

Irish Prisons Inspectorate

ARBOUR HILL PRISON

*Revisit Inspection :
12th - 14th February 2007*

Role of the Irish Inspector of

Prisons and Places of Detention

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) the health, safety and well-being of prisoners
- (d) the condition 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.

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REPORT ON REVISIT TO ARBOUR HILL PRISON
COMMENCING THE 12TH FEBRUARY 2007 TO 14TH FEBRUARY 2007

1. Introduction

The purpose of the revisit was to follow up on the recommendations made arising from the last full inspection from 3rd to 7th November 2003 and to establish if they had been acted on. The Inspectorate also examined the 2006 prison's business plan, viewed the new projects and inspected the prison. The report is not to be read as a full inspection. The Inspector was accompanied by his special adviser on this revisit.

Date:

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

2. Background

Arbour Hill Prison is located in the north-west of the City in Dublin 7 and it was a military prison up until 1973 when it was taken over by the Department of Justice. It was renovated and opened as a civilian prison in 1975. It has a capacity for 139 prisoners and some of the cells are doubled or trebled to cater for that number. There are 95 single cells and all of the cells have sanitary facilities which were installed in the mid 1990's. The entire prison has been rewired and all of the cells have electrical power points. Each cell is fitted with a TV and other electrical appliances such as a kettle, etc. There is one cladded cell which is fitted with sanitary ware, a TV and a special window which allows for the air flow to be controlled by the person occupying the cell.

The last full inspection of this prison by the Prison's Inspector was carried out from 3rd to 7th November 2003. There were 16 recommendations made arising from that inspection.

3. Meeting with the Governor

The Inspector accompanied by his Special Adviser met the Governor on the first morning of our revisit. He welcomed us to Arbour Hill Prison and gave us a separate office for the duration of our stay which was fitted out with tea-coffee making facilities plus a bowl of fruit which was much appreciated.

The Governor stated that he had 137 in custody of that morning and another 2 prisoners as inpatients in outside hospitals. His total capacity is 139. He

also has 3 long-stay patients in the Central Mental Hospital but if they were to return, then he would have to transfer 3 others out of the prison to make room for them.

The passing of the Electoral Amendment Act 2006 which for the first time allows prisoners to vote was discussed. The Governor outlined that they had conducted a survey prior to the date of issue of the forms for prisoners to register to ascertain (A) how many prisoners were interested in voting and (B) the number of prisoners seeking medical cards on release. The medical cards are a problem for those released if they require the services of the medical profession as they cannot be issued with a card while in custody. The survey found that 48 prisoners out of a total of 108 who completed the questionnaire required medical cards. The issue of the cards is income based and very few of the prisoners in this prison would have an income. The Governor said that they had a good relationship with the local community officer and that it takes approximately 2 - 3 weeks after release to obtain a card. The Governor outlined that 90 prisoners out of a total of 139 wish to vote or 64% of the population. Those with no fixed abode or who were never placed on the voting register can vote in the area where the prison is located. The fact that Arbour Hill holds a mature stable population is reflected in the interest in voting as in other institutions there may not be the same interest and a lot more movement/transfer of prisoners takes place.

The Inspector then asked about the psychological services within the prison and any incentives offered to those who participate in the sex offenders' programme. The Governor informed us that there was no change regarding incentives or extra remission or transfer to open or semi-open centres. He outlined that he has a senior psychologist for 4 days per week, and 3 of those days are taken up with the sex offenders' programme. He has another psychologist for 5 days per week, 3 days involved with the sex offenders' programme and 2 days doing one-to-one psychology work. He also has a 3rd psychologist for two and half days per week; the other days are assigned to Wheatfield Prison. This 3rd psychologist is involved in one-to-one counselling. The Governor said that there are 8 prisoners involved in the sex offenders programmes at present, 7 of the prisoners come from other prisons while one is from Arbour Hill. The programme lasts almost a year. The psychologists are now based in offices which were formerly the staff living quarters. Each has his or her own office as well as a small tea room and a meeting/board room. The Probation and Welfare staff have also been facilitated with individual offices in the same premises.

