
Visiting Committee

Arbour Hill Prison
Arbour Hill
Dublin 7

Arbour Hill Prison
Visiting Committee
Annual Report 2017

A Chara,

Herewith is the Annual Report for the Visiting Committee for Arbour Hill Prison for the year ending 31st December 2017.

The Visiting Committee

The following are existing members of Visiting Committee for 2017.

Rita Hayes appointed from 24/08/15 to 23/08/18

Padraig McGarrigle appointed from 02/03/15 to 01/03/18

Pat Holton was appointed from 15/09/2017 to 17/01/2019.

Billy Ireland was appointed from 15/09/2017 to 26/01/2019.

Ms Deirdre Kenneally was appointed from 11/12/2017 to 10/12/2020.

The Visiting Committee for Arbour Hill held Committee meetings as follows during 2017

January	26/01/2017
February	23/02/2017
March	15/03/2017
April	10/04/2017
May	10/05/2017
June	14/06/2017
July	13/07/2017
August	31/08/2017
September	27/09/2017
October	25/10/2017
November	23/11/2017
December	20/12/2017

At least one member of the Committee makes an unannounced visit to the prison each month in addition to the scheduled monthly meeting. The Visiting Committee frequently visited the prison before/during/after the monthly meetings and have had access to every area of the prison. While visiting the prison the Committee has made it a priority to make themselves available to the prison population in order to address any issues arising at the earliest opportunity. Notices are clearly placed around the jail informing prisoners of the availability of the Committee.

During the course of the monthly meetings the Committee met with Governor Dowling or Deputy Governor Hughes who briefed them on the day to day issues pertaining to the operation of the prison and matters pertinent to the welfare of the prisoners detained within Arbour Hill Prison.

Visiting Committee “Visits”

At the regular monthly meeting each “Visiting Member” reported on their visit during the previous month. The reports from the “visits” showed satisfaction and a very high standard of care provided to those serving sentence at this facility. The standard of hygiene and the cleanliness throughout every part of the prison is exemplary. Prisoner welfare is the primary concern of the management and staff in Arbour Hill Prison and this was evident in every monthly visitor report. The physical environment of the prison is maintained to a very high standard, the cleaning regime is exemplary and one can only describe the prison environs as spotless. The Committee was delighted to note that the Visit area was renovated in the latter part of 2015. This area was quite old and dated and now provides a more amenable facility for prisoner and friends and family to visit each other and has been highly acclaimed by all.

Visits to Prisoners

Visits to prisoners at Arbour Hill are facilitated by appointment as follows.

Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday/Friday and Saturday

10.00am to 12 noon

2.00pm to 4.00pm

There are no visits on Thursdays or Sundays.

In the visitors waiting room there are play facilities for children.

The visits area as previously mentioned has been renovated to a very high standard with completion late 2015.

New facility much easier to supervise and is proving popular with staff, prisoners and visitors.

Prisoner Visits and representations to the Committee.

Should a prisoner have a complaint he can request to see the Visiting Committee via a request to the Governor.

Despite the fact that we have communicated to the prisoners via prison staff, we are disappointed with the response of the prisoners. Three prisoners sought formal meetings with the Committee during 2017.

Chaplaincy

Sr. Mary Hanrahan is the Chaplain in Arbour Hill Prison. It would appear that Sr Mary Hanrahan has greatly benefitted from the assistance of the student Chaplain, (her name). Sr Mary attends the prison six days per week and is always available to prisoners if needed. Sr Mary continues to deliver extraordinary support and encouragement to all. Additionally the Chaplain continues to provide ongoing assistance with pre-release re-socialisation and general preparation for reintegration which is an ongoing challenge. Mindful that prison, by its very nature has an isolating effect such additional contact and support is welcomed by the many foreign prisoners, some of whom are serving long sentences.

Sr Mary also interacts with the Chaplaincy services in other countries, facilitating non Irish prisoners to actively link up with Chaplaincy support from their own countries.

