

Limerick Prison Visiting Committee Annual Report 2013

The 2013 Annual Report of the Limerick Visiting Committee is presented on behalf of the 6 members of the Committee.

We would like to recognise the work of the previous Chairperson and thank her for her work on behalf of the prisoners.

The Members of Limerick Prison Visiting Committee having been appointed by The Minister have carried out their duties and responsibilities in accordance with the duties and powers as set out in the Prisons (Visiting Committees) Act 1925 and in the rules made in the Prisons (Visiting Committees) Order 1925.

Limerick Prison is a committal prison for male prisoners from Counties Clare Limerick and Tipperary and for female prisoners from the 6 Munster Counties.

A closed medium security prison the operational capacity of Limerick Prison is 220 males and 28 female.

The committee held monthly and interim meetings during the year.

Limerick Prison is an exceptionally busy prison with constant movement of prisoners whether to court, other prisons, hospital, by committal from the community and discharge to the community. Management of this constant movement places additional pressure on the Governor and his staff. We have observed the team work necessary to maintain high standards, good working relationships and an atmosphere of calm co-operation essential for the efficient management and running of the prison. We have had excellent co-operation from all officers during our visits to different areas of the prison.

Numbers in custody.

There has been a significant improvement in the overcrowding through prisoner management. This has involved the transfer of prisoners to other prisons with capacity. Accepting that this places additional pressure on the staff it is however welcome as it relieves the pressures that overcrowding generates. It is also enabling better planning and management of prisoner's sentences.

| Year | Male | Female |
|--------|------|--------|
| 1/1/12 | 294 | 25 |
| 1/1/13 | 239 | 23 |
| 1/14 | 205 | 31 |

The committee met with male and female prisoners both at prisoner's requests and during visits to various areas of the prison. A number of concerns were raised and in general these were resolved to the satisfaction of both the prisoner and the committee. Requests for transfers to other places of detention and complaints re positive indications by the OSG dog were the most common complaints. There were a number of complaints re medical treatment relating in general to changes in prescribed medication. The formalised complaints procedure is working. There were two Category A complaints initiated and officially investigated but in both instances there was no evidence to support the allegations which were made against the officers.

A number of complainants were transferred either prior to meeting the committee or shortly after. We are satisfied that these were a coincidence but are concerned to put in place a protocol that will allow the prisoner a recorded communication with the committee prior to departing Limerick Prison.

The Incentivised Regime scheme introduced during 2012 continues to deliver good results. The number of Disciplinary Reports continues to decline and the prisoners are anxious to participate. Prisoners have advised the committee that they are happy with this approach and fully understand the consequences for them of failure and thus are anxious to succeed and continue participation.

| | | |
|-------|----------|----------|
| Basic | Standard | Enhanced |
| 3% | 68% | 29% |

| | | |
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| | | |
|--|--|--|

Death in Custody

Unfortunately there was one death in custody during 2013. The Committee extends its deepest sympathy to the family of the deceased prisoner.

Protection Prisoners

The committee welcomes the commencement of the census of Protected Regime Prisoners and note the reduction by 3 in the 2nd census of prisoners on 22/23 hr lock up. The number of Protected Regime Prisoners continues to be a cause of concern for the committee who are fully cognisant of the particular circumstances and are satisfied that The Governor and his team are constantly endeavouring to improve their circumstances.

Female Prison

The prison sentences that females are serving vary and some are of a short duration. The training and range of activities available for females has improved but need to be expanded on and tailored towards the shorter sentences to be most effective. The committee is concerned that a more family friendly visiting regime be introduced. We are aware of the potential difficulties associated with changing the current arrangements but believe that the bond between children and their mother must be nurtured and protected and this is not possible in the current visiting environment.

Prison General

The committee has visited every area of the prison. Visits have been unplanned and areas are picked at random.

There is a constant high standard of cleanliness throughout the prison.

The committee have visited the kitchens, tasted the food in the kitchen and have attended at various serving stations where prisoners expressed satisfaction with both the standard and quantity of the food provided.

The tuck shop is highly rated by the prisoners in particular the efforts the staff go to source special items for them.