Regarding illegal drugs within the prison, it was stated that the prison is 99% drug-free. Routine urine samples are taken and the visits are supervised very strictly. The prison also operates its own laundry, whereby no clothing is passing in and out for washing. It was explained that the majority of the prisoners are quite content and settled in the prison and don't want trouble as they consider it a good prison in which to do their sentences. Therefore they don't get involved in illegal activities such as bringing in drugs or mobile

phones, etc as such activity would bring a stricter regime to their routine.

The population is small and everyone knows everyone, so if a new prisoner gets involved in illegal activities, he comes to notice very quickly and is dealt with. There was only one occasion in the past 12 months that “hooch” was found on a search. So it is not a problem.

There are several services provided for the prisoners. N.A. and A.A. visit the prison weekly with good attendance of prisoners at both groups. “Grow” organisation attends and holds discussions with prisoner who may have mental health problems. There is a “listener” group within the prison and 8 prisoners are trained in the listening skills the group is supervised and supported by the Samaritan organisation. Those trained are issued with a special green shirt so that other prisoners can recognise the listener. The A.V.P. (alternative to violence programme) group has 4 trained facilitators, they hold group sessions and are supported/monitored by the Quaker organisation. The Probation and Welfare service will be doing an anger-management course shortly and they also run a “lifers” group. There are pre-release programmes run by the education section.

There was a change of R.C chaplain last September when the Head Chaplain, Fr. Blake, was transferred, and replaced by Fr. Enright. The chaplain received great praise for his work.

A new environmental waste-management system has been introduced since the last full inspection and all prison waste is now processed for recycling.

The previous practice of having a large skip in the yard in which all waste was deposited and taken away weekly is now discontinued. The prison has achieved two awards during 2006 for the management of their waste. One was the overall award presented by Dublin City Council neighbourhood competition and the second one was "The Irish Times" Living Dublin Award. Again it was the overall winner. Eight prisoners are engaged full-time at this environmental work along with the supervising officers. The prison has made a D.V.D of the entire process of waste management which is shown from a central point to all the TVs in the cells. The entire prison, both staff and prisoners, have taken the ethos of waste management very seriously and their enthusiasm has led to achieving these awards.

The Governor described a new initiative in I.S.M (integrated sentence management) which has just commenced on a trial basis in this prison as well as in Wheatfield Prison. It is a multidisciplinary approach which plans the requirements and needs of the prisoner and draws up a map plan of the prisoner's sentence. The prisoner himself is central in the agreement to the plan. It is like a contract with support on release from the health services, local authority, education, employment/employers etc. It is only in its infancy yet but hopefully will be fully operational within a few months.

The Inspector asked if there were any suicides since the last inspection and was informed that there were none but there was one minor attempt. There was praise for the doctor who attends the prison and he gives a very satisfactory service. Management feel that the overall medical services are

very good and the staff are very attentive and alert to any change in a prisoner's demeanour.

Official complaint forms to record complaints received from the prisoners have been introduced by H.Q. Each complaint form is numbered and traceable regarding each step taken into the investigation of the complaint with final result recorded. The prisoner making the complaint is informed of the result and a copy of the completed form is forwarded to H.Q. Since the introduction of the forms no official complaint has been lodged.

The Governor informed the Inspectorate that an area plus buildings which are adjacent to the Arbour Hill Prison boundary and belonging to the Department of Defence has been purchased by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. The Governor took possession of the area some time ago and is now in the process of installing a new staff car park on part of it. The entrances and exits from this new area have been secured as well as temporary repair work to the buildings as they were being vandalised and used by members of the public.

This completed our meeting with the Governor. He outlined the office and facilities that he was putting at our disposal for the duration of our visit.

