

IRISH PRISONS INSPECTORATE

MIDLANDS PRISON

**MIDLANDS PRISON INSPECTION:
27TH JUNE - 1ST JULY 2005**

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.

Any enquiries or comments about the inspectorate should be directed in the first instance to:

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REPORT ON VISIT TO MIDLANDS PRISON

COMMENCING THE 27th JUNE 2005 TO 1ST JULY 2005

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 On the 27th June to 1st July 2005 an inspection of the Midlands Prison was carried out by the Inspectorate Team which consisted of:

Mr. Justice Dermot Kinlen	Inspector of Prisons and Places of Detention
James Woods	Special Adviser to Inspector
Dr. Jim Ledwith	Consultant

1.2 The purpose of inspection is to identify issues and take note of any areas of concern and good practice which may pertain.

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

2. Background

- 2.1 The Midlands Prison is located on the Dublin Road, Portlaoise, Co. Laois and was built on 26 acres of land which was part of the original farm attached to Portlaoise Prison. So it is adjacent to Portlaoise Prison and consequently shares some of the facilities such as the water-storage tanks, the stores facilities, the boiler-house facilities, and soon the trades staff of both prisons are going to operate as one unit.
- 2.2 The site began to be developed in 1998 and the foundation stone was laid in April 1999. The prison was officially opened in November 2000. It was designed and constructed under a partnership programme of finance, design, and built in line with Government policy of the time on public/private partnership at a total cost of 46 million punts. The building contractors for the overall project were Henry, O'Rourke Ltd.
- 2.3. The total cell capacity is 473 with prisoner bed capacity of 517 which includes a 40-cell separation unit for disruptive prisoners. There are also five padded cells, two strip cells and one isolation cell in the main prison. There are 22 treble cells. Sanitary facilities are fitted in all of the cells. The landings and cells are designed to gain maximum natural light with a glass block wall known as the "bubble" at the end of each wing and with the cell windows extending almost from floor to ceiling. The locking system known as "Atlas Security Systems" was the first of its type used in the Irish Prison Service and it allows for selected areas, entire wing, or other such zones to

be locked electronically via computer control within the console room area. C.C.T.V cameras are used extensively.

- 2.4 The prison was opened on a phased basis from November 2000 onwards and there are still some vacancies (mostly in the Separation Unit which is not in use at present). It is not a committal prison from the courts, therefore all of the prisoners are on transfer from other prisons. The present population is 437 of which 433 are sentenced and 4 for trial, so it is mostly a sentenced prisoners' prison. It has all the services and facilities similar to other prisons such as education, workshops, medical, welfare, work/training, psychology, etc.

3. Governor's Briefing

- 3.1 The Inspector and his Special Adviser met the senior staff of the prison on the first morning of our inspection. Following informal discussion, introductions, tea and coffee, we then had a formal meeting with the Governor.
- 3.2 He outlined that he had 437 prisoners in custody on that day which included four for trial. He has the capacity for 517 prisoners. He described a Special Unit which holds 40 prisoners that is not in use at present. This Unit was designed and built to accommodate disruptive prisoners but it is now intended that it will be taken over by the Portlaoise Prison staff for a 12-month period.

- 3.3 The Governor stated that an average of 80 prisoners per day attend education. He also has a range of workshops which are now fully operational but prior to this there were difficulties in getting trained instructors for some of these work/training shops. Every prisoner on committal is given a briefing on the prison routine/facilities and an opportunity to work in any of the workshops. An average of 85 - 90 prisoners per day work in the work/ training shops. He gave a breakdown of the hours worked in the shops and said that he had 24 industrial trainers which included the kitchen staff. The Governor outlined the accredited certificates received by prisoners for 2004 from FAS or FETAC relating to the work/training in such subjects as horticulture, building skills, catering, computer training. It is hoped to get the other shops i.e metalwork, carpentry, industrial cleaning, craftwork, and laundry up to accredited certification standard in the next year or so. However, there are between 30 to 50 prisoners per day in the exercise yards doing nothing.
- 3.4 He said most of the prisoners were serving long sentences, a lot for drug-related offences and 60% of them were serving six years and upwards. He had 33 prisoners serving life sentences. He took the entire prisoner population (80) from the Curragh Prison when it closed and had to accommodate them on the entire "A" wing. 50% of those from the Curragh have now gone out, because time has expired since their transfer and four have died in outside hospitals or hospices. The difficulty of securing accommodation for those released was a major problem as a lot of them could not return to their local community.

- 3.5 The Governor gave a breakdown of the number of prisoners in each wing of the prison and their category. Apart from the "A" wing there is another wing in which sex offenders and protection prisoners are held but both of these groups are separated. Half of the "C" wing ground floor is used for the medical facilities; the other half is used for high security/protection prisoners.
- 3.6 They have no sex offenders' programme in the prison but hope to start one in October 2005. In the meantime, there is a programme in Arbour Hill Prison and places or vacancies are advertised in this prison and any prisoner found acceptable can be transferred there to participate in that programme.
- 3.7 He said the medical services at the prison were very good with two full time doctors working a 39-hour week each. They had 12 nurses plus one and a half jobsharing and no medical orderlies. They do not have a methadone maintenance programme. They could have 30-50 prisoners who may be H.I.V. positive but all prisoners are treated as if they are positive. They had two cases of hepatitis. They ran a hepatitis vaccine programme for staff last week and over 70% of them availed of the service.
- 3.8 The Governor stated that he had a total of 29 teachers, 14 of whom are full-time. The education classes close from mid-July until the first week of September. He also said that for the first time since the prison opened the Probation and Welfare staff were up to their full complement.

- 3.9 From 4/6/05 to 1/7/05 thirty staff transferred out of the prison. Most of them were part of the Curragh staff. There are 68 staff seeking transfers at present and he has a total of 396 staff of which 248 are of basic grade with two on temporary transfer to other prisons. He is operating now with 12 staff short of his allocated posts. His staffing levels work out at approx 9-1 prisoner/staff ratio. He said that he has an average of 12 prisoners per day being escorted to court/hospital appointments, etc and his overtime allocation for last year was exceeded by 2,700 hours. He has only two staffing posts that manually operate two gates within the prison; the rest are all electronically controlled.
- 3.10 The entire cell windows have been replaced since the prison opened due to lack of air within the cell and its being too cold in the wintertime. There are 40 prisoners at present seeking a transfer to Mountjoy Prison or other prisons within the Dublin area. The Governor stated that the reception of prisoners into the prison was very good . They had an induction programme where they were issued with a booklet outlining all of their entitlements and the facilities available to them. They are seen by a nurse on arrival and the next morning they are seen by the Governor, Doctor, Probation and Welfare, etc.
- 3.11 The Governor stated that the prison is operating very well. There is a good working relationship between staff, management and prisoners. The local branch union and management work quite well together; they have their differences but always agree to return to discussions to resolve their

differences. So all in all they work very well together. That completed the meeting with the Governor and he then invited some of his senior staff to join us and we then began going through the prison's business plans for the year ending 2004.

4. Business Plans 2004
Midlands Prison
(Summary)

Financial Management

Target 1.1. Manage within the overall budget allocation for 2004.

1.1.1 Conduct budget meeting with the Heads of Service.

Result: Done

1.1.2 Identify need & priorities, costing of agreed requirements.

Result: Done

1.1.3 Meeting with Director of Finance-for final approval & agreement.

Result: Done

1.1.4 Monitor & review expenditure throughout the year.

Result: Being done

1.1.5 Evaluate end-of-year result.

Result: Yes, done (exceeded budget slightly)

Target 1.2 Implement new Financial Management system as it is rolled out to prisons.

1.2.1 Conduct training & user-acceptance testing.

Result: Done

1.2.2 Train all end-users in Oracle Financing Systems.

Result: Done

1.2.3 Go "live" on Oracle Finance System.

Result: Done

Operational Management

Target 2.1. Ensure emergency planning in place to cover emergency situations.(Fire,riot.etc.)

2.1.1. Conduct review of existing fire plan, riot plan, hostage-taking, plus check on fire / riot /hostage taking equipment.

Result: Done

2.1.2 Produce report & recommendations to Governor.

Result: Done

2.1.3 Implement recommendation as approved by the Governor.

Result: Done

2.1.4 Review training needs of staff to deal with such emergencies.

Result: Not complete

2.1.5 Produce report on staff training & recommendations to Governor for approval.

Result: Only instructors only received refresher training. Not main staff.

2.1.6 Print all emergency plans in booklet form.

Result: Done

2.1.7 Implement approved training programme for staff.

Result: Partly done

2.1.8 Review all emergency plans twice yearly.

Result: Yes, done

Target 2.2. Implement new system for recording assaults in the prisoner population.

2.2.1 Conduct user acceptance test re suitability of package.

Result: Only own. Not National system as this was supposed to happen from Headquarters

2.2.2 Receive guidelines from operations in HQ based on new system.

Result: No, not sent from Headquarters

2.2.3 Receive new computer system from IT.

Result: No, not done by Headquarters

2.2.4. Train end-users in system.

Result: No, as no programme received

2.2.5 Implement new recording system.

Result: Local files only - not on computer

2.2.6 Review the new system.

Result: Locally, yes

2.2.7 Conduct initial audit of assaults in year 2004.

Result: Yes, annually

Target 2.3 Extend current visiting I D system in place at Mountjoy Prison to other Prisons.

2.3.1 Conduct research of Mountjoy Prison's system.

Result: Some done/ not installed yet

2.3.2 Review and adapt for the Midlands.

Result: In process

- 2.3.3 Consult & communicate system to visitors and prisoners.
Result: In October 2005 will commence.
- 2.3.4 Implement appropriate system.
Result: In October 2005
- 2.3.5 Monitor & review system when operational for some time.
Result: Not operational as yet

Target 2.4 Implement the report of the expert group on bullying.

- 2.4.1 Receive report from Operations in H.Q.
Result: Received, but it is not National policy
- 2.4.2 Result: Yes
- 2.4.3 Implement new guidelines & launch policy.
Result: Local policy only - not the National one as none adopted nationally.
- 2.4.4 Review policy after six months.
Result: Yes, done

Target 2.5. Introduce an annual review of security in all prisons commencing in 2004.

- 2.5.1 Review membership of security committee.
Result: Yes, done
- 2.5.2 Agree terms of reference & scope of annual review.
Result: Yes, done
- 2.5.3 Obtain approval from Governor re terms of reference.
Result: Yes, done
- 2.5.4 Quarterly security audit in place & operational.
Result: Yes, being done

- 2.5.5 Evaluate findings.
Result: Yes, done
- 2.5.6 Submit report.
Result: Yes, done
- 2.5.7 Integrate Curragh Prison prisoners into Midlands population.
Result: Yes, done
- 2.5.8 Open special unit to accommodate increase in prisoner population.
Result: Yes, done - since closed
- 2.5.9 Review and monitor progress.
Result: Done

3.Human resource management.

Target 3.1 Implement human resource aspects of Government decision of 11/11/03 in regard to prison closures. (Mothballing of Fort Mitchell & the Curragh) integrating of staff to Cork, St Patrick's, Limerick, Midlands prisons.

- 3.1.1 Introduce course for staff assigned from the Curragh Prison.
Result: Yes, done
- 3.1.2 Include inducted staff into Midlands Prison's roster rota.
Result: Yes, done

Target 3.2 Manage staff resources within overall budget allocated for overtime for 2004.

- 3.2.1 Ascertain exact budget for prison for 2004.
Result: Yes, done
- 3.2.2 Agree measures to remain within budget.
Result: Yes, done (1500 hrs overrun for yr)

- 3.2.3 Communicate measures to all staff.
Result: Yes, done
- 3.2.4 Implement measures.
Result: Yes, done
- 3.2.5 Review measures in light of monthly expenditure returns.
Result: Yes, done weekly. No provisions for staff in Special Unit the cause of o.t overrun.

Target 3.3 Implement whatever new attendance arrangements are agreed with P.O.A.

- 3.3.1 Review new agreement.(Full agreement not reached.)
Result: Yes, partly done
- 3.3.2 Identify implementation requirements.
Result: Yes, whenever new arrangements are agreed.
- 3.3.3 Communicate system to all staff.
Result: Yes, done
- 3.3.4 Implement system. (After agreement has been reached with union.)
Result: Yes, will be done then
- 3.3.5 Review the system after implementation.
Result: Yes, will be done when fully implemented

Target 3.4 Introduce PMDS for Prison Service grades from Asst Gov to Gov.

- 3.4.1 Identify participants & arrange for attendance at training courses.
Result: Yes, done
- 3.4.2 Prepare role profile forms for all participants.
Result: Yes, done

3.4.3 Monitor ongoing individual performances.

Result: Yes, done

3.4.4 Conduct interim reviews.

Result: Yes, done

3.4.5 Conduct annual review.

Result: Yes, done

3.4.6 Evaluate outcome.

Result: Yes, done

Target 3.6. Ensure adequate number of trained staff for emergency situations. e.g. C & R.