Befriender's volunteering to visit those who have no visits are facilitated through the Chaplaincy also.

Christians 95%

Other Religions 5%

Workshops and Training:

Woodwork

The wood workshop provides furniture for a number of charities and occasionally for the prison itself. This workshop has been upgraded to provide training and work for the prisoners who are assigned here. The standard of workmanship in Arbour Hill Prison, in the opinion of our committee, is proving to be of exceptional quality and reflects very well on the prison as a whole.

- Upgrade cell furniture
- Supply furniture for Barrettstown Castle
- The manufacture and supply of Doll's Houses to Temple Street Children's Hospital and also the Mater Hospital.
- The manufacture and supply of Replica Famine Boxes to various museums and exhibitions.
- Environmental awareness support for charitable and public bodies.

Fabric:

The fabric workshop produces the bed linen required within the prison service. Fire resistant bed-sheets and pillow cases are distributed throughout the country from this facility. Training is provided to prisoners which will assist in after prison employment.

Braille:

The Braille room teaches Braille and transcribes books and periodicals into Braille for people who are visually impaired. This is the only workshop of its type in the country and also the only place in Ireland that repairs "Braille Machines". The expertise and dedication evident here is more than impressive.

The Braille workshop is very popular with prisoners and on visits to this workshop it is noted that there are always a full quota of attendees.

Waste Management:

This facility has grown substantially during the last year. The Waste Management area is a large area which recycles prison waste (including electrical waste from other areas in the prisons estate and other Government bodies) and provides valuable training and work for a number of prisoners and in the past enabled a number of prisoners to get employment post release.

Print:

Prints material for a number of Government Departments providing work and training for up to nine prisoners. Printers are trained in the use of modern printing machines which helps them to prepare prisoners for work after remission. The modernisation of this plant is currently under consideration.

Kitchen:

The Catering Department is managed by prison staff, assisted by a number of prisoners, some of whom are undergoing certified training. It provides valuable training opportunities for the participants. The Industrial Manager in conjunction with the Educational Department co-ordinates and implements professional qualifications and training accredited by FETAC by participants. The performance of the catering area as acknowledged by afore mentioned EIQA awards is nothing short of extraordinary. The variety, quality and wholesomeness of the food provided are most impressive, not to mention the routine provision of specialist diets to cater for cultural, religious and medical needs. Prisoners also continue to work to provide the prisoner meals to the CCJ which results in a significant saving for the Irish Prison Service.

Education:

We on the committee recognise the commitment of the Governor and staff within the prison in ensuring that the educational facilities are made available to the prisoners at all times.

The provision of education is one of the rehabilitation tools available within Arbour Hill Prison. The Education Department is managed by Dublin City VEC. It provides learning opportunities from Basic Literacy to Degree level and beyond. The courses available are accredited by the Department of Education and include both the Junior and Leaving Certificate.

There are also QQI accredited courses available. A large percentage of prisoners participate in courses in the Education Department.

Additionally there is a considerable focus on Arts & Crafts as part of a holistic approach to personal development within an educational framework. Painting, Pottery & Stained Glass are just some of the artistic pursuits engaged in by prisoners. The Committee could not but be impressed by the creative quality and artistic content of the work produced. Engagement in such activities is in itself therapeutic and we would very much like to see greater exposure of the artistic output as an **acknowledgement** of the commitment and skill of participants.

Library:

The library is available for prisoners to study and read for leisure. The library is operated by prisoners and is very impressive offering a wide range of reading and study material to those wishing to avail of the service.

The prisoners involved clearly take great pride in their work.

Capital Works:

During the course of the year, two three man cells were made available and refurbished to cater for wheelchair accessibility, this work is now complete. New vents are currently being installed in individual cells in keeping with the smoking policy. Capital Works have commenced and are ongoing to ensure the Prisons compliance with this policy. This included updating the older ventilation system, further works are planned.