Work continues on upgrading the services infrastructure with minimum disruption to the orderly running and management of the prison. The committee is pleased with the progress being made in respect of the new build.

The committee noted the decision to relocate the court service to a site adjacent to the prison complex. We have noted that when completed there will be relatively little impact on improving prisoner movements to and from court hearings. This is an issue that the committee would like to see consultation on between the Irish Prison Service and The Court Service prior to the finalisation of design plans.

The committee recognises that the physical layout and design of Limerick Prison while improved and modernised is that of a penal institution of the 1800's.

The committee is concerned that the exercise yard and other outdoor areas are predominantly concrete with little or no green areas. This is an area we believe could be improved on and we welcome the plans to develop an area where horticulture can become an activity and form part of the training program for prisoners.

The delay in providing tutors/staff for the workshops is impacting on prisoners denying them an opportunity to learn new skills which would benefit and help with their rehabilitation. The Committee very much welcome the filling of all positions in recent weeks and we anticipate a positive impact on prisoners

Existing training, up-skilling and educational services are provided to a high standard for those prisoners availing of them and who are acquiring recognised qualifications.

The medical centre continues to provide an excellent service in all disciplines. The committee also recognises the support provided by HSE hospitals, facilities and staff.

Substance abuse and the availability of illicit drugs within the prison despite the best efforts of the Governor and his staff is extremely worrying and undermines the efforts of all those involved in providing support and counselling services.

The Probation Service continues to work with the Governor and staff to ensure that prisoners are equipped to re-enter the community.

We have noted the excellent working relationship that exists between all Agencies and NGO's concerned with prisoner welfare.

We are pleased with the proposed involvement of The Irish Red Cross and look

forward to positive outcomes from the planned initiative. This course will

begin on 11th January 2014.

Listener Project

The listener project will be rolled out in February. Prisoners will be trained

by The Samaritans to help other prisoners during the sentence.

Gaisce Award

The Gaisce Award will be introduced during 2014. Teachers and Prison

Staff will receive training in this scheme. It will recognise achievements made

by prisoners.

Limerick Prison Staff are working in a changing environment and the committee would like to recognise the commitment of the Governor and all the staff to making sure the new systems work.

Members of the committee attended the organised training day at Brian Stack House and found this to be extremely beneficial. The visit to Wheatfield afforded an opportunity to compare regimes and a greater understanding of the particular difficulties associated with managing Limerick Prison.

We would like to thank former Governor Mulane and other staff who retired or relocated during the year for their service.

We welcome Governor Dawson and look forward to continuing a positive working relationship.

We would like to thank Governor O'Brien, who has been appointed by Gov. Dawson, to liaise with the committee in the interest of continuity and an efficient response to any concerns and or queries the committee have.

Patricia McCarthy

Chairperson

Limerick Prison Visiting Committee

07/01/2014

Tuarascáil Bhliantúil 2013 Choiste Cuirte Phríosún Luimnigh

Cuirtear an Tuarascáil Bhliantúil do 2013 ó Choiste Cuirte Phríosún Luimnigh i láthair thar ceann an 6 ball den Choiste.

Ba mhaith linn aitheantas a thabhairt d'obair an Chathaoirligh roimhe agus buíochas a ghabháil léi as a cuid oibre thar ceann na bpríosúnach.

Chomhlíon na Baill de Choiste Cuirte Phríosún Luimnigh, ar cheap an tAire iad, a gcuid dualgas agus freagrachtaí de réir na ndualgas agus na gcumhachtaí a leagtar amach in Acht na bPríosún (Coistí Cuirte), 1925, agus sna rialacha a rinneadh in Ordú na bPríosún (Coistí Cuirte), 1925.

Is príosún cimithe é Príosún Luimnigh do phríosúnaigh is fir ó chontae Thiobraid Árann, ó chontae an Chláir agus ó chontae Luimnigh agus do phríosúnaigh is mná ó na 6 chontae i gCúige Mumhan.

Mar phríosún meánslándála dúnta, is é toilleadh oibriúcháin Phríosún Luimnigh ná 220 fear agus 28 bean.

Bhí cruinnithe míosúla agus cruinnithe eatramhacha ag an gcoiste le linn na bliana.