3.6.1. Review training needs in C & R, and B.A.

Result: Induction course implemented. Established training requirements but not implemented

3.6.2. Review arrangements with emergency services.

Result: Yes, done

3.6.3. Identify number of hours allocated for same.

Result: Yes, identified but not sanctioned

3.6.4. Produce recommendations to the Governor.

Result: Yes, done

3.6.5. Implement approved training programme.

Result: Not possible with overtime curtailment

4. Regime development

Target 4.1.A. Prioritise education against the background of budget restrictions following the Government's decision of 11/11/03.

- 4.1.A.1 Determine current take-up levels.
Result: Targets identified/ multidisciplinary committee involved
- 4.1.A.2 Determine the number of places for year 2004.
Result: Done
- 4.1.A.3 Interview all new committals for education programme.
Result: Done. Following day of arrival
- 4.1.A.4 Agree action to be taken, regular advertising of courses & classes.
Result: Yes, done
- 4.1.A.5 Regular implementation of agreed strategies.
Result: Yes, done
- 4.1.A.6 Enlist assistance of all other service providers within the prison in marketing education programmes / courses / classes.
Result: Yes, done multidisciplinary approach
- 4.1.A.7 Produce physical education development plan for 2005.
Result: Yes, done
- 4.1.A.8 Obtain approval for implementation from Governor.
Result: Done
- 4.1.A.9 Annual report to Mr K Warner, CVVEC, & Governor.
Result: Done

Target 4.1.B. Workshop training against background of budgetary restrictions following the Government decision of November 11th 2003.

4.1.B.1. Maintain prisoner numbers in vocational training as far as possible during ongoing budgetary restrictions.

Result: Yes, done (85 - 95 per day)

4.1.B.2. Establish workshop review group.

Result: Yes, done

4.1.B.3. Establish evaluation criteria.

Result: Yes, done

4.1.B.4. Conduct needs analysis.

Result: Yes, done

4.1.B.5. Review the current work / training programme & make appropriate recommendations.

Result: Yes, done

4.1.B.6. Seek approval for Governor to implement recommendations.

Result: Yes, done

4.1.B.7. Implement approved recommendations.

Result: Yes, done

4.1.B.8. Review changes.

Result: Yes, done

Target 4.2. Provide for the personal well-being of prisoners, including spiritual care and suicide awareness.

4.2.1 Provide religious services, sacraments and spiritual counselling to all denominations.

Result: Yes, being done. (one chaplain, two lay chaplains, other visiting chaplains)

- 4.2.2 Continue to convene quarterly multidisciplinary meetings to review current and new suicide-prevention measures & implement as appropriate.
- Result: Yes, done
- 4.2.3 Implement recommendations as appropriate of the National Steering Group on deaths in custody.
- Result: Yes, done
- 4.2.4 Convene special meeting of committee in the event of a death or serious suicide attempt.
- Result: Yes, done - no suicide since prison opened
- 4.2.5 Implement recommendation when approved by Governor.
- Result: Yes, done
- 4.2.6 Implement multidisciplinary meetings to review all committals and prisoners encountering difficulties within the prison.
- Result: Yes, monthly in all wings

Target 4.3. Provide care and rehabilitation programmes ensuring equality of access for all prisoners.

- 4.3.1 Continue to provide parenting classes to meet current & future needs.
- Result: Yes, done as far as possible.
- 4.3.2 Continue lifers' long-term project & links with the parole board.
- Result: Yes, done (one per year)
- 4.3.3 Library committee to continue.
- Result: Yes
- 4.3.4 Continue to support and refer prisoners to the intensive supervision scheme, bridge group, Talbot community trust, Tallaght After-care, and the various residential treatment centres.
- Result: Yes, done through the P & W service

4.3.5 Facilitate St. Vincent de Paul, NA, (once per month) AA, (2 per week) Samaritans (no Samaritans except by phone), etc continued access to those in need

Result: Yes, done

4.3.6 Post-release Services Co-ordinator to continue to facilitate transition from prison to the community.

Result: Yes, mainly by Probation & Welfare Officers.

4.3.7 All new committals to be assessed by the Probation & Welfare Officer within three days of committal to ensure appropriate services within the prison.

Result: Yes, done following day

4.3.8 Parole reports, Repatriation reports to be completed on all appropriate prisoners when requested.

Result: Yes. Both prison staff and P & W staff do same

4.3.9 Long-term focus work with selected individual prisoners to address offending behaviour.

Result: Done by psychology service A.P.V - two courses per year

4.3.10 Provision of thinking skills course.

Result: No, not done

4.3.11 Provisions of a Clinical Psychologist service to individual/groups of prisoners. Therapeutic service to prisoners aimed at addressing their mental health needs and/or offending behaviour needs. Quality of service in accordance with standards best practice of the psychology profession.

Result: Yes, being done now - no group work as yet (only newly appointed psychologist)

Target 5.1.B. Provide drug treatment & addiction services to prisoners.

5.1.B.1. Retain two full-time drug & alcohol counsellors.

Result: No, not available

- 5.1.B.2 Continue the association with community-based addiction facilities.
Result: Yes, through P & W
- 5.1.B.3 Provide medical treatment and care to all substance-addicted prisoners.
Result: Provide alternative
- 5.1.B.4 Review I.P.S. Drugs policy with view to local implementation.
Result: Yes, done
- 5.1.B.5 Make recommendations on actions/initiatives for the prison.
Result: Yes, done
- 5.1.B.6 Implement recommendations.
Result: Yes, as far as possible with local prison doctors

Target 6. Prisoner Health Care.

6.1. Implement agreed Health Care Standards as appropriate, to ensure Medical & Psychiatric care for prisoners consistent with standards that apply in the community generally.

- 6.1.1 Health Care committee to remain in place.
Result: Yes, in place
- 6.1.2 Refresh review of report and recommendations.
Result: Yes, done
- 6.1.3 Review recommendations that may be implemented in this prison.
Result: Yes, done
- 6.1.4 Review and approve appropriate recommendations.
Result: Yes, done

6.1.5 Implement appropriate recommendations.

Result: Implemented

6.1.6 Implement whatever arrangements need to be put in place in regard to prisoner medical records system, health care standards, etc. arising from conclusion of ongoing negotiations with Medical Officers in the Labour Relations Commission.

Result: Yes, all in place

Target 7. Facility Management

7.1. Manage the agreed maintenance budget for the prison.

7.1.1 Identify budget for 2004.

Result: Yes, done

7.1.2 Prioritise works for the year.

Result: Done

7.1.3 Review monthly.

Result: Yes, (weekly)

7.1.4 Agree the 2005 budget with Estates & Finance in I.P.S. HQ.

Result: Yes, done

Target 7.3. Assist in provision of new electronic and manual locking.

7.3.1 Identify the areas of need.

Result: Yes, done

7.3.2 Agree types of locks with Governor of Works.

Result: Yes, done

7.3.3 Prioritise schedule of installation.

Result: Done at time of building

7.3.4 Communicate system to all staff.

Result: Done

7.3.5 Implement new locking system.

Result: Done

7.3.6 Evaluate and review the new system.

Result: Done (ongoing)

Target 7.4. Ensure safety statement in place and updated as necessary, backed by effective health and safety procedure and practice.

7.4.1 Review safety statement.

Result: Done

7.4.2 Identify areas requiring change.

Result: Done

7.4.3 Redraft where necessary.

Result: In the process at present

7.4.4 Construct updated edition.

Result: Yes, being done at present

7.4.5 Familiarise staff of changes (if any).

Result: Yes, when booklets available from printer

Target 7.5. Establish arrangements to review and implement, where actionable, recommendations of the Inspector of Prisons & Places of Detention.

7.5.1 Review recommendation of the Inspector of Prisons.

Result: No inspection of prison in 2004

7.5.2 Set up working group (heads of function & areas referred to in report).

Result: Not applicable

7.5.3 Prioritise and agree areas requiring attention.

Result: Not applicable

7.5.4 Implement change.

Result: Not applicable

7.5.5. Evaluate and review.

Result: Not applicable

Target 8. Tobacco Control.

Target 8.1. Implement new tobacco control regulations as necessary in the Prison Service.

8.1.1. Agree unified smoking policy with headquarters and governors.

Result: Yes, done

8.1.2. Set up team to evaluate and implement.

Result: Done

8.1.3. Implement new smoking policy in March 04.

Result: Done

8.1.4. Review operations of new policy in Dec 04.

Result: Yes, done

Target 9. Environmental and waste management.

Target 9.1. In line with Irish Prison Service environmental policy statement set up systems to improve environmental and waste management in the prison service.

9.1.1. Awareness training for Governors.

Result: Done

9.1.2. Appoint environmental co-ordinator in the prison as per strategy report.

Result: Yes, appointed

9.1.3. Provide relevant training for co-ordinator & critical staff members.

Result: Yes, done

9.1.4. Set up an environmental management & implementation team.

Result: Yes, done

9.1.5. Implement local environmental management system.

Result: Yes, done

9.1.6. Carry out annual management review of environmental management systems.

Result: Ongoing

Section D.

New strategies specific to the Midlands Prison

(Health and safety issues)

DM 1.1 Develop health and safety induction course for all prisoners relating to in-cell equipment and accommodation. (by September)

Result: Started in 2005

- DM 1.2 Familiarisation programme established and commence implementation process by October 04.
- Result: Part done. Health and Safety officer not available
- DM 1.3 Programme being delivered and all prisoners made aware of personal safety issues in compliance with the health & safety regulations.
- Result: In place and ready for delivery

(Waste management programme.)

- DM 2.1 Develop waste management programme for the prison.
- Result: Done
- DM 2.2 Areas identified for introduction of new procedures.
- Result: Done
- DM 2.3 Roll out of programme to all other areas of the prison.
- Result: Done
- =====
- DM 3.1 Extension of stores to cope with staff & stock facilities.
- Result: On hold - no finance sanction
- DM 4. 1 Develop multimedia room in the education area.
- Result: Done
- DM 5.1 Develop IT system of facial recognition for all persons visiting prisoners in custody.
- Result: Done now - not in 2004
- DM 6.1 Tiling outside of shower areas on all wings level 2 and 3.
- Result: Completed
- DM 7.1 Painting programme, visitors centre.
- Result: Completed

DM 8.1 S.S.O. Staff to give briefing and update to Governor and Chief Officer grades on staff issues.

Result: Yes, done

DM 9.1 High-level secure netting along perimeter of "A/B" yards.

Result: Completed

DM 9.2 High level secure fence outside perimeter of " D" boundary wall.

Result: Yes, done

DM 9.3 Support the process of prisoner induction, provide booklet on committal, taking into account new prison rules.

Result: Booklet - yes - no new rules

DM 10.1 Refurbishment of the general office.

Result: Yes, completed

DM 10.1 Provide 17" monitors for the general office.

Result: On-going

DM 11.1 Cell-door bearing checks to be carried out.

Result: On-going

DM 12.1 Linkage with the Portlaoise waste management project.

Result: On-going

DM 13.1 Develop critical-incident command room within administration block.

Result: Yes, done

DM 14.1 Develop & upgrade 22 double cells to treble cells.

Result: Done

5. Statistical Information

5.1 Sentencing Profile

Number serving sentences of up to three months	13
Number serving sentences of over three months and up to & including six months	22
Number serving sentences of over six months and up to & including 12 months	34
Number serving sentences of over 12 months and up to & including two years	52
Number serving sentences of over two years & up to and including four years	86
Number serving sentences of over four years & up to and including seven years	96
Number serving sentences of over seven years & up to and including ten years	51
Number serving sentences of over ten years	41
Number serving life sentences	<u>33</u>
<i>Total sentenced</i>	428
Plus four on remand/trial	<u>4</u>
<i>Overall total</i>	<u>432</u>

5.2 Age Profile

Number of prisoners aged 16, 17, 18 years old	2
Number of prisoners aged 19, 20 and 21 years old (total for the three years)	42
Number of prisoners aged 22, 23, 24, and 25 years old (total for the four years)	83
Number of prisoners aged 26, 27, 28, 29 and 30 years old (total for the five years)	81
Number of prisoners aged 31 to 35 years old. (including 35 years old)	69
Number of prisoners aged 36 to 40 years old (including 40 years old)	36
Number of prisoners aged 41 to 45 years old (including 45 years old)	33
Number of prisoners aged 46 to 50 years old (including 50 years old)	27
Number of prisoners aged 51 to 60 years old (including 60 years old)	38
Number of prisoners aged 61 years and older	<u>21</u>
<i>Total</i>	<u><u>432</u></u>

5.3. Staffing

Serving Officers by Grade on 27th June 2005

Governor Grade 1	1
Governor Grade 2	1
D/Governor	2
A/Governor	3
(including one on temp-duty)	
C.O. Grade 1	1
C.T.O. Grade 2	1
Clerk Grade 1	1
C. O. Grade 2	5
Industrial Manager	1
C.T.O. Grade 2	1
Clerk Grade 2	19
A.C.O.	26
Industrial Supervisors	5
P.O. (trades)	9
P.O.	248
(plus two on temp. transfers)	
Assist Industrial Supervisors	24
Nurse Officer (+ one on temp. transfer)	<u>18</u>
<i>Grand Total</i>	<u>366</u>