4. Recommendations from the previous full inspection from 3rd to 7th November 2003

The Inspectorate team met senior management and went through each of the recommendations to establish whether they had been implemented.

Herewith are our findings:-

1. That the number of psychologists attached to the prison be increased to enable one-to-one therapy to be carried out and to increase programmes for prisoners. (6.3(d) pg 45 & 6.11(c) pg 62)

Result: Yes. Increased to 1 senior and 2 other psychologists.

2. That the Judiciary Presidents be sent a copy of this report and they be respectfully invited to consider keeping control of sentences by review or devising some method of encouraging prisoners to do the main sex offenders' programme. (6.9(b) pg 58 & 6.5(m) pg 49)

Result: Understood that H.Q staff to do same. No change in sentencing and no incentives offered to prisoners to participate in the course.

3. That Headquarters of the Prison Service ensure that the business plan for the prison is not delayed or not implemented due to Headquarters failure to reach its own targets. (3.7 pg 7,8,10,11)

Result: Yes. Generally H.Q has been very supportive.

4. That the possibility of providing work training facility along with the present workshops be looked at. (8.7 pg 73 and 14.2 pg 9)

Result: Yes. The new environmental management course has achieved the overall Dublin City Council neighbourhood competition award in 2006. "The Irish Times" Living Dublin Awards - overall winner 2006 plus the Dublin Inner City Awards 2006. (8 prisoners doing full environmental waste-management work. Proposal for and engineering workshop - plans submitted but awaiting approval.

5. That the vacancies in Probation and Welfare be filled urgently (6.5 pg 46)

Result: Yes done. 1 fulltime and 2 part-time Probation and Welfare Officers plus a part-time Senior now in place.

6. That modesty doors surrounding toilet unit in treble cells be increased in size to at least half standard size doors and the broken tile in the shower cubicle. (5.2 pg 16)

Result: Not done. Prisoners did not want the work carried out as the toilets are seldom used. Tile replaced.

7. That the library should be opened more frequently than at weekends and the gym at least some evenings per week. (5.12 pg 23 6.12(e) pg 64) (5.9 pg 19)

Result: Library open at least one period every day plus every evening (5.00pm - 7.30pm). It is open at weekends (Saturday and Sundays) during the day.

8. That the programme facilities be expanded for in the computers in the detail office. (5.18 pg 28)

Result: Yes. Up-to-date computer programmes now installed.

9. That the health promotion policy be clarified by Headquarters and implemented. That the Health review group's recommendations be implemented and active health screening be provided for hepatitis. (6.1 (b) pg 39, 6.1 (g) pg 40)

Result: Yes. Health Service facility extended to all prisoners and screening taking place for hepatitis and other illnesses. All records computerised. Staff also can have hepatitis screening/testing.

10. That the doctor's request for dictaphone and a fax machine for use in the surgery be implemented at my recommendations. (6.1 (j) pg 41)

Result: Yes. They have got same for the doctor.

11. That some support course be provided for suitable applicants who fail to get placed on the main sex offenders programme. That the psychologist's time be directed at prison work rather than being involved in Headquarters meetings or committees. (6.5 (m) pg 49, 6.3 pg 43)

Result: 6 sessions per week of one-to-one counselling now taking place in the prison. The senior psychologist has a wider remit than delivering the sex offenders' programme. She also carries out research and performs some training tasks within the H.Q of the

psychology service. She is not involved in Prison Headquarters committees and is very seldom at meetings.

12. Sex offenders cannot avail of transfers to open centres and are not granted temporary or supervised release. This is a matter which should be looked at in Headquarters/Minister's Department as such considerations may encourage involvement in the programmes and lead to a structured and supportive release. (6.5(i) pg 48, 6.6(a) pg 49)

Result: Not happening at present. Perhaps the new sentence programme may change this situation. Just have to wait and see.