Is príosún ríghnóthach é Príosún Luimnigh mar gheall ar ghluaiseacht leanúnach na bpríosúnach, bíodh sí chuig an gcúirt, chuig príosúin eile, chuig an ospidéal nó trí chimiú ón bpobal agus ar scaoileadh chuig an bpobal. Leagann bainistiú na gluaiseachta leanúnaí sin brú breise ar an nGobharnóir agus ar a fhoireann. Chomhlíonamar an obair bhuíne atá riachtanach chun coinneáil a dhéanamh ar chaighdeán arda, ar dhea-chaidrimh oibre agus ar thimpeallacht chomhair shocair atá éigeantach le haghaidh an príosún a bhainistiú agus a reáchtáil go héifeachtúil. Chomhoibrigh gach oifigeach go sármhaith linn le linn ár gcuairteanna ar limistéir éagsúla an phríosúin.

Líon daoine faoi choimeád.

Tá feabhas suntasach tagtha ar an bplódú trí bhainistiú príosúnach. Ba éard a bhí i gceist anseo ná príosúnaigh a aistriú chuig príosúin a bhfuil toilleadh breise acu. Glactar leis go gcuireann sé sin tuilleadh brú ar an bhfoireann ach,

mar sin féin, cuirtear fáilte roimhe mar go laghdaíonn sé an brú a chruthaíonn plódú. Tá sé ag cumasú pleanáil agus bainistiú níos fearr á ndéanamh ar phianbhreitheanna na bpríosúnach freisin.

| Bliain | Fir | Mná |
|--------|-----|-----|
| 1/1/12 | 294 | 25 |
| 1/1/13 | 239 | 23 |
| 1/14 | 205 | 31 |

Bhuail an coiste le príosúnaigh, idir fhir agus mhná, ar iarratas an phríosúnaigh agus le linn cuairteanna ar limistéir éagsúla an Phríosúin araon. Ardaíodh roinnt ábhair imní agus réitíodh iad go ginearálta chun sástachta an phríosúnaigh agus an choiste araon. Ba iad iarratais ar aistrithe chuig áiteanna eile coinneála agus gearáin faoi thásca deimhneacha arna ndéanamh ag an madra GTO na gearáin ba choitianta. Bhí roinnt gearán a bhain le cóireáil leighis maidir le hathruithe ar réim cógas ordaithe de ghnáth. Is ag éirí leis atá an nós imeachta curtha ar bhonn foirmiúil le gearáin a dhéanamh. Rinneadh dhá ghearán Chatagóir A a thionscnamh agus a imscrúdú go hoifigiúil ach ní raibh aon fhianaise sa dá chás sin a thacaigh leis na líomhaintí a rinneadh in aghaidh na n-oifigeach.

Aistríodh roinnt gearánach roimh an gcruinniú nó tamall gairid ina dhiaidh. Táimid sásta gur comhtharlú a bhí i gceist ansin ach táimid ag iarraidh prótacal a chur i bhfeidhm a ligfidh don phríosúnach teachtaireacht thaifeadta a bheith aige/aici leis an gcoiste roimh dó/di Príosún Luimnigh a fhágáil.

An scéim um Chóras Dreasaíthe a tugadh isteach le linn 2012, tá sí ag leanúint ar aghaidh ag soláthar torthaí maithe. Tá líon na dTuairiscí Araíonachta ag laghdú fós agus tá fonn mór ar na príosúnaigh páirt a ghlacadh inti. Chuir príosúnaigh in iúl don choiste go bhfuil siad sásta leis an gcur chuige sin agus go dtuigeann siad go hiomlán na hiarmhairtí a bheidh rompu má theipeann orthu agus, dá bhrí sin, tá fonn mór orthu bheith rathúil agus leanúint ar aghaidh lena rannpháirtíocht.

| | | |
|----------|--------------|-------------|
| Bunúsach | Caighdeánach | Feabhsaithe |
|----------|--------------|-------------|

| | | |
|----|-----|-----|
| 3% | 68% | 29% |
| | | |

Bás faoi Choimeád

Ar an drochuair, fuair duine amháin bás faoi choimeád le linn 2013. Is mian leis an gCoiste comhbhrón deacrach a dhéanamh le teaghlach an phríosúnaigh nach maireann.