6. Meetings with Various Groups and Individuals

6.1. Meeting with the Prison Doctor

6.1.1 The Inspector and Dr J Ledwith had a meeting with Dr Rasool, the prison's medical doctor. He informed us that he was the full-time doctor. There were 13 1/2 nurses and no medical orderlies. He was told of this meeting a few weeks ago. The Curragh prison closed down about a year ago and he informed us that about 100 prisoners were transferred to the Midlands Prison. Many were elderly in their 70's and 80's. He has a five-day week and is in the prison from 9.00 to 5.00 as is Dr. Owens. They have a 39-hour-week contract and he is Chairman of the Prison Doctors' Association. They do a one in two weekends on-call and provide a 24-hour cover over all. He arrives at 9.00am and has surgery from 10.00am to 12.00pm and from 2.00pm to 4.00pm. He is happy with the surgery which opened in 2000. Computerisation of records is not as yet available but would be very helpful, he informed us. He would like to have more space so he could have two surgeries at the same time. He sees about 25 patients per day. If it is not urgent it can take a day to see him. He likes to spend about half an hour with each individual prisoner. Prisoners are referred to him by a class officer via a nurse. He feels he has all the equipment he needs. He is happy with the nursing staff. Medication can be obtained from the local pharmacy if necessary. There are no problems with storage of drugs he informed us. Prisoners are not given sleeping medication and benzodiazepines are not used except on prescription from the psychiatrist. Methadone has been used. He does not believe illicit drugs are a problem in the prison. He did not know, however, if the

prisoners made hooch when informed by the Inspector that they did. He did not think cocaine was a problem but again the Inspector informed him that cocaine was the drug of choice and that drugs can be thrown in from outside but that is not so easy at present. A local psychiatric hospital will not take prisoners because he was informed that they had no forensic psychiatrist. If necessary prisoners are commenced on psychotropic medication until the psychiatrist sees them. Suicidal awareness meetings are held on a monthly basis and the healthcare staff meet regularly. Dr. Rasool feels there is no need for him to have a practice outside the prison. He has recently completed a course on forensic medicine in U.C.D. Prisoners can be seen by specialists in the local general hospital. Three prisoners have been transferred to hospice care with terminal illnesses. There are, he informed us, "one or two" padded cells and four "strip cells" on each landing. He does not feel they are therapeutic and he does visit prisoners in them. There is a secure room in the local general hospital for prisoners. In the punishment block there is no radio or television and no cigarettes and prisoners spend 23 hours per day locked in that area. Dr. Rasool feels there is no value in this. When the Inspector told him that he had been informed by the prisoners that it took a long time to see him, Dr. Rasool denied this.

- 6.1.2 He did feel that the occupational health needs of the prison officers could be dealt with by the prison medical officers.

6.2 *Meeting with the Psychiatrist*

6.2.1 Dr. Paul O'Connell was seen by Dr. Ledwith along with the Inspector. He informed us that he attends at the Prison on a Tuesday from 9.30am - 2.00pm. He then goes to Portlaoise prison. Referrals come to him via the GP's or the staff. There are referral forms but Dr. O'Connell felt that these could be refined. He is concerned that files do not follow prisoners from prison to prison. Management do not agree that there is a delay with files being transferred. He has great difficulty in admitting prisoners on a temporary basis to local psychiatric services. He is strongly of the opinion that mentally ill offenders should be admitted directly to psychiatric hospitals rather than to prison. He feels that the amount of time that he spends at the prison is sufficient. His registrar comes with him as well as the CPN. This service he informed us was a developing service and he has been in post for the past eight or nine months. He felt that the referral system could be improved by the GP only. Benzodiazepines are a problem when prescribed by a locum GP. He is of the opinion that treatment of sex offenders should be psychologist-led. He doubts the value of punishment units and of padded cells.

6.3 *Meeting with Dentist*

6.3.1 Dr. Enda Whelan was seen by Dr. Ledwith with the Inspector. He had been told of the meeting about six weeks previously. There are two dentists and they each hold half a half day session on a Tuesday and Wednesday from 2.00pm to 5.45pm. Eight or nine prisoners are seen at each session and two prison officers are allocated to each session. They

don't usually start until about 2.30pm and they may have to "leave early". The prison staff are generally very helpful. The dentists are paid on a fee per item basis. Nurses refer prisoners to the dentist. Prisoners get the same range of treatments as medical card holders with the exception that they can have their teeth cleaned once a year only while medical card holders can have their teeth cleaned twice a year. They will deal with any emergency that occurs but this does not occur very often. Dr. Whelan informed us that the dental surgery was not big enough. There was a major problem with the maintenance of the equipment which was installed only three years ago. It is serviced every six months but there are ongoing problems with the equipment and he is not sure if the right person is maintaining it. He would like an O.P.G. (X-ray machine) which could be shared with Portlaoise Prison. This would cut down on expenses as prisoners at present have to be sent to Dublin for the special x rays for which this machine would be used. He has difficulty in establishing proper reporting procedures. Prisoners are beginning to take an interest in their own dental health, he informed us. Sugar-free methadone is a must. He would like the prison staff to be available for their full sessions.

6.3.2 He would like the equipment to be working all the time. Because of the changing scene with regard to hepatitis C, hepatitis B and HIV, he and his colleague would like to be kept up to date with the latest treatment including needle-stick injuries. He would like the Dublin Dental Hospital to provide lectures on this topic on a regular basis. He brings his own practice nurse with him. He does find the Governor and his staff very helpful

generally and he is happy with the number of sessions per week. When informed by the Inspector that he (the Inspector) had been told by the prisoners that it could take six weeks to see the dentist Dr. Whelan could not see how this could be so.

6.4 *Meeting with Nurses*

6.4.1 Several members of the nursing staff were seen by Dr. Ledwith along with the Inspector.

6.4.2 There are twelve nurses and one and a half job-sharing. Two and a half nurses are on temporary transfer. There are no nursing orderlies. The nurses have general, psychiatric and midwife training. 90% have also post-graduate training. They felt that perhaps there could be a role for nursing orderlies. There is no matron and they would like a hierarchical structure in place. There is limited opportunity to do post-graduate courses and they feel they are not encouraged to do so. The Department of Health, we were informed, encourage post-graduate training but not the Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform. The nursing staff felt they needed further education on current drug problems in order to help prisoners. Outside agencies are brought in for some educational programmes but they felt, especially CPR, that some of their own staff were better qualified to teach this skill than outside agencies. Nurses are not encouraged to teach each other as this is not the “culture” within the prison, we were informed. Nursing staff have skills that are not being used and indeed they feel they are becoming “deskilled” because of the lack of opportunity. Some of the

nurses do not live in the area and they do not have an opportunity to transfer to a prison nearer their homes because of the promotional system. All are members of the Prison Officers Association and they feel there should be a nursing union to represent them.

6.4.3 They do not object to having had prison officer training. They do feel that the standard of care is good but there is room for improvement (“a lot done and a lot more to do,” we were told). The prison has the potential to be a primary care centre and they are anxious to do more to help prisoners to adjust to outside life on their discharge. There is no opportunity, we were informed, to give prisoners health promotion and education. There is no opportunity to meet with the prison management's structure. A medical secretary would be of help. All the foregoing is strongly denied by management. There is a medical secretary assigned to them for reports etc. “Non-nursing” tasks such as urine testing take up a huge amount of their time. Nursing orderlies they feel would be of value here. The number of nursing staff actually on duty at any one time is a big problem and they feel there should be five nurses on day duty and two on nights. This does not happen. It is not unusual for two nurses to be on day duty for 430 prisoners and one nurse to be on duty for 5.00pm-7.00am. They would be happy with five nurses on day duty and two at night management state it was the situation at the time of our visitation. That's a day duty and two on night since the prison opened. Those staffing levels are already in place since the prison opened according to management. Their preparation of drugs, filing, and phone calls take up a lot of their time, we were informed.

There is no policy on needle-stick injuries they informed us. They did feel that padded cells have their uses. The management stated that there is a national policy re needle stick injuries and that they are involved in a number of multidisciplinary meetings. They would like to have multi-disciplinary team meetings. The management state that nurses are deeply involved in number of multi disciplinary groups.

6.5 *Meeting with Psychologists*

6.5.1 Dr. Duffy and Ms. Hume were seen by Dr. Ledwith with the Inspector. Dr. Duffy works in the Midlands Prison on three days a week from 9.00am-5.00pm. Ms. Hume is full-time five days a week, 9.00am-5.00pm. Dr. Duffy informed us that he had worked in the Curragh Prison with sex offenders and "lifers". In the Midlands Prison he does individual work with sex offenders. There is no opportunity to do group work. Ms. Hume has much the same duties as Dr. Duffy. They have a good relationship with the psychiatrist. Clients are referred via the GP with whom they also have a good relationship. They have two clinic rooms and clients who go to sessions lasting from 50 minutes to one hour. A prison officer stays outside the clinic room and they have an alarm button available. They do feel that they are being well looked after by the management who are very supportive. They would like the sex offender programme to happen. Extra staff would be needed for this, also a bigger room. The extra staff would need about a year's training. There is a need for a follow-up for sex offenders. There is little motivation for sex offenders to seek therapy. They also see staff-referred prisoners and it can take about six weeks to be

seen. They would like two more psychologists and the opportunity to do group therapy. They type their own reports. They also are involved in preparing clients for discharge and they are involved with anger management.

6.6 *Meeting with Heads of Service.*

6.6.1 The Inspectorate met the Deputy Governors, Assistant Governors, Chief Officer, Chief Trades Officer and the Industry Manager. Each gave a break-down of the areas of their responsibilities, the number of staff and prisoners for whom they were responsible plus the positives and difficulties they encounter in their everyday work.

6.6.2 The main points of concern were:- the difficulties in getting "outside" people involved and interested in working with prisoners and for agencies to provide a service to the prisoners. The constant battle in preventing illegal drugs from entry to the prison (even parents of prisoners bring in drugs). The shortage of work or work training for all prisoners. The difficulties involved in keeping within a restricted budget and the services/facilities being provided to prisoners within such budgetary restrictions. The various levels of security being imposed within the electronic locking system. The possibility of introducing drug-control dogs into the prison especially at the visitors entrance. Security in general. The need for some of the work/training areas to be brought up to the required standard of certification levels. The necessity for prisoners to have recognised certificates on leaving prison in order to continue such courses on release

and assistance in seeking employment. The efforts to get FETAC qualification standards implemented as well as Fáilte Ireland in the catering section. Waste management was also discussed. The level of staff sick leave is very high with an average of 20-30 staff going sick on Saturdays. The unease among staff at present due to the industrial relations problems nationally and the uncertainty of the permanent location of the staff who were transferred from the Curragh prison upon its closure. They highlighted the need for a church to be provided for the prison as they are operating in a temporary location at present. The chaplain is strongly supporting this requirement.

6.6.3 They outlined that there was no tension in the prison and that the prison was very airy and bright. There are good facilities and it is clean and fresh. The education facilities are very good with a broad range of subjects available to the prisoners. The installation of TVs in the cells as well as kettles have been a wonderful success and helps greatly in reducing tensions and self-harm among the prisoners. They are improving the attendance levels of prisoners in the gyms and introducing "outside" coaching courses in G.A.A. Talks are taking place with other "outside" coaches such as F.A.I. etc. re the possibility of their providing a similar service. This is being done in liaison with the P.E. teacher attached to the prison. The completion of additional security fencing outside the prison's boundary wall has helped considerably in preventing illegal drugs being thrown over into the exercise yards. They are advancing the recycling programme to include paper and clothing, and planning to get a bigger

recycling facility made available. The newly installed I.T. financial system “Oracle” is up and running well.

6.7 *Meeting with the Probation and Welfare Staff*

6.7.1 The Inspector met the senior probation officer, a locum probation officer assigned to the prison for the summer, a clerical officer, plus three other probation and welfare officers.

6.7.2 The prison was assigned four posts and a clerical officer. However, in reality there were always two vacancies, partly due to people on sick leave. The prison ran on just two probation officers on the ground. The prison has roughly 440 prisoners. They now do have four probation officers which means that they have 110 prisoners each. They say it is physically impossible to cope with the needs of that population with such a small group of officers.

6.7.3 They complain about their access to the prison. They say it is difficult because of staffing levels in the prison. They have to be escorted. This means that they may be delayed getting to see a prisoner. The prisoner may be delayed coming to them also and the session they require with the prisoner may be shortened because an escort has to be available for the prisoner and for the probation officer at a specific time. They accept with the shortage of staff that this is inevitable but it does obstruct their work.