Building Better Lives:

The Building Better Lives Programme was launched in 2009 and replaces the original Sex Offender Treatment Programme previously available in the prison. The programme is based on a Canadian Model and is empirically proven to be an effective intervention for the profile of the sex offender prisoner. Arbour Hill Prison is currently the centre of excellence for the treatment and rehabilitation of sex offenders. The programme is delivered by the Psychology Department.

Unfortunately the Senior Psychologist, Mr Colm Regan, died suddenly and his loss within the Prison is deeply felt. We would like to place on record his significant contribution over many years. It is imperative a suitable replacement(s) be found to maintain this very important service. This has resulted in an extra workload for the remaining Psychologist currently involved in the implementation of this therapeutic programme. The Visiting Committee note concerns in this regard. There continues to be an ongoing waiting list for prisoners to engage in the Psychology services. The BBL Programme concludes with a three way meeting where a handover to the Probation Service takes place with a view towards a supported and in many cases, a supervised release that will hopefully offer the best chance for a seamless integration back into the community.

Other Treatment Programmes and Services Provided

In addition to the BBL programme Arbour Hill provides other treatment modules to assist in developing important life and social skills such as Anger Management, Successful Living, Preparation for Independent Living, Group Skills, Thinking Skills and Alternatives to Violence Programmes. The St Vincent de Paul, Legion of Mary, Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, GROW, the allocated Community Welfare Officer and the Samaritans also provide valuable supportive services.

External In-reach Services Arbour Hill Prison **2017**

Samaritans

AA

HSE CWO

Trail Housing Services

Narcotics Anonymous

Relate

GROW

Psychotherapist

Chiropodist
Church of Ireland Ministry
Crosscare (Housing)
Gambling Anonymous
Prayer Group
St Vincent de Paul
Linkage (Production Services)
Agency Nurses

Bereavement Support Group
(Denist)
Vision Express
HSE Community Occupational Therapist
HSE Community Speech Therapist
CMH In Reach
FCPN / CMH
Toe to Toe

Listeners Programme

This is proving to be a very popular programme. This service is provided by willing and trained prisoners. "The Listeners" are trained to listen to concerns, issues, and fears in a confidential setting. Training is provided by the Samaritans, this service provides an important emotional support for fellow prisoners and may well be a contributing factor in the low level of self-injury at this facility. The importance of this programme is proving to be of exceptional benefit to those in receipt of same but also to the staff.

Medical & Services:

Arbour Hill currently has six nurses and also a locum Doctor who attends the prison three days per week. Unfortunately there is no Doctor in the Prison at the weekend which means that if a prisoner needs to see a Doctor he has to be brought to the local hospital Accident & Emergency department. This is of concern to the Committee especially as Arbour Hill has a high volume of elderly prisoners.

Medical services include a visiting Psychiatrist and Psychiatric Nurse. Psychotherapist, Psychologists, Chiropodist, and optical services as required. The Committee notes that there are a number of very elderly and feeble prisoners who require constant medical attention and very high medical support.

As per our report in 2016, there is regret that there has been no improvement in the medical services available, particularly at weekends.

In accordance with directive issued regarding the implementation of a no smoking policy, a supply of vaping cigarettes are now available to purchase in the prison tuckshop.

Special Observation Room

Part of the function of the Visiting Committee is to monitor the use of the Special Observation Room. It was used very sparingly during the year 2017 but each case was a voluntary admission of very short term duration.

The Committee is pleased to report in 2017 there were no suicides or attempts at self-harm.

Complaints Procedure:

Any prisoner can request a complaint form from any member of staff at any time. All complaint forms are numbered and recorded, consequently once a form has been drawn down the "complaint" has to be pursued to a conclusion and retained for inspection by the *Inspector of Prisons* or other

prison authority who might seek to have sight of same. A new complaints procedure and forms were introduced during 2014 where complaints are categorised from A-F. This appears to be working very well.