Príosúnaigh faoi Chosaint

Fáiltíonn an coiste roimh thús an áirimh um Príosúnaigh faoi Chóras Cosanta agus tugann sé dá aire go raibh laghdú 3 príosúnach sa 2^ú háireamh ar phríosúnaigh faoi ghlasáil 22/23 uair. Leanann líon na bPríosúnach faoi Chóras Cosanta ar aghaidh mar chúis imní don choiste, atá láneolach ar na tosca ar leith agus atá sásta go bhfuil an Gobharnóir agus a fhoireann ag déanamh a ndícheall i gcónaí a dtosca a fheabhsú.

Príosún na mBan

Bíonn éagsúlacht sna pianbhreitheanna príosúin atá á gcur isteach ag mná agus baineann fad ama gairid le roinnt acu. Tháinig feabhas ar an oiliúint agus ar an raon gníomhaíochtaí ar fáil do mhná ach ní mór iad a leathnú agus a oiriúnú do na pianbhreitheanna atá níos gairide lena n-éifeachtacht a mhéadú. Tá an coiste ag iarraidh córas cuairte atá níos cairdiúla do theaghlaigh a thabhairt isteach. Táimid eolach ar na deacrachtaí féideartha a bhaineann leis na socrúcháin reatha a athrú ach creidimid nach mór cothú agus cosaint a

dhéanamh ar an dáimh idir leanaí agus a máthair agus ní féidir déanamh amhlaidh sa timpeallacht chuairte reatha.

Príosún Ginearálta

Thug an coiste cuairt ar gach limistéar den phríosún. Neamhphleanáilte a bhí na cuairteanna agus roghnaíodh na limistéir go randamach.

Tá ardchaighdeán seasta glaineachta ar fáil ar fud an phríosúin.

Thug an coiste cuairt ar na cistineacha, bhlaís sé an bia sa chistin agus d'fhreastail sé ar stáisiúin éagsúla dáilte mar ar chuir príosúnaigh in iúl go raibh siad sásta le caighdeán agus méid an bhia atá á chur ar fáil.

Taitníonn an siopa milseán leis na príosúnaigh, go háirithe na hiarrachtaí a dhéanann na baill foirne míreanna speisialta a fhoinsiú ar a son.

Leantar ar aghaidh le hobair ar an mbonneagar seirbhísí a uasghrádú agus tá an suaitheadh is lú is féidir á dhéanamh ar reáchtáil agus bhainistiú ordúil an phríosúin. Tá an coiste sásta leis an dul chun cinn atá á dhéanamh i leith an fhoirgnimh nua.

Thug an coiste dá aire an cinneadh a rinneadh chun an tseirbhís cúirte a athlonnú chuig suíomh cóngarach d'ionad an phríosúin. Thugamar dár n-aire gur sách beag a bheidh an tionchar ar ghluaiseachtaí na bpríosúnach chuig éisteachtaí cúirte agus ar ais uathu a fheabhsú agus é críochnaithe. Is saincheist í sin ar mhaith leis an gcoiste comhairliúchán a fheiceáil ina leith idir Seirbhís Príosún na hÉireann agus an tSeirbhís Chúirteanna sula ndéanfar pleananna deartha a thabhairt chun críche.

Aithníonn an coiste gurb ionann leagan amach fisiceach agus dearadh Phríosún Luimnigh agus iad sin a bhí ag institiúid phionósach na 1800í, cé go ndearnadh iad a fheabhsú agus a nuachóiriú.

Is údar inní don choiste gur coincreiteach is mó atá sa chlós aclaíochta agus i limistéir eile amuigh faoin spéir agus gur beag limistéar féir atá ann. Is réimse é sin a gcreidimid gur féidir é a fheabhsú agus fáiltímid roimh na pleananna chun limistéar a fhorbairt mar a bhféadann gairneoireacht a bheith ina gníomhaíocht agus ina cuid den chlár oiliúna do phríosúnaigh.