- 6.7.4 The school and the probation service are anxious to have a pre-release course running. However, at the moment, this very important course is not available. They used to run drug awareness/general addictions courses which were very successful but this is now being upset because of the staffing problems. So they have to start again because of access problems so that the group can be present at the same time as the staff.
- 6.7.5 AA are locals but the NA have been coming from Dublin only since last October. They come only once a month. There would be a greater attendance if they were more regular and frequent visitors.
- 6.7.6 Regarding rehabilitation, they work with Linkage or probation officers from the country and these are easy to access. There are also community groups which are very active and very helpful. There is a wonderful woman who comes from Dublin and is marvellous at sourcing accommodation for prisoners but access to accommodation is difficult in the country. However, they do their best to rely on local welfare officers. There is also a problem with foreign languages. The main problem is communication. They are not satisfied with the present system which costs €50, as it is very difficult to access appropriate interpreters. They suggest that there should be an arrangement put in place for express access to interpreters for the main languages at least.
- 6.7.7 There is no course for sex offenders. There are a number of them who are segregated. They have been transferred from the Curragh which has been

closed. Some of these prisoners would not engage in treatment as they are in denial and also there is no incentive to do the course. The parole board keep telling them to engage with the course/programme but in this prison there is no such course (even if there were, in view of the fact that some prisoners are in denial and there is absolutely no incentive to take up any such course, it would not work). They also spoke of C division (where the protection prisoners are) being a problem area where they are targeted prisoners.

6.7.8 They are awaiting the appointment of a new head of the probation service. There is obviously need for a planned approach to the problems of this prison and their various services. They should undoubtedly have a pre-release course. Narcotics Anonymous should be encouraged to come more frequently and be more involved.

6.7.9 The Inspector is of the opinion that the sex offenders' course should be reviewed and should be organised by the psychology service with an input by the officers. The present course in Arbour Hill is totally inadequate. The well intentioned work of the parole board will not achieve the desired effect. Incentives and inducements should be considered. It is an international problem to reintegrate such offenders particularly as they come from small communities where they are regarded, with some justification, as "lepers". Also some sex offenders are more likely to reoffend than others.

6.8 *Meeting with a Prisoner in Segregation Area and inspecting Padded Cell/Segregation area*

6.8.1 On the Wednesday I visited "C" wing to see the medical facilities and also to see the punishment block. I availed of the opportunity while I was in the area of crossing over to see the padded cell.

6.8.2 I was informed that the padded cell had not been used since February of this year and it was not planned to use it certainly in the near future.

I went to the punishment cells about which I had been told by a number of the staff including the Catholic chaplain. There are five or six prisoners normally kept in this area. They have no television or radio and are denied all privileges.

6.8.3 I asked to meet one of the prisoners involved. He insisted that I see him alone and that the door be closed. He sat on his bed. He told me he was allowed two half-hour periods in the fresh air. He might go to the gym for half an hour and go to the yard for the other half-hour. One period is in the morning and the other in the evening. The prison officer told me that they got two hours. But I heard from other sources that it was in fact one hour. They are denied everything else. If they cannot read and write, they are left to ruminate on their sad condition. The prisoner to whom I spoke was apparently an experienced man regarding punishment cells. He had been in a number of them in different establishments in this jurisdiction. He complained bitterly about the water. He drew a cup from the cold tap and asked me to drink it. I did not like the smell. I told him truthfully that I had

drunk a great deal of bottled water during the day as it was very warm and couldn't face another glass of water. He insisted that the water was undrinkable. It certainly did not have an attractive smell. I discovered that there is a great problem of limescale in the water in the prison. Infact there are large purification-type machines to try and reduce the limescale. He said that he was very anxious to buy water and that it was readily available in the tuck shop. However, since he was deprived of privileges he could not buy water. A person on punishment in an adjoining cell was able to buy shaving gel and he couldn't understand why he couldn't buy water. I mentioned the matter of bottled water to the very jovial and experienced prison governor. He promised to look into this matter and to solve this particular problem. I thank him for that and many other reasons.

6.8.4 I mentioned the matter of the punishment cells to the doctor, the psychiatrist, the two psychologists and to my own medical adviser, Dr. Ledwith. They all agree that this treatment was definitely anti-therapeutic. It should cease. There is an empty unit designed for disruptive prisoners within the Midlands and this unit might be revised with specifically trained staff to deal with disruptive prisoners.

6.9 *Meeting with the Visiting Committee*

6.9.1 The Visiting Committee were very impressive. Some of them had been on the committee since the foundation of this prison over five years ago but some were new appointees. They were all provided with the 1925 Act and the 1925 Rules which has not happened everywhere. Of course, if you

have an up to date version of the 1925 Rules you will find a lot of them struck out.

6.9.2 The Inspector welcomes the Minister's proposal in relation to the mandatory drug testing of all prisoners and shares the views of the visiting committee that they would welcome significant improvements in the area of drug treatments, detox programmes, etc. The Minister is determined to get rid of drugs prisons. This is a noble aim but one must accept that the ingenuity of addicts is incredible. However, in the Midlands there have been very substantial efforts to prevent drugs arriving onto the landings.

6.9.3 The VC note that an average of 12 offenders can be accommodated on "C1" (punishment area). These offenders can obtain one hour of outdoor exercise per day. The officer on duty states they get two hours. Many of the offenders in this area are sent from other prisons to serve their punishment time here. The VC in their last report stated that 12 offenders are accommodated in this area. There were only six offenders at the time of my inspection.

6.10 *Meeting with a Prison Officer*

6.10.1 I met a very enthusiastic prison officer who specialises in studying "passive response search with dogs". I, as Inspector, would wholeheartedly encourage the introduction of sniffer dogs. The enthusiastic officer has prepared a report (which is being sent to the Governor and management and the Irish Prison Service and the Minister and his Department) which is

a very convincing document. However, I met a prisoner who told me that his mother had been stopped in Strangeways Prison near Manchester in England by a sniffer dog on two occasions. The dog had made an error. It meant that she had wasted money coming from her home in Ireland, travelling and staying overnight in Manchester. She was not allowed to see her son the next day. The officer in question agreed that dogs like humans can be fallible. He states that was one of the reasons why there should be two dogs. He felt that if both dogs with separate handlers at separate times made a positive identification, well then one could say with absolute certainty that drugs were present.

6.10.2 There are difficulties in other jurisdictions where sniffer dogs have been targeted and killed and in at least one case the handler was also killed. The dog normally lives with the handler and becomes part of the family. However, the officer stated that it is part of the job. It is one of the dangers which one accepts in becoming a prison officer.

6.10.3 The officer informed me that in November 2001 the NI Prison Service introduced passive search dogs into the service. The officer with whom I had discussions regarding this issue has contacted various agencies about the supply of such dogs and the training of their handlers. He estimates that it should work out at €7,000 per dog although it does vary considerably depending on the source. His written submission should be placed before the Minister and any other person dealing with this matter. I have a copy.

6.11 *Meeting with prisoners*

- 6.11.1 We had several meetings with prisoners, sometimes in groups and sometime singly. I propose to deal with issues raised rather than identify the source of the complaint. Most who had previous experience of prisons agreed that this was an excellent prison; others disagreed with that opinion. Those who have been here since its inception say that it has improved and say that it continues to improve. These were very positive reactions although naturally there were complaints.
- 6.11.2 The letters that are sent take three or four days or sometimes much longer. They say this is due to the fact that there is only one officer dealing with correspondence. They also complain that it is very difficult to see the probation staff who are very important mainly for contact with family. However, it will be seen under the section dealing with the probation service that their staffing numbers have recently improved.
- 6.11.3 They also complained that management needs to address the rehabilitation problems. There was no proper sentence management. This was agreed by all the prisoners. There was no plan and no real incentives. They state that the Parole Board are very slow and that the Visiting Committee are useless and have no powers.
- 6.11.4 They said that it took four days to see a doctor and that everything is done on a go-slow basis. One prisoner stated that he put his name down to see a doctor and it took six weeks. Another put his name down every

second week and has not yet seen the dentist. They said they cannot get teeth crowned here; one must wait until released. It is alleged that unless you had severe pain at times it took up to six weeks to see the doctor. They complained that it was hard to get to see all of the professional services.

- 6.11.5 The tuck shop could stock a greater variety of goods, particularly non-sugary foods. Unlike some other prisons there is fresh fruit available. Newspapers are available but only at your own expense. Sometimes they are available in the library.
- 6.11.6 The opinion of the Inspector is that the main daily newspapers should be available in the libraries. The report of the Inspectorate should also be available in the library so that prisoners can read the reports on the prison where they are presently staying and indeed might have views which they might wish to communicate to the Inspector on matters specifically within his remit. They have indoor soccer but no handball alley. There are no telephone lines dedicated to Samaritans. A foreign national told me he has no contact at all with his consul. However, he has a group of pals who have taken him under their wing.
- 6.11.7 Some would like to have conjugal rights as in other countries. A prisoner serving a very long sentence may be unable to have a family on release owing to the wife's age.

6.11.8 There should be more phones, (only three phones per wing for over 120 prisoners). Some of their friends work and can ring them only after 7.00pm when they return to their homes. The time allowed on the phones was also too short (6 mins). Two prisoners complained about Beef Stroganoff and yoghurts being an inadequate meal. A number complained about being hungry at night. Some complained about the potatoes being black and not fully cooked. They stated that Ready Brek and honey are out of stock for months and there is only one cereal for breakfast. The meals served here are very bland.

6.11.9 They stated that there was no personal officer dedicated to each prisoner as is the case in England. In that way the officer informs you of all the facilities and opportunities available to you as well as guiding you as to the courses most suitable for you. They also keep you informed of your progress and of decisions re applications for work release, T.R. for family occasions or for transfer to other institutions/open centres. Such an officer would be a benefit in this jurisdiction. They stated that the prison had no proper craftshop and while the workshops are good the space to do work in them is very restricted. The workshops are excellent but moving from A to B is done at a snail's pace.

6.11.10 The education classes are excellent but there is great difficulty getting to and from the school especially if you have to go outside the normal starting times. If you go to see some of the other services in the morning time you should afterwards be in the classroom, but you could be left on

the landing for ages before being brought to the school or you might not be brought at all owing to no officer being available to escort you.

6.11.11 The Chaplains are excellent and the Probation and Welfare Officers are okay (when you can get to see them) but the Welfare Officers do not include the "C" wing prisoners in their anger-management course. Management maintain that they have restricted access to courses.

6.11.12 They outlined the different facilities from prison to prison and asked why there was not uniformity.

6.11.13 They complained regarding the distance between prisoner and visitor in the visiting area and not being able to cuddle your loved one, not even your children. They also stated that there were terrible delays in the waiting room from the time of the visitor's arrival to being called eventually into the visiting area. They stated that they thought the staff were on a type of "go slow" as when they get the visiting docket they take a long time to collect the prisoner and even then on the way to the visiting area the staff member may stop and chat with fellow officers. In the meantime your visitor is still waiting to be called. They also complained that their visitors may not get the full time allocated even if they were delayed being collected for the visit.

6.11.14 They stated that the industrial cleaning work/training has been discontinued due to an incident with a female officer. There is no drug-

free landing in this prison and as a result you are put in the way of other drug abusers and pressure is put on you to get drugs. There is a rule of no smoking on the wings but it is ignored and those who don't smoke have to put up with it.

6.11.15 Complaints related to individuals' sentence management and imposition of another sentence on completion of a sentence served plus poor planning for lifers. Regarding lap top computer, not allowed here and they state are allowed in other prisons. Why the difference? The same applies re "Play Station 2" they say that they are not allowed in this prison, yet available in cells in other prisons. Prisoners being refused TR to attend parents' funerals. The poor facilities for visitors who travel long distances to visit prisoners here - even from England and Africa - no help towards costs and no meals available for them at the prison. Phone cards should be used instead of the present system. No toilet seat or seat covers in cells and having to live and eat meals with uncovered toilet.

6.11.16 Prisoners who work hard in here, some at dirty work such as the recycling area, should get an extra gratuity for same as in other prisons and also their work should be acknowledged when applying for TR. The prisoners on "A" wing (protection) are restricted as to the educational classes available to them as well as being restricted in the workshop areas plus the full use of exercise yards. The possibility of restorative-justice sentences for low-grade sex offenders. The selection of items in tuck shop should be wider. Fans or cooling system installed in laundries in "A"

wing. The installation of Discovery Channel on TV's in cells in place of another channel. If complaint made or if prisoners seek to see the VC they will be transferred to another prison, perhaps to Cork if they are from Dublin . Management strongly regret this statement. Family day for life-sentence prisoners - as in other jurisdictions. Water filters not available to "D" wing prisoners as in some other wings. The supply of suntan cream at state expense for those who have to be out in the yard all day. Poor response to cell call-bell at night-time - waiting for ages for officer to come.

6.11.17 These are most of the issues raised. Some of their complaints can be dealt with by local management while others are headquarters/policy issues. Undertakings have been given by local management that they will look at those within their remit.

6.12 *Meeting with Deputy Head Teacher*

6.12.1 The Deputy Head is a very happy and enthusiastic teacher. She told me that all prisoners are met within 24 hours by a teacher. They try to assess the needs of a prisoner for educational exams. They inform the prisoners fully on what is available. Since many of the prisoners have limited or no literacy skills they are gently tested. They are coaxed into attending school. However, if they fall by the wayside the teacher makes contact with them within a week or two to find out why they gave up school and to encourage them into returning to school. This is quite effective. Also a prisoner might want to change from his first selection of topic to another.

6.12.2 They are satisfied with the accommodation for the school except they need a theatre. Indeed the chaplain needs a chapel. A large room with a moveable screen across the altar fulfils these two important needs.