13. That the sex offenders' programmes, while excellent be extended by providing additional programmes and prisoners be encouraged to engage in these courses. The Judiciary should offer incentives such as sentence review to encourage people to do the full course. (6.9 pg 57,58, 6.5 (m) pg 49, 6.3(b) pg 45)

Result: Has not happened. No change since the full inspection.

14. That facilities for children of prisoners when they visit be provided at the waiting room. (5.21 pg 31, 6.7(i) (7) pg 55)

Result: Yes. Tea/coffee-making facilities plus playhouse and toys provided.

15. That there be annual refresher staff training in C & R, B.A, use of fire hoses, fire extinguisher, etc and an evacuation fire drill exercise carried out regularly where there are staff and prisoners accommodated. (7.13 pg 69)

Result: 2 fire drill evacuation exercises plus one real fire exercise took place in the past 12 months. Fire in adjoining building belonging to the Dept of Defence and smoke spread into prison. Consequently prison had to be evacuated to open space (yard). Major emergency situation planned for next month. C & R - not done - awaiting on instructors. Hose reels etc - not done, BA- not done. This form of B.A will be discontinued and replaced with a paraquit mask type training. Training Liaison officer just appointed.

16. That the facility of providing hepatitis vaccine for staff be reintroduced and updated. (7.14 pg 69,70)

Result: Yes. It is being done and is available to staff if they request same.

Summary

So as can be seen, 12 of the recommendation have been implemented or partly implemented while 4 have not been acted on.

5. Business Plans

The Inspectorate then proceeded to go through the business plan of the prison for 2006. Please find particulars hereunder.

Business Plan 2006 Arbour Hill Prison

Strategy 1. Implement the agreed proposals for Organisational Change.

1.1 Operate the prison on the basis of New Staff Attendance arrangements.

Result: Yes, being done. Working well. Living within budget. 50% of allocated overtime working.

1.2 Introduce new planned preventative maintenance arrangements for all plant and equipment.

Result: Not happening. Agreement not in operation in this area as yet.

1.3 Enhance regimes services available to prisoners.

Result: All workshops operational and no posts cut. Educational and other services fully operational.

1.3.1 Implement new Gym Roster to maximise utilisation of gym facilities.

Result: Yes. Full complement of staff on gym roster plus P.E. teacher. "Peg" recommendations have been implemented.

1.3.2 Maximise use of Library facility.

Result: Yes. Upgraded and totally revamped. Prisoners working in the library are doing a library course.

1.3.3 Develop "GROW" self-help programme.

Result: Yes, very successful initiative which was supported by a financial award from the Prison Service H.Q.

1.3.4 Facilitate Samaritans' Listener Scheme.

Result: Yes, up and running. Roster of a listener on duty each day who is recognised by a special green shirt.

1.3.5 Alternative To Violence Programme.

Result: Yes. 2 Programmes ran last year. Their A.G.M will be held here in the prison this year.

Strategy 3. Implement the prison's drug policy

- 3.1 Establish a Study Group to review the physical arrangements for the prevention of drugs entering Arbour Hill Prison

Result: Very few drugs within the prison. N.A & A.A attend weekly.

C.C.T.V in operation. X-ray machine coming on stream shortly.

- 3.2 Implement the Mountjoy Visitor I.D. System.

Result: In place. Photographs and list of visitors forwarded in advance of visit.

- 3.2.1 Ascertain logistical requirements.

Result: Done and on "pris" system.

- 3.2.2 Inform prisoners and visitors of system.

Result: Yes, done.

- 3.2.3 Implement new visits system.

Result: Yes, done.

3.2.4 Review implementation and operation.

Result: Yes, done.

3.3 Enhance drug treatment provisions for prisoners.

3.3.1 Maintain a positive environment for prisoners to stay drug-free.

Result: Yes, doing it as far as possible. No drug treatment programmes as no need for them.

3.3.2 Continue induction sessions for all committals

Result: Yes, being done.

3.3.3 Maintain support arrangements so as to enhance a drug-free ethos.

Result: Yes. On limited basis.

