had the effect of changing the culture and ethos of the Centre. The following are the types of practices that I refer to:-

- A disconnect between management and staff. Staff in certain cases not being given responsibility and in other cases not taking responsibility.
- Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's), Governors' Orders, Chiefs' Orders and guidelines for the implementation of same not known to all staff.

- In certain instances staff and especially junior staff who were following proper procedures were not at all times supported by senior staff and especially by management.
- A perception, widely held by both officers and prisoners, that certain prisoners received more favourable treatment than others when decisions were being made with regard to the implementation of SOP's, orders or guidelines.
- A perception, widely held by both officers and prisoners, that certain prisoners received more favourable treatment than others when sanctions were being imposed for breach of prison discipline.
- Prison disciplinary hearings not being dealt with as expeditiously as should be.
- A perception again widely held by both staff and prisoners that "*she who cries loudest gets most*". This particular perception was borne out by my investigations.
- What was everybody's responsibility ended up by being nobody's responsibility.
- No mentoring of junior staff.

This is not an exhaustive list.

- 2.44 From my conversations with many people, my perusal of records in the Centre and my observations generally I was satisfied that the Centre was, to an extent, losing its way.
- 2.45 I met with the Governor, the management team, the Prison Campus Governor and officials from the Irish Prison Service. I outlined my concerns. It was accepted that certain changes would have to be made.
- 2.46 **At this point I wish to point out that I did not advocate changing personnel or making any other sweeping changes. I did advocate a change in focus.**
- 2.47 I have worked closely with the Governor and her team to ensure that the changes necessary have been agreed and, where possible, implemented.

2.48 I am satisfied that the Governor, heading the management team, has and is taking steps to address all of the concerns outlined in paragraph 2.43. This has entailed and will entail, *inter alia*, the following:-

- Having a management structure and a command structure that is clear and understood by all.
- Ensuring that SOP's, Governors' Orders, Chiefs' Orders and guidelines for the implementation of same are known to all staff.
- Dealing with disciplinary hearings expeditiously.
- Taking steps to ensure that the perceptions referred to in paragraph 2.43 are dealt with.
- Introducing relevant training for all members of staff. (I refer to this in greater detail in the paragraphs 2.61 to 2.65).
- The Mountjoy Campus Management adopting a hands on approach in providing "support" in the spirit of paragraph 1.17 to the Governor and her team in the Centre.
- Introducing mentoring for junior staff.

2.49 I am satisfied that the measures outlined in paragraph 2.48, if implemented to the letter, will address the concerns expressed in paragraph 2.43. However, as some measures have only recently been taken and others have yet to be implemented I wish to continue to monitor the situation for a number of months to ensure that all the undesirable practices that have crept in have been eradicated. Therefore, I will refer to this aspect in my comprehensive report on the Centre that I intend submitting to the Minister in approximately six months.

Parameters for Prisoners

2.50 In all walks of life people are entitled to know what the parameters are and the consequences that follow a breach of such parameters. Prisoners are no different.

2.51 All the women prisoners in the Centre should be made aware of the rules of the Prison. These rules should be explained to them in detail and in a language that they understand and the consequences for breaching such rules should be made clear.

2.52 When a prisoner breaks a rule of the prison the sanction should be a standardised sanction unless particular circumstances dictate otherwise. If there is to be a departure from the standard this must be explained to both the officer and the prisoner. Sanctions must always be proportionate and be seen to be fair.

2.53 I am aware that the Governor and her management team are acutely conscious of their obligations in this regard. However, I felt it important to re-iterate these points in order that there could be no slippage.

Staff issues and staff training

2.54 Working in any prison is a challenging occupation. Different dynamics apply in different prisons depending on the cohort of prisoners being detained.

2.55 I accept that working in a women's prison poses challenges not found in men's prisons.

2.56 From talking to staff and others both inside and outside the Centre and from my own observations I accepted that there was a discernible disconnect between management and staff working on the ground.

2.57 The major issues as I saw them can be summarised as follows:-

- The perceptions referred to in paragraph 2.43 of this Report.
- Lack of direction for staff.
- Lack of a mentoring system for younger/junior staff.
- Lack of a structure whereby issues of concern could be addressed.
- Lack of appropriate training for staff working with women prisoners.

- A perceived shortage of staff at all levels to ensure that the facilities in the Centre operate as normal at all times.

This is not an exhaustive list.