Teachers in the Midlands have colourful information leaflets regarding the list of classes which include reading, writing, physical education, home economics, computers, music, guitar, woodwork, photography, art, pottery, English, maths, science, metalwork, engineering, technical drawing, construction studies, yoga, Spanish, creative writing, drama, fabric crafts, history, geography, sociology, business studies, French, German, and Irish. The leaflet also gives you details about the certificates or the accreditations which are available. FETAC and FAS certificates were achieved a number of times throughout the year. This means that a student can work at his own pace in class and submit his work for examination when he and his teacher feel he is ready. There is no pressure to do exams.

6.12.3 Classes are normally from 9.15am to 11.15am, 11.15am to 12.15am and 2.15pm to 4.15pm. The education centre is open from September to the end of July. However, even in August there is some teaching available. They issue school news. The latest school news tells me that they have started Batik classes and they are shortly starting "samba" classes. A lot of the literature is provided via a comic so it is easy to engage the reader. A prisoner wrote a play called "The Masterpiece" which was a great success and is now going to be performed at the Dublin Fringe Festival. Another prisoner wrote the accompanying music. The teachers and the students

deserve great credit for this achievement. The work of the school is very impressive.

6.13 *Meeting with the Chaplains*

6.13.1 There is one Catholic chaplain and two lay chaplains namely Fr. Jim O'Connell Mrs. Vera McHugh and Ms. Janet Finlay. The Inspector met Fr. O'Connell and Mrs. McHugh. They expressed concerns about the prisoners contained in the C1 wing. There are usually five or six there at a time. They lose all privileges and have no radio or television or cigarettes. They also complained about the lack of air. Over €1 million has been spent on putting in new cell windows. In some areas still there is no fresh air getting in.

6.13.2 There is no chapel. A room should be provided as a theatre and a church. This was done in a parish by one RC Bishop but another RC Bishop has refused to allow a church to be used for public events. It seems sensible to use a room for many purposes (subject to canon law). Certainly the institution needs a chapel and a theatre. They did not think there was any racism although there may be some against travellers.

6.14 *Meeting with the P.O.A.*

6.14.1 The Inspector met the branch secretary, treasurer and vice-chairman of the local P.O.A. (Messrs O'Sullivan, Cremin and Roe.)

6.14.2 They outlined their fears concerning the additional time their members could be compelled to work with the new proposed working arrangements. They claim that approximately 25% of the staff here do not work any overtime but if the new working arrangements come into operation, those members will be forced to work overtime. They were worried about the staffing levels and the savage cuts in posts that had already taken place over the past three years. They outlined that the present issues were not about money. The dispute is about discipline and the operational difficulties. They claim that morale is low because of the present impasse.

16.14.3 A general discussion took place regarding the prison and they informed me that approximately one third of the prisoners in "C" division are itinerants.

7. Tour of Inspection

7.1 Main Gate

7.1.1 The entrance to the prison is controlled from within the office at the main front entrance gate. This office is designed with glass/perspex windows in a half-moon shape which allows the officers operating there a full view of everyone plus vehicles entering and leaving the prison. The officers operate the electrical control door/gate panels which allows access/exit from the prison and the adjoining car parks. They also operate the console which controls the vehicle entrance to the prison. They are provided with CCTV monitors which allows them view both sides of the gate prior to opening. There are IT monitors installed which allows access to the "pris"

system. Thus the staff can check on prisoner discharges and record new committals. The pedestrian entrance is controlled by two sliding doors and one has to pass through the first door which is locked behind you before the second door is opened. The same procedure applies when one is leaving the prison. The officers operating these doors must satisfy themselves of your identification prior to entrance or exit.

7.2 *Waiting room at main gate*

7.2.1 There is a waiting room with seating adjacent to the main gate entrance and just off this area are two offices with desks and chairs. This area and these rooms are used as interview rooms for prisoners returning off temporary release, or for garda, probation and welfare officer, and prison-staff interviews with prisoners' families, or visitors/contractors calling to the prison re enquiries, etc. The areas were clean and tidy.

7.3 *Visitors' search area*

7.3.1 Visitors entering the prison must walk through a security detector which displays and sounds an alarm if it detects something illegal. There is also an X-ray (luggage type) machine which monitors articles or items in clothing, baggage, etc. The staff also operate a hand-held detector for body detection. All the visitors pass through this procedure on entrance but they may also have to pass through the same security systems on leaving.

7.4 *Detail Office*

7.4.1 This office is located at the rear of the office at the front entrance gates. It is operated by an ACO plus eight officers. The officers work “back-to-back” shifts, which allows for continuity. They detail staff for their various duties, posts, rosters, as well as recording the overtime worked, sick leave, annual leave, etc. It is a good-sized office and gives the appearance of an everyday working office with monitors being operated, papers and books on desks etc.

7.5 *Clock-in/Clock-out area and office*

7.5.1 This area is operated by an assistant chief officer who monitors/supervises the staff’s clocking-in/clocking-out systems as well as operating the office which contains security keys, individuals’ keys, emergency keys, transport keys etc. There is a “pris” computer there which contains the prisoners’ information. The office is quite small with a large viewing panel which allows the ACO to observe the movements outside and establish the identity of those passing in/out keys. There are two security hatches where the keys are passed in and out of the office. There is a security system in place which identifies who left in keys and those to whom keys are issued.

7.6 *Reception area (prisoners)*

7.6.1 The entrance of the reception area is an open space with seating attached to the walls. There is a toilet and wash-hand basin just off the seating area and a drinking-water-fountain facility nearby. A storage facility is also just off the entrance area which contains prisoners’ jumpers, runners, trousers,

sheets, pillow cases, etc. A corridor from this area contains three holding cells which are each fitted with a toilet and whb. The corridor also contains a walk-through security detector and there are three dressing cubicles plus three shower cubicles just off same. There is an office with a counter where all of the prisoners' particulars and property are recorded. Each prisoner is given a tag and locker number and all of their clothing is fitted with this tag number. If a prisoner wishes to wear his own clothes rather than prison clothing, his private clothing is also tagged with the same number. Prisoners are issued with a laundry bag which is tagged with the same number. They place their clothing for laundering each week in this bag for their entire sentence and the tag number identifies the prisoner's name and the clothing within it.

7.6.2 There is a clerk's office beside the reception counter and when new committals arrive the clerk from the office goes to this office and records the prisoners' private cash, jewellery, rings, etc and takes charge of their warrants. There is a facility in the office to store valuables but not cash.

7.6.3 Further on the reception area are the locker rooms which the staff state are of sufficient numbers now for the prisoners' requirements. However, some of the areas had to be altered from the time of the prison opening as the lockers fitted then were too small and resulted in two lockers having to be issued per prisoner. The new lockers are of sufficient size to allow for one locker per prisoner. The record of property and clothing within the lockers is computerised but paper/book records are also in use. Each transaction

of new property or clothing left in or sent out is recorded and all signed off by the prisoner on discharge or transfer. While there may be sufficient lockers for each prisoner there are surplus amounts of items which are stored on top of lockers and the staff state that they have not adequate space or facilities to store them anywhere else. The items stocked on top of the lockers up to ceiling height give the impression of untidiness but obviously this cannot be avoided for the reasons stated. There are another two toilets just off this area. A security X-ray machine for parcels, property, etc is also operated from within the locker room area.

7.6.4 The corridor continues with three further holding cells for containing prisoners prior to discharge. These cells are fitted with sanitary facilities. There is a photograph/fingerprint room with computer and equipment just off the corridor as well as another room for use by the nurse on duty to deal with new committals. The end of the corridor leads into the centre of the prison's cellular area. The entire reception area was reasonably clean but with the lack of storage facilities it was not very tidy.

7.7 *Internal Key Room*

7.7.1 This room was being operated by an ACO at the time of inspection. It contains keys and other security items plus equipment. The back-to-back radios are issued from this room and the radio battery charging machines are stored there. There are records of keys received and issued as well as the staff patrols with the radios. There is a night safe to hold valuables for prisoners received after lock-up hours or for prisoners being discharged in

the early morning. The office is fitted with a computer which has all of the prisoners' particulars, location, wing, etc recorded on same.

7.8 *Cellular Accommodation*

7.8.1 There are four wings known as "A" "B" "C" "D" and each of them is three storeys high. Each of these wings joins at one end an area known as the "circle". The entrance to each of the four wings from the circle is protected by a steel bar grid and gate controls.

7.8.2 There is another cellular accommodation stand-alone building which can cater for 40 prisoners, which was designed to hold disruptive prisoners but this building was unoccupied at the time of our inspection. It is entirely separate from the rest of the prison buildings and surrounded by a high wire-mesh fence.

7.9 *D1*

7.9.1 There is a control area off the circle entrance which contains the servery facility for the prisoners' meals. The opposite side of the landing has two staff toilets plus a sluish room for mops buckets, polishers, etc. On the landing there are four prisoners' showers, 36 cells (34 single person cell and two treble person cell) and a class officer's office.

7.9.2 The office is fitted with a computer which has the "pris" system on same that displays all the necessary information concerning the prisoners. There are various control panels which display fire alarms, security alarms, and

cell button calls. The cell button display can be cancelled within the office but the cell light remains on outside the particular cell door which can be cancelled only by going to the cell door and manually pressing the button there. The control of the electrical power supply to all of the cells is operated from this office as well as the air-vent controls in the roof.

7.9.3 The office also maintains records of razors issued, report books, etc and special equipment for emergencies. There is a letter box for "D" wing prisoners' letters on the wall outside the class officer's office.

7.9.4 The cells are all fitted with a toilet, wash-hand basin, worktop type table, chair, steel-framed bed which is screwed to the floor, TV, kettle and a cork type material notice board for photographs etc on the wall. The cell window is designed with strips of glass (perspex) approx three inches apart within a steel frame. There are no steel bars. The lower part of the window consists of steel grids with holes in them for ventilation purposes. The prisoner can open or shut the grid as he requires. The window allows in a lot of light which gives a great brightness to the cell. The toilet is blocked off with a small wall and out of view when the cell is occupied.

7.9.5 The treble cell is like the single cells with an open archway in the wall dividing the two cells and free access to pass from one to the other. There is a bunk and bed in one section and a single bed in the other. Both beds are secured to the floor and the bunk is also secured to the wall. It has the same equipment and facilities as the other single cells.

7.9.6 At the end of the landing just immediately after the cellular area there is another steel barrier with gates which allows one into the “bubble” section of the landing. In this area there are three recreation rooms (two of which are not being used for security reasons) and a TV room and a games room which is quite large. An exit door leads to the exercise yard which is quite large and suitable for five-a-side soccer matches. The yard is enclosed with wire-mesh fencing and extra protection placed at the top of the high fencing to prevent articles being thrown over the boundary wall into the yard. There are toilet facilities within the yard but their entry doors are boarded up and they are out of use. The Inspectorate inquired as to why the toilets were boarded and were informed that it was to prevent the prisoners from using them as a protection area or a site which was out of view of staff. When illegal drugs were thrown over the wall into the yard, a scrummage would take place among the prisoners and the prisoners would then congregate in the toilets to distribute the illegal “drop”. The staff could not positively identify the culprits with the numbers involved and so prisoners were misusing the toilets as a hiding/protection area. On the day of the inspection there were 27 prisoners in the yard.

7.9.7 The cells, landing, open areas and exercise yard were clean and tidy. Some of the cells were better maintained than others but, overall, all of them were of an acceptable standard of hygiene and tidiness. Quite a few ignored the noticeboard supplied in their cells and pasted the walls with posters, clippings and paper cuttings. Some of the cells have light timber laths fitted to the windows to prevent the daylight from getting in and also

block off the floodlight beams at night-time which they stated prevented them from sleeping. None of the toilets in the cells is fitted with a toilet seat or lid although there are facilities on the toilet bowls for such fittings. The showers have tiles on the floor but no tiles on the walls. The walls are painted.

7.10 *D2 and D3*

7.10.1 There are 34 single cells on each of these landings and two treble cells i.e. 40 prisoners per landing. The design of the landings are the same as those described on D1 with facilities for recreation, games room, TV room, and tuck shop in the "bubble" section of the landings. In order for prisoners on D2 and D3 to go to the exercise yard they proceed down the rear stairs to D1 level and exit to the yard from there. The cells and landings were at an acceptable level of cleanliness and tidiness. Some had posters on the walls of their cells while others were quite bare. The same applied re their beds being made up while others were as they had left them when they arose in the morning.

7.11 *B Division*

7.11.1 B1.

This landing contains 30 single cells, two treble cells, one strip and one padded cell. Its layout is identical to that described on D1 with barrier gates at circle end, then another enclosed barrier gate area where the food servery is located, staff toilets and mop store area on opposite side, then the cellular landing with "bubble" at the end beyond another steel barrier

with gates. Recreation rooms are also within this area and an exit door to an exercise yard.