Tá an mhoill ar theagascóirí/bhaill foirne a chur ar fáil do na ceardlanna ag imirt tionchar ar phríosúnaigh toisc go ndiúltaíonn sí an deis a thabhairt dóibh

scileanna nua a fhoghlaim a rachadh chun leasa a n-athshlánaithe agus a chabhródh leis. Fáiltíonn an Coiste go mór roimh líonadh na bpost uile sna seachtainí romhainn agus táimid ag súil le tionchar dearfach ar phríosúnaigh.

Cuirtear seirbhísí reatha oiliúna, uasoiliúna agus oideachais ar fáil ar ardchaighdeán do na príosúnaigh uile atá ag baint leas astu agus atá ag gnóthú cáilíochtaí aitheanta.

Leanann an liachtlann ar aghaidh ag cur seirbhís shármhaith ar fáil i ngach disciplín. Chomh maith leis sin, aithníonn an coiste an tacaíocht a chuireann ospidéal, áiseanna agus foireann FSS ar fáil.

Is cúiseanna imní iad mí-úsáid substaintí agus an fháil ar dhruaí neamhcheadaithe sa phríosún, d'ainneoin na n-iarrachtaí a rinne an Gobharnóir agus a fhoireann, agus baineann siad an bonn ó iarrachtaí gach duine a bhfuil baint acu le seirbhísí tacaíochta agus comhairleoireachta a chur ar fáil.

Leanann an tSeirbhís Phromhaidh ar aghaidh ag obair leis an nGobharnóir agus leis an bhfoireann chun a chinntiú go gcuirtear ar chumas na bpríosúnach dul isteach sa phobal arís.

Thugamar dár n-aird an caidreamh oibre sármhaith atá ann idir gach Gníomhaireacht agus eagraíocht neamhrialtasach a bhfuil baint acu le leas príosúnach.

Tá áthas orainn faoin bpáirt bheartaithe a bheidh ag Cumann Croise Deirge na

hÉireann agus táimid ag súil le torthaí dearfacha ón tionscnamh atá

bheartaithe. Cuirfear tús leis an gcúrsa an 11 Eanáir 2014.

Tionscadal an Éisteora

Cuirfear tionscadal an éisteora i bhfeidhm i mí Feabhra. Cuirfidh na

Samáraigh oiliúint ar phríosúnaigh chun cabhrú le príosúnaigh eile le linn a

bpiabhreithe.

Dámhachtain Gaisce

Tabharfar Dámhachtain Gaisce isteach le linn 2014. Cuirfear oiliúint ar

mhúinteoirí agus ar Fhoireann an Phríosúin sa scéim seo. Tabharfaidh sí

aitheantas do ghnóthachtálacha na bpríosúnach.

Tá Foireann Phríosún Luimnigh ag obair i dtimpeallacht atá ag athrú agus ba mhaith leis an gcoiste aitheantas a thabhairt do thiomantas an Ghobharnóra

agus na mball foirne uile agus iad ag déanamh cinnte go bhfuil ag éirí leis na córais nua.

D'fhreastail baill den choiste ar an lá oiliúna eagraithe ag Teach Brian Stack agus bhain siad an-leas as. Thug an chuairt ar Phríosún Chruithneachtáin an deis le córais a chóimheas agus tuiscint níos fearr a fháil ar na deacrachtaí ar leith a bhaineann le Príosún Luimnigh a bhainistiú.

Ba mhaith linn buíochas a ghabháil leis an iar-Ghobharnóir Mullane agus le baill foirne eile a chuaigh ar scor nó a d'athlonnigh le linn na bliana as ucht a gcuid oibre.

Cuirimid fáilte roimh an nGobharnóir Dawson agus táimid ag súil le leanúint le dea-chaidreamh oibre.

Ba mhaith linn buíochas a ghabháil leis an nGobharnóir O'Brien, ar cheap an Gobharnóir Dawson é chun teagmháil a dhéanamh leis an gcoiste ar mhaithe le leanúnachas agus chun freagra éifeachtúil a thabhairt ar aon ábhair inní nó ar aon cheisteanna atá ag an gcoiste.

Patricia McCarthy

Cathaoirleach

Coiste Cuairte Phríosún Luimnigh

07/01/2014