- 2.58 I worked closely with the Governor, her management team, the Mountjoy Campus management team and the Irish Prison Service in an effort to address the problems that I had encountered.
- 2.59 In paragraph 2.48, I have detailed the steps taken by the Governor and her management team to deal with a number of these issues.
- 2.60 The staffing of the Centre is a matter solely for the Governor. In this she must be supported by the Campus Governor of the whole Complex and the Irish Prison Service. In paragraph 1.18, I stated that the Centre is the flagship women's prison in this State. Adequate numbers of staff must always be assigned to the Centre. I am aware that this issue has been addressed and is being kept under constant review. I will revisit this issue in my upcoming substantive report.
- 2.61 I have been informed that certain training for personnel of all grades has taken place and is ongoing. I have been briefed on the training that has taken place and that which is proposed and I am satisfied that it is relevant and appropriate training for those working with women prisoners.
- 2.62 The following is a brief description of the training referred to in paragraph 2.61:-
- A bespoke 2 day 'Women Awareness for Staff Programme' (WASP) for staff working with women prisoners in the Centre provided by the Irish Prison Service College (IPSC). This programme was developed in partnership with the NOMS Women's team. The WASP was designed to assist staff in a practical way and to

empower them to work with women in a way which offers women equivalent respect according to their needs. It has modules covering the following issues:-

Women in Custody

Relationships and Wrongdoing

Reasons for Managing Difficult Behaviour

Equality

Self-Harm & Suicide Prevention

Domestic Abuse

The Impact on Children – Parenting from Prison and Pregnancy

Changing Lives

In particular, this programme explores the principles of equality, diversity and anti-discriminatory practice that can be applied when working with women in custody.

- All new entrants to the prison service undertake a ‘women awareness’ module which seeks to enable them develop an understanding of equality and diversity.
- The Higher Certificate in Custodial Care (HCCC) is a mandatory two year accredited programme completed by all new entrant prison officers. The HCCC modules aim to introduce custodial care professionals to Human Rights Law.
- The IPSC has worked in partnership with the Irish Human Rights Commission to develop a 5 day ‘Train the Trainer Programme’ for their training of liaison officers. The object is that this will provide the prison based instructors with the skills and training material needed to deliver a 2 hour training course to other prison officers. While this programme is intended for all prisons I have been informed that it is of particular benefit to those involved in the training of officers charged with dealing with women prisoners.
- The Psychology Service continues to support the provision of Marte Meo training for staff in the Centre. This is a film-based training that provides concrete and practical information to Officers on how they can best support mothers with

babies in the Prison, focusing particularly on the social and emotional developmental needs of the children.

- 2.63 The primary obstacle experienced by IPSC personnel in relation to training staff working with women in custody was getting staff released from their duties to attend training events. To circumvent this issue training is now provided on site when possible and a number of shorter training interventions have been developed to allow local training officers to deliver courses when staff is available. **Management of the Centre must ensure that adequate time for training is made available.**
- 2.64 The IPSC has restructured its approach to designing training interventions for staff working with women prisoners. The college has consulted and involved external experts, both academics and practitioners, to ensure that their programmes reflect best international practice. A number of external agencies and NGOs have been involved in providing seminars, awareness programmes and training interventions specifically aimed at staff working with women in custody.
- 2.65 It is essential that all officers of all grades who work in the Centre are adequately and appropriately trained. This training must be ongoing. All newly assigned officers coming into the Centre must be similarly trained. It is not unreasonable to assume that within a timeframe of six months all those working in the Centre will have undergone all appropriate training. I will refer to the issue of training again in my substantive report when I will be in a better position to evaluate the effects of such training.
- 2.66 I am satisfied that all prison personnel have the capacity to embrace the changes that have and are taking place in the Dóchas Centre. There must be an ongoing commitment by all in this regard. From my recent inspections of the Centre I am satisfied that considerable progress has been and is being made to ensure that the Centre regains its former ethos.
- 2.67 **All persons working in the Dóchas Centre should respect all others and all staff must respect the actions and decisions of management. All staff must appreciate**

that prisoners are entitled to the same respect as anyone living in the community. Equally prisoners must respect staff. Respect must be earned not demanded.

General comment

2.68 Overcrowding has been the main contributing factor which led to the lowering of standards as detailed in this section of this Chapter. Therefore, every effort should be made to cap the numbers in the Dóchas Centre at 105.

Chapter 3

Other Concerns

- 3.1 There were other issues that I identified as requiring attention. These could be divided into two groups – changes to the ‘fabric’ of the Centre and ‘housekeeping’ matters.
- 3.2 The Healthcare Centre was being used for a variety of purposes including for accommodation. There was no committal area and the Safety Observation and Close Supervision Cells were not being used for purpose.
- 3.3 I attended many meetings with the Governor, her management team, the Campus Governor and the providers of medical and therapeutic services to the Healthcare Centre. As a result of such meetings plans were agreed and the Healthcare Centre has been remodelled. A dedicated committal area comprising four rooms is in this area in addition to a Safety Observation Cell, a Close Supervision Cell and two ‘step down’ rooms. Relevant Standard Operating Procedures have been agreed and appropriate records are to be kept. The Healthcare Centre should now be used for purpose.
- 3.4 The facilities in the Healthcare Centre for the professionals working there are adequate.
- 3.5 Many parts of the Centre looked dilapidated and in need of refurbishment. In many instances all that was required was paint and in some cases minor repairs. A major refurbishment programme was agreed. Much of the work has been completed and is of a high standard.
- 3.6 Many of the kitchens in the houses needed upgrading. In many cases they needed to be replaced. A programme for such upgrading was agreed. Again much of this work has been completed.
- 3.7 The Reception Area needed refurbishment. This has recently been completed.