7.11.2 *B2 & B3*

7.11.2.1 Both of these landings hold 40 prisoners each and the entire wing is of the same design and layout as “D” wing with barrier at circle end and “bubble” at opposite end. The padded cell has the walls and floor entirely covered in protective material and the window is covered with perspex. There is a call button within the cell when activated displays a light outside the door on the landing as well as displaying a light in the control panel in the class officer's office and creating a buzzer sound. There is an air sampling detector fitted with two water sprinklers. Immediately outside the door there is a toilet, shower and wash-hand basin. A mattress and special blanket was placed on the cell floor. The records show that the padded cell is used very rarely, about 2-3 times per year at most. The strip cell has a wooden plinth on the floor with a mattress and special blankets. The window is covered with perspex and a call button system similar to the one in the padded cell. The smoke detector and water sprinklers are also similar to the padded cell. There is a stainless steel wc wash-hand basin and shower in the annex at the entrance to the strip cell but they also issue a plastic chamber pot in the cell.

7.11.2.2 There were 32 prisoners placed in the strip cells in the past six months and the longest period a prisoner remained there was seven days.

7.11.2.3 There is an exercise yard just off "D1" which is used by the prisoners on B wing. The yard is quite large with fence/sheeting surrounding it to prevent articles from being thrown over the boundary wall into it. The toilet doors within the yard are blocked up to prevent entry. There is a permanent officer's observation hut within the yard but it was not in use on day of inspection.

7.12 *A Division (Wing)*

7.12.1 A1

7.12.1.1 There are 35 single cells plus two strip and one padded cell on this landing. Both the strip and padded cells are identical to those described on "B" wing. In the "bubble" section at end of landing there is a multi-purpose room which operates as a games room, recreation room and church for religious ceremonies. There is also a TV room and a gym which has a stepper machine, two rowers, seven resistant weights machines, and a bicycle. There were four prisoners using the gym at the time of our inspection in the afternoon and there had been eight prisoners using it in the morning. There is another recreation room with tables and chairs in it. There is an exit at the end of the landing which leads to a reasonably sized enclosed exercise yard. It is tarmacademed and suitable for a five-a-side soccer match. The toilets within the yard were open. There is also a permanent hut for the officers within the yard but again this was not in use at time of inspection.

7.12.1.2 The landing is of similar design to “D1” wing with servery area, class officers’ office, four showers, cells, then barrier with gate and “bubble” area at the end.

7.12.2 A2

7.12.2.1 There are 34 single cells and two treble cells which accommodate forty prisoners in total on this landing. The end of the landing “bubble” area contains a small laundry which is operated by two prisoners who launder the clothing for prisoners on this landing. The machines being used are the small domestic type which the prisoners state break down regularly. Also within this area is a recreation room which is used at times as an educational classroom. There is a computer room with five computers and each of the computers was being used by prisoners doing Open University courses. There is an art room for educational use and another classroom, neither of which was being used at the time of our visit. The entrance to the landing from the circle end has the same facilities as outlined on D wing i.e. offices, four showers with floors tiled, broom room etc.

7.12.3 A3

7.12.3.1 This landing can accommodate forty prisoners in thirty-six cells which includes two treble cells. There are four showers plus offices, etc at the entrance end from the circle while at the other end “the bubble”. There is an IT training room which had five prisoners in it at time of visit. There is a small laundry room similar to the one on A2 and operated by two

prisoners to cater for the laundry needs of those on this landing. There is a tuck shop, a recreation room with a table tennis table in the centre of the floor, and a pool table on the landing. The landing is bright as the windows in the roof allow a lot of light into the wing.

7.12.3.2 The cells, landings, exercise yard and recreation/educational areas were all clean and well kept. The laundry rooms were quite small and obviously converted for this use to provide for the category of prisoners held within this wing. They were extremely hot on the day of our inspection and if an air fan or vent could be installed in them it might help to reduce the temperature.

7.13 *"C" Division*

7.13.1 C1.

7.13.1.1 The ground floor of this landing is different from the other three wings in that there is a central wall or dividing wall down the centre of the landing. The right-hand side has 15 cells (all single) and are used to accommodate prisoners who have been placed there as a result of misconduct reports. On the day of inspection there were six prisoners in this area. The management state that some of the prisoners are transferred to there from other prisons. The cells are the same size as the ones in the rest of the prison with the bed attached to the floor. The equipment within the cells (toilet & whb) is made of stainless steel material whilst the other cells' equipment is of porcelain material. There is an enclosed exercise yard which is covered by netting. There is an officers' observation hut

within the yard. There are toilets and whb for prisoners' use in the yard which again are blocked up with timber sheeting. Two officers were supervising the prisoners from outside the entrance yard gate at the time of our visit.

7.13.1.2 The left-hand side of C1 is the medical area plus 15 cells. A small number of the cells are larger than the other cells and are fitted with a "hospital type" bed. This is to accommodate prisoners who are ill or who have returned from hospital to recuperate. The entrance to this medical section contains the waiting room, nurses' station, dentistry, treatment room, doctor's surgery, medical record areas, plus a consultation/training room. There is a steel gate at its entrance and it is also divided off from the cells area with another steel gate. In the end section at the "bubble" area there is a recreation room with three machines for gym use. There is another recreation (small) room which is used at times for church services. The landing also has a servery area and three showers (two of which are not used for showers but as storage areas). There is a class officer's office similar to those on the other landings and with the same equipment and facilities i.e computer, records, etc. There were no prisoners in the "medical" cells.

7.13.2 "C2" & "C3"

7.13.2.1 Both of these landings can accommodate 48 prisoners each. In the "bubble" section at the end area of C2 there are a TV room, two card game/recreation rooms and a pool room. In the same area on C3 there is

a pool room, three recreation rooms and a tuck shop. The landings have four showers on each, a class officer's office, with the corridors tiled and the landings bright and airy. The prisoners from both these landings exercise in a tarmacadamed enclosed exercise yard. There is an officer's observation hut within the yard and prisoners' toilets. These toilets were not boarded up like similar toilets in other exercise yards. The toilets were in need of a good cleaning. The landings, cells, recreation areas were all clean and tidy and this particular wing appeared brighter than the others from the roof's skylights.

7.14 *General purpose exercise yard*

7.14.1 This is a very large enclosed exercise yard which is used by different groups of prisoners at various times and by the educational PE teacher plus the other gym staff. It's mostly used on a rota-type basis, but during the summer months when a lot of the classrooms are closed due to teachers' holidays, the PE teacher uses it extensively to play various games and competitions. During the week of our inspection, it was used every day for all different type of games. There was great participation by quite a large number of prisoners who showed great enthusiasm and were very loud in their support for their particular team or individual. The yard can facilitate a five-a-side soccer match, basketball, volleyball, and tennis and it has a four-lane running track around the entire yard. Apparently the yard cannot be used during some of the winter months as its surface becomes extremely slippery with ice.

7.15 *Tuck Shop*

7.15.1 There is a tuck shop on each of the four wings and each is stocked with similar items. The staff rotate among the various shops and the prisoners can get the opportunity to use the shop twice per week. New committals can get shop orders on the day of arrival or if late on arrival, they can get to the tuck shop the next morning. The items on sale are cigarettes, tobacco, cigarette papers, toiletries, soups, ready meals, biscuits, cereals, crisps, snacks, minerals, water, cheese, greeting cards, water-filter/jugs, fruit, multivitamins, tea, coffee, chocolate, snack bars, sauces, cakes, newspapers and magazines. The shop is open from 9.30am-12.00 noon 2.15pm-4.00pm, 5.30pm-7.20pm every day except Tuesday when it is closed for restocking. It is a well stocked tuck shop although there were complaints from the prisoners that they stock a lot of sweet materials and that they cannot purchase cold meat or tinned fish, as in tuck shops in some of the other prisons. When enquiries were made to management on this matter they stated that they were reluctant to allow cooked meats into the cells as they did not have storage facilities (fridges) and therefore meats could cause food poisoning.

7.16 *Staff Restaurant*

7.16.1 There is a very well laid out large staff restaurant which is operated by an outside company. It has over 20 small tables with seating for four to five persons per table. The kitchen and servery area appeared clean and tidy. The prices for the meals appear reasonable and a lot of staff use its facilities. The dining area is bright and airy. Staff to whom I spoke in the

dining area said that the company operating the canteen is very flexible and will provide meals or sandwiches that are not on the fixed menu if requested. They said that they were satisfied with the meals and services provided.

7.17 Prisoners' Visiting Facilities

7.17.1 A corridor leads from the circle (centre) of prison to visiting rooms where an A.C.O. operates from an office on the corridor. Records (cards) are maintained of every prisoner's visits and when the officer outside in charge of the visitors' waiting room telephones the ACO to inform him/her that visitors have arrived for a prisoner, that particular prisoner's card is checked to establish if he is entitled to the visit. If he is entitled then an officer is dispatched to escort the prisoner to the visiting areas.

7.17.2 There are several visiting boxes off the corridor. The first room is for professional visits and has four separate boxes. There is a table or bench in each with a stool permanently fixed to the floor at one side while there are three chairs on the opposite side. The officers patrol outside the doors which have glass in the top part of them but they cannot overhear the conversation taking place. There are no CCTV cameras in any of the professional visiting boxes.

7.17.3 The room next door has ten visiting boxes which are divided off in cubicles and have quite a wide table or bench dividing the prisoners from the visitors. There are no barriers in the centre of the benches but there are

CCTV monitors with two officers supervising at both ends. Generally it is the prisoners from the "A" wing who have their visits in this particular room.

7.17.4 The next room has ten cubicle boxes with a screen from table to ceiling and prisoners have no means of contact with their visitors. The communication is via a screen in the table top. There are cameras also in this room and it is generally used for those on punishment or for those found attempting to pass articles on previous visits.

7.17.5 There are three further rooms which can cater for eight visits at a time in each of them. There is a barrier in the centre of the table but not enclosed to the ceiling. Each of these are also CCTV monitored with staff situated at each end supervising. These three rooms normally accommodate prisoners from "B", "C", and "D" wings.

7.17.6 There is another "closed visits" box containing five cubicles and barriers from table top to ceiling. There is no contact between visitor and prisoner. Communication is via a grid with holes in it on the table top.

7.17.7 Outside the visiting rooms at the visitors' entrance there is a waiting area with seating and toilet facilities. An officer controls the entry/exit doors as well as recording the prisoner's name, the number of visitors for that prisoner, visitors' entry and exit. On the evening of our inspection there had been 35 visits on that Tuesday.

7.17.8 Beside the ACO's office on the corridor leading from and to the prison, there is a search room where a number of prisoners are searched at random or if there were suspicions that something had been passed on the visit. There was a record of six searches taking place that day and nothing prohibited found. The entire visiting areas, corridor, waiting room, etc were clean and tidy.

7.18 *Visitors' waiting room/creche/officers' office, control, observation area*

7.18.1 On entering the prison driveway from the main road an observation/control area is seen in the centre of the roadway with entry to the left of the post and exit by the right. There is a visitors' car park on the left and further on there is a staff car park on both the left and right of the prison's entrance gate. The officer in charge in the observation/office controls the automatic electronic entrance gates to all three of the car parks.

7.18.2 Visitors give their names to the officer and state to whom they wish to visit. If it is their first time visiting they must produce an ID with their address. These are recorded on computer and if they come on subsequent visits their particulars are already recorded and no further ID is required. There are lockers provided in the waiting area which visitors must use to store buggies, child chairs, prams, handbags, parcels, phones, etc. They are issued with a key for the locker which they return to the officer who gives them a tag with corresponding number. When the visit is over they return the tag and the officer issues the corresponding key. The officer also takes in money and property from visitors for prisoners and issues a receipt re

the transaction. Articles or property being left out by prisoners is processed to the visitors in the same way. When visitors give in their name to visit a prisoner, they are issued with a number and when the visit is ready to proceed the visitors are then called by number (not name) to enter the visiting area. The waiting area is quite large with over 50 seats attached to the floor and large windows on both sides which allow in great light. There is a section of the waiting area divided off for use as crèche facilities. There are small tables, chairs, toys, books, and children's art work facilities within it. In fact some of the children's drawings are displayed on the walls and the St. Vincent De Paul Society members who operate this run little competitions in art work for the children. The S.V. P. staff also provide a tea, coffee, soup, etc facility within another section of the waiting room. A child-care worker is part of the St. Vincent de Paul staff. Just off the waiting area are toilets, wash-hand basins and baby-changing facilities. The floors are tiled and it is a bright, airy, cheerful, well kept waiting room.

7.19 *Console Room*

7.19.1 The console room operates 24 hours per day and there was an ACO plus five staff on duty there at the time of our visit. It is a high-security area and there is a CCTV camera on the entrance door plus a call button system to establish one's identity. There are a number of other security procedures to follow before gaining entry to the console room.

7.19.2 The numerous security monitors are observed from here as well as the CCTV monitors within the prison wings, visiting area, grounds, etc. The

controls for the video and TV stations within the prison cells are operated from here as well as the prisoners' phone system. The prison's alarms/fire/security/call bells display panels as well as maintenance faults are constantly being recorded on computer. There are touch-screen monitors which display the maps of the prison which can focus or highlight any particular area needing attention. The public telephones plus the staff's back-to-back radio systems and location areas are constantly reporting to and from the consul room. The audio-visual control-monitors of the various gates, entrance or exit areas, corridors, etc are operated from this point and if a door/gate, etc is left open beyond the set time an alarm will sound. There is also a facility within the system whereby the person in the consul room can communicate with the person at gates/doors, etc that have the audio-visual facility attached. There is also a very modern security lockings system in place known as the "Atlas Security Systems" which controls the entire locks for the prison. This unique system allows for the selection of lockings, scheduling and zoning as required. There is a night-duty-tour-of-duty monitoring and recording system which displays the officer's patrol on the landings plus the recording station's impressions at the appointed time.