3.3.4 Ensure C.C.T.V provides high quality coverage in the visiting area and prison perimeter.

Result: Yes, good system in place.

3.3.5 Record quantities of all drugs seized.

Result: Yes. Being done but very few seizures.

Strategy 6 Secure Custody of Prisoners

6.1 Meet set targets in preventing escapes from custody.

Result: Yes. No escapes took place.

6.1.1 Security committee to review all security-related practices and procedures.

Result: Yes. Being done. Major security review took place last year.

6.2 Conduct an annual review of security.

6.2.1 Conduct interim meetings.

Result: Yes. Being done.

6.2.2 Identify requirements and submit report.

Result: Yes, done.

6.2.3 Implement approved actions.

Result: Yes, done.

6.2.4 Conduct Annual Review of Security.

Result: Yes, done.

6.2.5 Present Report to Governor.

Result: Yes, submitted.

6.2.6 Implement approved recommendations.

Result: Yes, done.

Strategy 7. Safe custody of prisoners

7.1 Fully implement the computerised Accident, Assaults and Incidents of Self-Harm Information System in 2006 to establish benchmark for performance in future years.

Result: Yes. Up and running. 4 in the past 12 months (all accidents or incidents) no self-harm.

Strategy 8. Humane custody of prisoners

8.1 Implement new prison rules.

Result: Not passed as yet by Government.

8.2 Co-operate with prison inspections by the Inspector of Prisons & Places of Detention and by CPT.

Result: Being done.

8.2.1 Inform staff and prisoners of role and functions of the Inspector and CPT.

Result: Yes done.

8.3 Maintain a formal Prisoners Complaints Register.

Result: Yes. No complaints as yet.

Strategy 9. Contingency Planning

9.1 Review all fire, riot and hostage-taking plans annually to take account of changing needs and circumstances including operational changes consequent to implementation of the agreed Proposal for Organisational Change.

Result: In progress. Fire plan completed and riot plan under review at present.

9.1.2. Review arrangements with emergency services.

Result: Yes. Being done and plans for a major incident in future.

9.1.3 Produce report and recommendation to Governor for approval.

Result: Yes. Done.

9.1.4 Amend plans and implement recommendations as approved by the Governor and IPS fire officer.

Result: Yes. Locally only. No fire officer in H.Q as person in post resigned and has not been replaced so far.

9.2 Carry out two fire drills this year.

Result: Yes. Done.

Strategy 10 . Introduce defined care standards.

10.1 Pilot a staff-prisoner interaction survey.

Result: Waiting on regimes director to appoint a consultancy firm to carry out same.

10.2 Provide relevant HACCP training to stores relief panel.

Result: Done and got 88% result in catering field.

10.3 Provide basic skills training to kitchen relief panel.

Result: Yes, done.

10.4 Improve information to prisoners on prison regimes, rules, entitlements and services, using written and electronic media

Result: Yes, information booklet updated but no approval for electronic media. Also new D.V.D. system into cells which relays information to all prisoners.

10.5 Endeavour to achieve a minimum score of 80% in annual external catering audit & grade "C" in hygiene audit.

Result: Yes achieved got 88%.

Strategy 11. Ensure the provision of health care to prisoners of a standard consistent with that which applies in the general community.

11.1 Facilitate full co-operation in the implementation of proposed health care review as set out by Healthcare Directorate in February 2006.

Result: Yes. Awaiting approval for entire medical area. New procedures in the administration of medication. All staff trained to P.M.R.S.

11.2 IPS Smoking Policy to be fully implemented by end of year.

Result: Implemented in one day. Only one prisoner on report since its introduction for breach of smoking policy.

Strategy 15. Enhance prisoner employability prospects on release through continuing development and delivery of skills-based training courses and activities.

15.1 Complete the roll-out of the information system to track prisoner participation in work and vocational training by end of 2006.

Result: Yes. Being done on daily basis.