- 3.8 Certain rooms in the school and the recreation area needed refurbishment and upgrading. Again a programme was agreed. This will always be a 'work in progress' but I am satisfied that there is a commitment to ensure that such areas are maintained and continue to be fit for purpose.
- 3.9 The outside recreation areas needed to be attended to. The lawns and gardens had been neglected. Again this has been and continues to be attended to.
- 3.10 It should be clear from this section of this Chapter that much work has been done in the Centre. This is ongoing work. The committal has been commissioned. Standard Operating Procedures for this area have only recently been agreed as have SOP's for the Safety Observation and Close Supervision Cells. Therefore, I will need some time before I can evaluate how such areas are working in practice. I will report on such in my comprehensive report.
- 3.11 In paragraph 3.1, I stated that I had concerns of a 'housekeeping' nature. These could also be described as the failure of the prison to provide certain services to the women prisoners. The following are examples of such failures:-
- Problems in having prisoners escorted on time to such places as the school, for visits etc.
 - Delay in post to and from prisoners.
 - Difficulties for prisoners in accessing the school, tuck shop or other services.
 - Problems with the tuck shop.
 - Problems in arranging visits to prisoners.
 - Problems when leaving in money or other lawful items for prisoners.
 - Transparency in the visiting booking system.
 - Difficulties in arranging telephone calls between prisoners in the Centre and prisoners in other prisons.

3.12 Many of the problems outlined above have been attended to. Some remain. I will address all of these issues in my substantive report.

General comment

3.13 Unlike male prisons there is not, at present, a readymade workforce in a women's prison. There is a perception that women can only engage in certain work activities. Many women that I have spoken to in the Centre have expressed a desire to engage in work around the Centre. Their reasons are threefold – they could enhance the Centre, it would give them something constructive to do which would be therapeutic and the experience gained would assist them on leaving prison in being able to maintain their own homes in the future. Many of the women have skills that could be utilised. The work could range from painting to general maintenance and upkeep and would be an addition to the ordinary cleaning duties at present undertaken by the women. It would also have the benefit of giving the women certain ownership of the Centre and a pride in its physical appearance. Obviously the women would have to receive appropriate training. I feel that this would be a considerable investment for the future.

Appendix A

The figures in this appendix were supplied by the Irish Prison Service.

1990 – Offence Group classified by sentence length.

	<3m	3<6m	6<12m	1<2y	2<3y	3<5y	5<10y	10y +	Life	Unspecified	Total
Offences Against the Person	4	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	8
Offences Against Property with Violence	2	2	5	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	12
Offences Against Property w/o Violence	28	10	42	16	2	0	0	0	0	0	98
All Other Offences	20	6	4	5	0	0	0	1	0	1	37
Total	54	18	53	25	3	0	0	1	0	1	155

2005 – Offence Group classified by Sentence Length

	<3m	3<6m	6<12m	1<2y	2<3y	3<5y	5<10y	10y+	Life	Total
Offences Against the Person	9	10	8	6	0	2	1	0	0	36
Offences Against Property with Violence	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	3
Offences Against Property w/o Violence	25	28	31	11	3	1	0	0	0	99
All Other Offences	186	42	19	4	8	4	0	1	0	264
Total	221	80	58	23	11	7	1	1	0	402

2012 – Offence Group classified by Sentence Length

Offence Group	<3m	3<6m	6<12m	1<2y	2<3y	3<5y	5<10y	10y+	Life	Total
Homicide Offences	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Sexual Offences	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Attempts/Threat to Murder, Assaults, Harassments and Related Offences	17	17	8	2	2	1	1	0	0	48
Dangerous or Negligent Acts	119	6	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	128
Kidnapping and Related Offences	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Robbery, Extortion & Hijacking Offences	1	0	1	3	0	3	0	0	0	8
Burglary and Related Offences	0	5	5	0	3	1	0	0	0	14
Theft and Related Offences	121	54	59	7	6	0	1	0	0	248
Fraud, Deception & Related Offences	20	13	6	1	3	1	0	0	0	44
Controlled Drug Offences	35	5	6	8	6	3	3	0	0	66
Weapons & Explosives Offences	1	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	5
Damage to Property & to the Environment Offences	55	5	5	0	0	1	0	0	0	66
Public Order & Other Social Code Offences	171	19	6	0	0	1	0	0	0	197
Road and Traffic Offences	777	30	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	811
Government, Justice Procedures & Organised Crime Offences	235	12	13	0	1	0	0	0	0	261
Offences Not Elsewhere Classified	184	4	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	193
Total	1,736	171	121	23	23	11	7	0	0	2,092