7.19.3 There are other rooms off the main console room area which have back-up machines for all of the computer systems.

7.19.4 The console room was fitted with the most modern technology available at the time of building. It is very impressive. The areas were clean and tidy

and the staff operating at the various stations within the room were kept busy observing monitors, answering phones, operating the security systems/ various lockings plus the constant flow of information/direction coming and going on the “walkie-talkie” system.

7.20 *Library*

7.20.1 The library was being operated by two officers at the time of our visit and there were up to ten prisoners within this very large room. Some were browsing through books, some were seated at tables reading books, while others were reading the daily newspapers. There were computers there where prisoners could look up information on particular books for educational purposes. The library has a law book section plus talking books, easy learning section, tapes, discs, videos, dvd's plus approx 8,000 books in stock. It facilitates between 25-30 prisoners per day and is open Monday-Friday 8.00am-5.00p.m., closed Saturdays and open for “A” division prisoners on Sundays from 8.00am-7.00pm. They purchase the three daily newspapers and some of the weekly/monthly magazines. They bring books once per week to prisoners on “C1” class who are deprived of association. The entire stock plus lending transactions are recorded on computer. The section of the law books requested are photocopied and issued as they found if they gave out the hard copy it generally was returned with the particular pages torn or removed. The library also facilitates prisoners coming into it and playing draughts/chess or other such type of board games. They have guest speakers who come in from the “outside” about four times per year. They work in conjunction with the

prison's educational section and have constant communication with the teachers. They are attached to Laois County Library and generally about once per year they have a complete overturn of books and stock. [This is unusual as most prison libraries are attached to the Dublin City Libraries under the auspices of the prisons' educational section but this library operates independently of this system.] It appears to be a very well run library. It has great space, it is bright and it has a relaxed atmosphere about it. The staff and prisoners present had good rapport with each other.

7.21 *Kitchen*

7.21.1 The kitchen is operated by two industrial supervisors, six assistant industrial supervisors and 20 prisoners. The staff work on a back-to-back roster system in order to have continuous cover and there is an average of 12 to 14 prisoners daily working there as the others attend education, workshop activities or gyms. There were 14 prisoners working there on the day of our visit. The kitchen produces over 1200 meals per day and the newly approved national 28-day-cycle prison menu is in operation. They also cater for special dietary requirements.

7.21.2 The kitchen has achieved the "Q" mark award each year since the prison opened in 2000. It is also subject to the Department of Health & Children's (Environmental Health Section) Officers' inspection which they carry out at least two to three times per year and have achieved confirmation from them each time that they operate the kitchen above the required standard.

7.21.3 The prisoners receive an introductory training course prior to commencing work in the kitchen in the field of hygiene, food safety, storage, health and safety, etc and they are also passed as medically suitable by the doctor. The kitchen operates the “HACCP” (hazard analyses critical control point) procedures in that they ensure that the purchase, delivery, storage, cooking, handling of the food, etc is done to the highest standard and hazards eliminated as far as possible.

7.21.4 The kitchen is laid out with the cooking island in the centre of the floor and the worktops, sinks, pots/pans, storage presses, etc around the walls. The fridges, store rooms, cold rooms are all off the kitchen area and the delivery area is close to the front main entrance to the prison. The deliveries are made directly to the kitchen and not to the stores first and from there to the kitchen which is the practice in some other prisons. The reception area for the deliveries is tiled and they have arranged to have the bottom portion of the walls covered in stainless steel to improve the hygiene and prevent the tiles from being chipped by delivery trolleys.

7.21.5 The storage areas are located between the delivery area and the main kitchen. The storage consists of a chemical store for cleaning materials, mops, papers, etc, a dry good store for cereals, tinned fruit and vegetables, a cold vegetable store, freezer stores for ice cream, chips, etc and refrigeration store for milk, butter, meat, etc. All of these stores were most hygienically maintained.

7.21.6 The kitchen operates as a “team effort” with the staff and prisoners at the various locations all doing their own particular task. When prisoners become efficient and trained in that particular area they then move on to other tasks and in doing so gain experience in all aspects of cooking. Most of the vegetables are purchased pre-prepared. They place the cooked meats and vegetables in large heated containers which are then wheeled to the various wings of the prison. They transfer the contents into containers at the servery area on the wings and “plate” the meals from the servery area. The prisoners from the wings file past the servery area with their trays, receive their meal and return to their cells. There is no communal dining. They serve about 450 meals at a time in approx 15-20 minutes.

7.21.7 The whole kitchen/cooking/serving/operates very smoothly. The entire areas were very clean. The staff and prisoners all wore whites. One of the areas of discontent that was mentioned to the Inspectorate related to trained kitchen staff when off and recalled back to work on overtime. They may not be placed in the kitchen when working overtime but may be out on the landings. Their place in the kitchen may be taken by an untrained officer who has no experience or interest in working there. They felt that it did not make sense to have a trained officer performing disciplinary duties while the untrained discipline officer was placed in the kitchen for that day. The Inspectorate were of the same opinion and management also share this opinion.

7.22 Workshops

7.22.1 The training workshops are located in a factory-type setting with the various work training shops operating within. It is a two-storey, stand-alone building.

7.22.2 Building Skills /Training Workshop

7.22.2.1 The building skills workshop is managed by two assistant industrial supervisors and can cater for 14-15 prisoners at a time. There were 11 prisoners there at the time of our visit. The shop is divided into several cubicles or bays with the different skills being imparted by the instructors. The skills involved included the erection of partition walls, the erection of frames, studding, slabbing, plastering/skimming the plasterboard, (hardwalling) painting, decorating, tiling (both walls and floor), click wood flooring and wallpapering, (although they are just beginning the wallpapering skills).

7.22.2.2 The shop is a recognised FETAC training centre and in 2004 there was a throughput of 42 prisoners of whom 26 achieved accredited certificates. The skills learned in this workshop are very useful to prisoners on release. Some of the prisoners take on their own projects within the shop and erect, build or install the item from start to finish. One prisoner was working on the installation of a fireplace with a decorative chimney breast over it. Another prisoner had produced a beautiful picture of a lady from various coloured tiles or mosaic. Two prisoners were busy tiling the wall of a cubicle and both informed me that they never tiled before. Another

prisoner was working on a “click” wooden floor, installing it in one of the bays while another prisoner was installing a different type of wooden floor. The prisoners were all very interested in their work and enjoyed it. They also do projects/work for the prison or for some of the other workshops and for this work they felt that they should get additional financial reward as it related to prison maintenance.

7.22.2.3 The workshop is quite big but the staff maintain that they require bigger space to expand the facilities and to relocate some of the items within the work area.

7.22.3 Carpentry

7.22.3.1 The carpentry work/training workshop is managed by one industrial supervisor plus two assistant industrial supervisors. They have up to 20 prisoners “on their book” but have a daily average of about 14-15. There were 16 there on the day of our inspection. The shop is divided into various sections with workbenches, lathe, timber-cutting machines, etc at various locations. It is now a recognised FETAC training centre as the staff who operate it are qualified instructors. Prior to 2005, this shop was operated by non-industrial training staff and therefore did not receive certification recognition.

7.22.3.2 They make small items such as dolls’ cots, dolls’ play houses, bedside lockers, lamps, salad bowls, candle holders, harps, bird boxes, wine racks, etc. The craftsmanship displayed in the items they produce is

outstanding especially in the lamps and bowls. The prisoners can give out the articles made within the shop to their friends or relatives and there is a small charge towards the cost of the timber. The monies received for these items go towards purchasing toys, etc for the crèche in the visitors' waiting room outside the main gate.

7.22.3.3 The staff highlighted the shortage of space within the shop especially the storage facilities. They outlined the restrictions imposed on them as result of not having a separate area for doing sanding and polishing. Dust within a workshop is a problem for polishing work. There is a gate at the end of the workshop which leads into an open area. The Inspectorate recommends that this space/area be looked at with a view to seeing if the shop could be facilitated with this extra space .

7.22.4 Metal Workshop

7.22.4.1 There were 12 prisoners in this work/training workshop at the time of our visit. It is managed by two assistant industrial supervisors. They have 9-12 prisoners working there daily. They make gates, drip trays, line poles, flower baskets, lamp stands, tool boxes, as well as stainless steel work. They made the stainless steel covering for the bottom of the tiled walls in the delivery area of the kitchen as well as other work around the prison. The prison's horticulture work/training area uses a lot of the flower pots/containers that are made in the metal shop.

7.22.4.2 They instruct the prisoners in the various types of welding such as electric, mig, tig, gas and manual area. They also instruct them in making the various angles and designs plus the cutting of the metal. Prisoners can also make their own article and send it out to their families or friends. There is a deduction taken from his cash or gratuity for the cost of materials used. The instructors deliver the FAS integrated assessment course but it is not a FETAC recognised training centre as yet.

7.22.4.3 The lack of space for the storage of iron and for storage of articles completed was raised by the staff and they are seeking to have the workshop extended. Perhaps management may look at this possibility. They also raised the issue of further training courses especially in the field of sheet metal work. There is also a lathe within the workshop for the past five years which was never used as the staff never received instructions in its use. The inspectorate recommends that these issues be looked at with a view of further training for the staff concerned.

7.23 *Laundry*

7.23.1 The laundry workroom is a large airy building with two officers operating same. The officers' roster accommodates the staff working back-to-back hours so that when one is off the other is on, thus continuity of the laundry's operation is maintained. It is intended that the officers' posts will become industrial supervisor positions. They had 12 prisoners working there which is the number they have all of the time. The area is fitted with nine industrial washers and nine industrial dryers. They meet the laundry

requirements of the entire prison. They operate the laundry bags with identifying tags that were issued to the prisoners at reception on committal. Each bag's contents are recorded and the same clothing returned after each wash. They have assigned landings for each day's wash. The machines are automatic with the minimum number of settings and the wash powder is also fed automatically. It appears to be a well run laundry, the staff and prisoners were busy working and the area was clean.

7.24 *Horticulture/garden/grounds*

7.24.1 This area is managed by an industrial supervisor, two assistant industrial supervisors and a daily average of seventeen prisoners. They grow the flowers from seeds and have glasshouses/plastic tunnels to start them off. They then transfer them into trays and place them outside. From there they are then planted in the ground/flower beds. They also have vegetable gardens and fruit gardens. The prison is situated on a 26-acre site and the horticulture staff are responsible for the grass cutting, the flower beds, flower boxes, flower baskets, plus the cleanliness/tidiness of the walkways between the various units and the exercise yards. There is a spectacular array of flowers in the flower beds, boxes and the hanging baskets all along the entrance walkways. It is a most pleasant sight and the lawns are also very well maintained. They have some prisoners working at basket weaving making baskets for flower containers as well as others weaving "wind breakers" from flexible lengths of light timber or sticks. The staff deliver the FAS integrated assessment course which is certified by TEAGASC and endorsed by FETAC. There were 14 prisoners who

received an accredited certificate in this area in 2004. It is a very impressive work area and there was a great sense of achievement among both the staff and prisoners to see the flowers flourish from seeds to full bloom.

7.25 Recycling Centre

7.25.1 The recycling centre is operated by two officers and six prisoners. They take all of the waste bins from the prison, offices, kitchen, etc and separate the contents into different sections. e.g. paper, cardboard, bottles, plastic, tins, etc. The contents of each of the different bundles are crushed and baled and are then collected by an outside company. The centre is operated in an open-front-type shed and yard while upstairs there is a store where washing/disinfecting liquids are stored. The officers' office is adjacent to the stores as well as a toilet and whb. The officers raised the problem of no showering facility within the area and with the type of work involved they state that they need such. The Inspectorate recommends that a showering facility should be made available to them.

7.25.2 Despite the type of work involved in the recycling unit, the area was very neat, tidy, and well maintained.

7.26 Craft shop

7.26.1 Two assistant industrial supervisors manage this shop and have eight to eleven prisoners daily with them. There were nine prisoners there on the day of our visit. The shop operates mostly timber-based crafts such as

engraving, making jewellery boxes, children's chairs, small tables, draught boards, window boxes, bird tables as well as painting the items produced. They also make names for gardens and figures for cribs from plaster of paris type material. It is not an FETAC accreditation centre as yet but they hope to get enrolled in the coming year.

7.27 Computer Workshops

7.27.1 There are two computer workshops in the upstairs section of the factory complex. [There is also a computer shop on A division.] There was an officer and seven prisoners in one of the computer shops and the prisoners within it were mostly from the "C" wing. They were doing the basic computer skills (introduction to computers) course. They have the theory driving test programme also which they find very helpful if they wish to apply for a driving licence on release. They can also do a more advanced computer course once they have gained the necessary basic knowledge.