15.2 Increase the number of available work training courses.

Result: Yes. Some "outside" work brought in.

Strategy 16. Recognising the important role that families can play in the rehabilitation process, pursue a service-wide approach aimed at sustaining and maintaining prisoners' relationship with their families, in as normal a manner as possible.

16.1 Ensure continuing support for appropriate services provided by prisoners visitor centre.

Result: Yes. Being done as far as possible.

Strategy 19. Enable all staff to contribute to achievement of the service's objectives.

19.1 Adopt and fully implement an HR-led initiative to prevent bullying and harassment in the workplace.

Result: Still awaiting the bullying policy from H.Q. (prisons) for staff instruction. The prisoner harassment policy document introduced.

Strategy 22. Organisational supports

22.1 Maintain and develop Management - Staff Partnership structures.

Result: Yes. Ongoing. All discipline staff and union members involved.

Strategy 25. Review the current Health & Safety Management System.

25.1 Facilitate roll-out of agreed plan for Health & Safety Management System when developed and available.

Result: Has not come on stream yet. 4 staff undergoing H & S course at present.

Strategy 26. Implement Environmental Management System.

26.1 Establish local implementation team.

Result: Done.

26.1.1 Access training for all relevant personnel.

Result: Yes, done.

Part B Targets for 2006 specific to Arbour Hill Prison.

1.1 Sustain delivery of existing therapeutic programmes.

Result: Yes. Ongoing.

2.1 Training

Result: Yes both for staff and prisoners. Register of all training. (I.P.S. system and local system)

3.1 Examine possibility of expanding existing horticultural project.

Result: Yes. Glasshouse work in operation and gardens in front of prison being used at present.

4.1 Explore options and strategies for expanding and developing gym usage, mindful of age-specific groups.

Result: Yes. Done. Also special courses for the over 50's.

Strategy 1 Sustain delivery of existing therapeutic programmes.

1.1 Review programme delivery.

Result: Yes, being done. U.C.D staff completed review of sex offenders programme.

Strategy 2. Training

2.1 Provide and maintain an up-to-date "Staff Training Register"

Result: Yes. Done.

Strategy 3. Examine possibility of expanding existing horticultural project.

3.1 Carry out review of existing project.

Result: Yes. Done and intend entering competition for Dublin City Council award this year. The garden in front of prison being used for this purpose.

Strategy 4. Explore options and strategies for developments in gym area.

4.1 Establish team to carry out review and make recommendations.

Result: Yes. Done. Business plan for gym area completed.

6. Meeting with the prisoners

There were notices placed on noticeboards of the Inspector's return visit and a number of prisoners sought a meeting with him. They wished to be met individually and not as a group. In all 14 prisoners were seen on a one-to-one basis. It was explained to each prisoner that the Inspector could not take up individual complaints and in fact his contract did not allow him to do so. He would take account of general issues affecting the management of the prison such as the health service provided, food, education, hygiene, services, regime, relationships, buildings, etc. They were advised of the

route they could take if they had a personal complaint such as to the Governor, the Visiting Committee, the C.P.T the Minister, the Courts or their politician. They all recognised and acknowledged the restraints placed on the Inspector.

The following were their main areas of complaint.

- Temporary release or open centres not applicable to sex offenders, thereby they were being discriminated against.

- Accommodation on release for sex offenders, problems living in the community and the press exposure of their presence despite the fact that they have paid their debt to society on completion of their sentence.

- Breach of trust in the Probation and Welfare officers, but system insists that prisoners must work with the Probation Service despite the fact that the relationship between them may be poor. They feel that the same probation officers are on every board considering or discussing their case and is therefore unfair.

- Transfers from one workshop to another and that prisoners are managing the workshops and dictating what is done instead of the officers who are supposed to be in charge.

- _ The length of life sentences and the uncertainty of not knowing the approx time one must serve. No sentence plan.