Probation Services:

This prison is very fortunate to have the service of a very active and dedicated probation team consisting of two equivalent full time Probation Officers and one acting Senior Probation Officer. They work with prisoners both individually and collectively in addressing a broad range of issues. All new committals are interviewed within 3 working days of arrival.

Individual offence work with (voluntary) prisoners.

Facilitate group work, Anger Management, Group Thinking Skills.

Complete Parole Board and repatriation / transfer and prisoner reports.

Pre-release work, including referrals, notification and linkage with homeless services.

Co-ordinations of AA and GROW meetings.

Liaise with family where relationships are strained or dysfunctional.

Key participants in the delivery of Integrated Sentence Management.

Notwithstanding all of the above the Probation Service continues to assist prisoners in managing their time in custody, encouraging them to participate in education and rehabilitation programmes and provide support for them in reintegrating back into the community. Additionally they assess the potential risk that individual prisoners may pose to society and with increasing frequency have to provide or organise court imposed supervision, sometimes for many years post release.

Integrated Sentence Management. (ISM)

Arbour Hill is making good progress with ISM. All prisoners are actively engaged in the process. First case waiting list is cleared all the time and first case assessment interviews are conducted within 24 hours of committal. Consent form is signed and retained on file in ISM office. Referrals are created and Probation, Psychology, Education, Work Training (Industrial Manager) Medical are using database to update assessments.

All services are co-operating well with ISM in Arbour Hill.

Drug Free Prison

Random drug testing is part of the day to day routine at Arbour Hill and prisoners are acutely aware that if they wish to avail of the many excellent services that Arbour Hill has to offer, they are expected to be 100% drug free.

We are pleased to note there are no recorded incidents of drug use in Arbour Hill during 2017.

Summary:

Arbour Hill Prison always strives to promote an ethos of constructive support in a calm and caring atmosphere. The relationship between staff and prisoners although professional is also a very humane and caring one.

The ongoing development of the Building Better Lives Programme and Integrated Sentencing Management provide important initiatives not just within Arbour Hill Prison, but in the Irish Prison Service generally, and for the wider community at large, as they positively contribute to reintegration and risk management in the post release scenario.

Case Conferences are scheduled well in advance of all prisoner releases. All relevant parties, including **representatives** from the relevant County Councils are invited to participate and provide their input and **recommendations**. However, due to the present housing crisis, it is proving extremely difficult to place prisoners upon release in **accommodation**. We note the concerns of the Governor and staff in this area and their trojan efforts that they make in securing accommodation. We hope that in 2018, that there will be a vast improvement in this area.

It is to the credit of all at Arbour Hill that they have managed to initiate contact with Community Welfare in every case, in many cases they have continued to source a range of supports varying across a broad spectrum of needs: eg. Therapeutic, Psychological, Psychiatric and General Medical. In a small number of cases former prisoners are availing of "Voluntary Supervision" provided by the Probation Service.

It is clear there is an enormous need for some type of supportive transitional accommodation to facilitate re-integration of prisoners back into society. Programmes such as Building Better Lives when enhanced by concepts such as Integrated Sentence Management are wonderful initiatives. However, without a functioning post release support structure there are limitations on what can be achieved.

Appreciation:

We wish to thank the Governor Liam Dowling and Deputy Governor Thomas Hughes, the Secretary to the Committee, PEO Aimee Carey, and all staff for their co-operation and assistance and for their willingness and desire to create and sustain a pleasant and caring regime.

This concludes the Arbour Hill Visiting Committee Annual Report for 2017

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Signed: Padraig McGarrigle Padraig McGarrigle. Chairperson

Signed: Rita Hayes Rita Hayes

Signed: Pat S. Holton Pat Holton

Signed: Billy Ireland Billy Ireland

Signed: Deirdre Kenneally Deirdre Kenneally.