- Failure of Prison Service H.Q. to acknowledge receipt of correspondence and failure of H.Q. to give a decision in the case.
Taken off temporary release without any written explanation as to why and no evidence presented relating to the breach of T.R. He is now almost 3 years returned into custody since alleged breach of T.R. and no plans whatsoever for his future. Just despairing of the system.

- Access to children and court orders pertaining to same.

- Problems with his personal mail while in Cloverhill Prison. States mail and books sent to him which he has not received also books.

- Failure of management and H.Q. to allow personal insurance policy to apply to hospital appointments.

- Prices in tuck shop extremely high compared to prices in other prisons' tuck shops.

- Lack of psychological services throughout sentences. Must go before Parole Board and only if they recommend same, can prisoners see psychologist. Should be available from early stage of sentences. And not just after Parole Board suggestion.

- Waiting list for dental services and only fillings and extractions carried out.
- Long waiting list to see psychologists despite being recommended to work with them. Claim that the waiting list is operated on a “most needs” basis but some have glaring needs and still not seen.
- Seeking transfer to a British prison to be close to family who reside in England.

A number of prisoners raised legal issues, complained of their legal team, not allowed call witnesses, retrials, appeals, etc and all were informed to speak and seek advice from their legal representatives.

The “general” complaints raised were discussed with the Prison Management following our meeting with the prisoners. Herewith is a brief summary of our meeting.

The temporary release, transfer to open centres, accommodation for sex offenders on release, etc, are all policy matters. Probation and Welfare staff are assigned to a prison and prisoners have to work with them throughout their term of assignment, generally an assignment is for a duration of 3 years. However, they can speak to the senior/supervisor if there is a problem with a particular officer. The management undertook to review and monitor the practices in the workshops to establish if there are any grounds

for such complaints. Life sentences are a matter for the Minister to decide as to what period they must serve. They all differ depending on the case. Some of the other complaints are of a personal nature e.g failure to acknowledge correspondence, breach of T.R., lost property, private insurance, etc and are not within the remit of the Inspector. However, the management took note of same. The policy regarding private insurance cover has been raised separately with Prison Service H.Q. The management team produced a new tuck shop price list which displayed a reduction in almost every single item sold in the tuck shop. Regarding waiting list to see the psychology service, there were 34 on same for almost a year but this has now been reduced to 7 as of week beginning 14/2/07. So with the present staffing levels, this list should soon be eliminated. There were 8 prisoners on the waiting list to see the dentist and the list covered a month to 6 week period. Apparently the dentist just performs essential dental treatment and no “cosmetic” treatment.

The transfer of prisoners from one jurisdiction to another is a matter for the Minister and not the Inspector.

The Inspector is strongly of the opinion that there should be a Prisoners’ Ombudsman. There is in Northern Ireland and Britain.

7. Summary

The Visiting Committee happened to be holding their monthly meeting within the prison on one of the days of our visit and the Inspector dropped into their

meeting for a short while. They were talking about the importance of the new integrated sentencing plan. This is a brilliant idea and hopefully it will be properly implemented so that a prisoner will know his progress or regression throughout the various stages of his sentence and as to which services he will need to access to achieve his eventual planned release.

The Inspectorate also met Dr. Lonergan, the head psychologist. The Inspector stated that the sex offenders' programme that she runs is an extremely good one. However the Inspector pointed out that there were sex offenders in practically every prison, there were only 8 on the course in Arbour Hill and it is the only course available to sex offenders. The course runs for approximately 12 months. Dr. Lonergan agreed re the need for more programmes. However, she stated that it is voluntary for prisoners to attend, there are no extra benefits for doing the course and she is not sure if the demand is there for extra courses. The Inspector said he felt that psychological counselling was necessary on a one-to-one basis particularly for those who do not participate in the programme. Dr. Lonergan outlined the increase in psychology staff at Arbour Hill prison and the one-to-one counselling taking place. She is delighted with the increase in staffing but if more were available she would love to have them. They provide 2 hours individual counselling in the a.m and 2 hours in the p.m and each patient has a one-hour session.

The Inspector said that the Minister assured the Oireachtas that there are enough psychologists for each of the prisons and that they are to be found in

all of the prisons. There has been an increase in the number of psychologists attached to the Prison Service but there is no psychologist attached to Portlaoise, Castlereagh, Loughan House or Shelton Abbey. A Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform official stated that they are available and that the Minister wasn't telling an untruth. I am afraid I do not follow the thinking process that enables the Minister to make such a statement on the grounds that 4 institutions have not got a psychologist.

It is a matter of grave concern for the Inspector that there is only one sex offenders' course available for all of the prisons and that is in Arbour Hill Prison. So if you want to do it and if you are considered suitable you will have to go there. There seems to be no problem in getting into Arbour Hill to do the course. However there are over 200 offenders throughout the system and there is literally nothing in the way of psychological assistance/programme for them in any other prison. The Minister and the Chairman of the Parole Board announced that there would be incentives for people to undergo courses. This had been recommended by the Inspector and naturally he was pleased that, without attribution, it was being adopted. However, while it was a lovely photo opportunity it has not happened. There is absolutely no incentive for anyone to undergo a course. It is disgraceful in this day and age that these two smiling gentlemen have not carried through on this promise. In fairness, it is not within the remit of the yet unstatutory Parole Board but it is entirely within the remit of the Minister.

The newly acquired area and buildings which were taken over from the Department of Defence by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform were shown to the Inspectorate. Work is in progress in preparing a new staff car park and the bulldozers and lorries were busy on site. The other sections of the buildings have been secured by blocking up the doors and windows. The entrances and exits have been reinforced to prevent unauthorised entry and a general clean-up of the area has taken place. It was suggested to the Inspectorate that one of the buildings may be used for staff training while the others may be used as workshops. It is good that this area has been taken over by the Prison Service as it is adjacent to the prison. It has good potential for further development and a possible link-up with one of the wings of the prison.

The environmental waste management project is to be commended and the Inspector is delighted that the prison has achieved the awards in this area as already outlined. The horticultural work is another good project and hopefully the gardens in front of the prison will merit an award. They are looking very well despite the fact that it is winter/early spring season.

The visitors' waiting room has been improved for the comfort of visitors with tea/ coffee facilities available. There is a small playing facility for children which consists of a Wendy house and a few toys. The toys appear sparse but management informed us that very few children accompany adult visitors and the children's needs are not so much in demand as in other prisons.

It is good that at least three-quarters of the recommendations made arising from the full inspection in 2003 have been implemented. The 2006 prison's business plans have also achieved almost all of their targets. The staff training should improve with the appointment of a Training Liaison Officer. Some aspects of training have fallen behind.

The new annualised hours appear to be working quite well and the staff are working approx 50% of their allocated overtime. The maintenance aspect of the agreement needs to be finalised for the prison.

The entire prisoner population are assigned a job/work or education and nobody is walking around idle in the exercise yard. It is a very settled population with little turnover and all of the prisoners to whom we spoke emphasised how good and relaxed the prison is. They all praised the management and staff.

The prison is spotlessly clean and there are plants in large wooden boxes along the corridors. The prisoners take great pride in the plants and tend to them and ensure they get water, etc. There are 2 canaries in a cage on a corridor leading to the church which again are looked after by the prisoners. The joke is that the canaries sing with the choir!!

The staff/prisoner relationship is very good. There is a relaxed and homely atmosphere about the place. Most of the prisoners are serving long sentences and consequently the staff and prisoners know each other very

well. This also helps to identify at an early stage any problems a prisoner may be having. All in all it appears to be a well run prison.

The Inspectorate are grateful for the welcome, assistance and facilities afforded the team while on the visit. The meals sampled were top quality. So thanks again to the Governor and his staff for the hospitality shown to us throughout our stay.