7.27.2 The second computer shop has one assistant industrial supervisor managing same with six to nine prisoners on the books. Generally nine prisoners per day are engaged in this shop. These computer classes are the same as in the other computer shop by starting off at the basic level and going up to FETAC certification level in word processing, keyboards, desk top publishing, spreadsheets, database, file management, etc. They also run the Fáilte Ireland basic food safety skills course which is an online food safety awareness course. The shop also produces almost all of the forms, booklets, and books for general use throughout the prison. They

also produce a work and training newsletter which is distributed to all of the prisoners within the prison.

7.27.3 The day of our inspection of the upstairs section of the workshops/factory was very warm and there were complaints re lack of ventilation. It was extremely hot and uncomfortable to work within and the Inspectorate recommends that local management/trades section look at the problem to see if fans or such other cooling system could be installed.

7.28 *Health and Safety Room*

7.28.1 This classroom is operated by an assistant industrial supervisor. It was empty on the day of our visit. He gives classes to prisoners on health and safety issues especially prisoners on assignment to the workshop areas.

7.29 *Industrial Cleaning*

7.29.1 The industrial cleaning work/training workshop is operated by one assistant industrial supervisor and has four to five prisoners at each six-week training course schedule. The area where the instructions are given is divided into purpose-built sections. In one section toilet bowls (of different designs), wash-hand basins, water taps, etc are installed, another is a tiled area, another is a wooden floor area, another area is covered in linoleum and in another area a carpet is laid on a cement floor area. They are in the process of building a few steps at present with the view of showing the prisoners the different areas of steps that need to be cleaned and the various different coverings that are placed on steps. The rest of the area is

laid out in classroom format with flip charts, etc. The course covers the following topics: chemical components (cleaning) mixture, quantity, strength, different usage on different surfaces; machine operations - safe use, health and safety matters in the operation of the machines, maintenance of the machines; changing of the various discs/scrubbers or polishers on the head of the machine, mop cleaning, different usage in various areas (different mop for floor than one used in toilets), buffing and polishing, stripping off of old polish, drying, preparing and applying new polish; cleaning techniques re toilets, wash-hand basins, baths, taps, cleaning tiles both wall and floor plus the joints between each tile and overall safety issues. The instructions given are to the standard that qualify for a certificate issued by the Irish Institute of Cleaning and Science, provided the prisoners reach the required standard. Those who receive a certificate can apply for jobs in the cleaning industry outside and the certificate is recognised as a qualification in this field. The instructor stated that there were great openings in this area on the outside and that car valeting was now becoming a growth industry.

7.30 *Gym (in factory area)*

7.30.1 There were two instructors and 19 prisoners in this gym at the time of inspection. The staff informed us that this gym was open morning and afternoon, seven days a week with 15-20 prisoners involved in each session. It is a very large airy area fitted out with 20 CV pieces of equipment, 12 resistance machines, bicycles, steppers, etc. The area was originally intended to be used as a bakery and was fitted out accordingly

with the necessary equipment. However, the bakery never came into operation and the equipment was moved to a section of the building and a wall/partition erected, blocking it off and the vacant area turned into a gym. There are no changing rooms or showers attached to the gym so on completion of a session the prisoners have to return to their landings to get a shower. It appeared to be working very well at the time of inspection with the prisoners involved at the various machines.

7.31 *Gym (near sports hall)*

7.31.1 This is a purpose-built gym erected after the prison was opened. It was being operated by two instructors who had 22 prisoners in it at the time of our visit. The staff informed us that they take 15-25 prisoners per session but could take a maximum of 30 prisoners. This gym is also operating seven days a week. It is equipped with eight resistance machines, eleven C.V. machines, two punchbags, and mats on the floor to do exercises.

Just off the gym there is a changing room with seating all around the walls and off this room are eight showers, toilets and wash-hand basins. The areas were clean and tidy but obviously in use with clothes on the seats, showers in use, etc.

7.32 *Sports hall*

7.32.1 This is a very large impressive sports hall suitable for basketball, five-a-side soccer, volleyball, circuit training, badminton, etc. It has a special floor which is lined for all of those sports. The ceiling is of a special material that

reflects the sound back down towards the floor. It is used by the PE teacher and by the gym instructors but it was not in use at the time of our visit. There are two small storage facilities off the main hall as well as showers, toilets and wash-hand basins. There are not sufficient numbers of showers (only four) to cater for the numbers using the hall at a time. Upstairs at the entrance to the hall there is a gym which is used for staff training. It has mostly weights within it with a toilet and shower off it. It is a reasonably sized room. Both the hall and gym were clean and well kept with the equipment and weights, etc all around where they had been used.

7.33 *Censor Office*

7.33.1 There was one officer working in the censor office when we visited. The office was a reasonable size with two desks and computers. They record all of the incoming and outgoing post on computer as well as recording the registered post in a book. They also receive property for prisoners (mostly clothing) which is also recorded. They receive an average 120-130 letters per day for prisoners and the same approx going out. The postboxes are on each wing for prisoners to post their letters, so the censor has a key and goes around each wing and collects them.

7.33.2 It was raised with the officer that a lot of complaints from the prisoners related to the slowness of the post and the delay in receiving letters. The officer denied that there was undue delay and stated that it was the same day delivery. However, on further questioning re a tray of letters untouched within the office he stated that there were times when there was a backlog.

In fact the letters in the postboxes on the wings on that day had not been collected and as it was late Friday afternoon, they would not be collected until after the weekend. The staff then outlined that the censor office was one of the posts to be cut if there were a staff shortage on the day and consequently was often cut. They said that in such cases an officer would be put in the censor office on Saturday or Sunday to clear the backlog.

7.34 Trades Staff workshops/facilities

7.34.1 There are nine trades officers plus a chief trades officer grade one and a chief trades officer grade two attached to the prison. They operate from workshops outside the main prison building with the workshops on the ground floor level and their (chief trades) offices upstairs over the workshops. They are amalgamating with the trades staff in Portlaoise Prison under a new agreement. These workshops and offices will then be shared by both prisons' staff. Their facilities are very modern, bright and airy. They carry out some repairs or make articles for prison needs within the workshops.

7.34.2 Near to the workshops there is another building which contains large water storage tanks with a facility for treating all of the water used in the prison. (It softens the supply.) A sample of the water from these containers is sent out to a laboratory for testing on a regular basis to ensure that the water used for domestic purposes complies with and conforms to the regulated standards.

7.35 *Staff locker rooms*

7.35.1 There are two large locker rooms (a male and a female room) to cater for the staff's needs. We were informed that there are sufficient numbers of lockers for all the staff. Beside the locker rooms there is a games room, a restroom, showers and toilets. They were neat and tidy on the day of viewing.

7.36 *Offices and Stores*

7.36.1 There are two offices in the main administration building: one deals with all aspects of the prisoners' needs (the general office) and the other one deals with the prison's personnel matters (human resource office). The general office deals with prisoners' warrants, files, applications to courts or to headquarters for TR etc, cash, gratuity, tuck shop, parole board, medical requirements, (appointments), sex offenders' programme, photographs/fingerprints/tagging. It is managed by one clerk 1 grade and seven clerk 11 grades. They have the same problem with the programme within the computer re calculating of sentences as other prisons in that if a prisoner returns off T.R. late in the evening and it is not recorded until the next day after his return, the calculations of his release date may not be accurate and they have to check it manually.

7.36.2 The HR office is operated by two clerk 11 grades, and the clerk 1 grade operates between both the general and HR office. They deal with staff pay, allowances, applications, files, sick leave etc. They say the computers work satisfactorily. There is a new system coming into operation whereby

when staff clock in at the main gate and all of their entries/exits are recorded, this record via computer will go to the finance section, in Killarney, Co. Kerry and the cheques issued accordingly. The record at present is done manually and forwarded to Killarney in sheet format but this will be discontinued when the new system is up and running. This should reduce the workload in the office somewhat.

7.37 *Stores*

7.37.1 The stores are managed by six clerk II and one clerk I grade. They look after the needs of the Midlands Prison, Portlaoise Prison and Beladd House staff training centre. They arrange for the provision of the victualling for the Midlands and Portlaoise Prisons. Their stores are quite large, with free-standing-shelving storage facilities placed down the aisles and a fork-lift to put up and take down goods from the upper shelving. A section of the stores' work relates to the maintenance needs of both prisons in ordering the delivery of sand, cement, plus whatever other such building/repair needs required.

7.37.2 The offices and stores are similar to any other working offices with staff at their various desks operating computers, etc. They were clean and tidy but working centres with papers, files, phones, in full use.

7.38 *Separation Unit*

7.38.1 This is a stand-alone unit designed to accommodate disruptive prisoners. It is unoccupied at present and apparently there are plans to hand it over to

the Governor of Portlaoise Prison. In fact, its location is closer to Portlaoise Prison than the Midlands. It consists of five units with eight cells in each unit, total capacity for 40 prisoners. There are three padded cells. There is a small gym, education room, library room, chief officer's offices, visiting area, with all closed visiting facilities, three class officers' office, four small exercise yards, reception area, surgery within it. So it is almost self-contained (no kitchen) and fitted with special cell doors (stronger than normal) and its design is like the Midlands prison's, i.e. the cellular accommodation with "glass bubble" at the end of each unit which allows in plenty of light. The sanitary fittings within the cells are of stainless steel type to prevent breakages as far as possible.

8. *Health and Safety (especially fire aspect of Health and Safety)*

- 8.1 The Inspectorate met the senior staff responsible for health and safety within the prison. They brought the fire plan plus all of the records relating to the servicing of equipment, dates such was carried out, visits of fire brigade personnel, etc with them. The staff's health and safety representative was not available as he was away on holidays. He sent a written apology for not being able to be present which is fully understandable and acceptable.
- 8.2 There is a ring water mains supply surrounding the prison and there are 13 fire hydrants off the mains. The hydrant locations are clearly marked with their steel lids painted yellow and "hyd" sign displayed very visibly adjacent to the hydrant. The mains water supply serves two purposes. It is the

domestic supply for the prison's use as well as for fire hose use. It is the local town's water supply with huge back-up storage tanks located in Portlaoise Prison that serves both prisons. The stan pipe connections and hose reels are located in containers that are clearly marked. There are also fully charged hose reels located at both ends of each landing inside the prison which can reach the furthest point of each landing. There are also dry risers installed within each wing of the cellular accommodation areas. The cell doors are fitted with an inundation facility to allow a fire-hose reel head access.

8.3 A total of 308 fire extinguishers of different varieties and types are located at strategic points throughout the entire buildings. Their locations are marked on the fire and emergency plan. The chief trades officer also has a record of their locations.

8.4 Smoke detectors are installed in the cells, offices, school, stores, workshops, etc. The type installed in the cells is the air sampling model while the offices and stores are fitted with the obstacle/heat head type. There is also a smoke beam detection system installed in all the main wings of the prison. A smoke extraction (motorised) system is installed which is a cove ventilation and fan extraction model. The roofs are fitted with vents which are linked into the smoke extraction detection system and open automatically once smoke is detected. The fans and vents can also be operated manually from the control panel switches in the class officers' office, the chief officers' office or the chief trades officer's area. There are

no fire doors installed on the landings or stairwells but there are steel security doors in these areas which can be closed manually in the event of a fire. The new gym has been fitted with fire doors which close automatically when smoke is detected in the system. As well as smoke detectors there are water sprinklers installed in all of the padded and strip cells. There are no water sprinklers in any of the other cells.

- 8.5 On discovery of a fire, there are break glass units (break glass and push button to activate the alarm) installed at various locations throughout the prison. The assembly points for an evacuation are well displayed at various points (mostly exercise yards) throughout the buildings. All of the designated fire exit doors have an exit sign which is reasonably visible. They are not illuminated. There are various exits from the landings and emergency exit doors in all of the buildings. The officers with radios (walkie-talkies) can also activate an emergency from their radio emergency button.
- 8.6 In the event that the smoke detectors detect smoke or if the break glass unit is activated, an alarm bell will sound within that particular area or building. The alarm will also display in the control panels in the class officer's office the CO's office, the chief trades officer's office, as well as in the central control console room. There is also a fire siren which sounds throughout all the buildings if activated. The siren alarm is also linked into the same control display panels and the console room. There are

instructions in the fire and emergency plan book as what to do in the event of the alarms being activated.

8.7 There is an emergency lighting system installed throughout the buildings and there is a back-up generator in the event of a power failure. The emergency lighting fittings are protected in areas where prisoners have access.

8.8 A considerable amount of the servicing of the firefighting/emergency equipment is carried out by outside contractors, and management have records outlining the dates such were done. The following is a breakdown on servicing carried out by contract:-

Fire extinguishers: twice yearly, last one done 13/11/04

8.9 S.C.B.A. (breathing apparatus including cylinders tested) once per year, last done October 2004

8.10 Smoke detectors one week per month, done 18/3/05

8.11 Control panels/re smoke detectors one week per month, done 18/3/05

8.12 Smoke extraction systems once per year, done 20/06/05

- 8.13 Break glass units alarms/emergency exit doors, one week per month, done 18/3/05
- 8.14 Hose reels and fittings twice per year, done 13/11/04
- 8.15 Cell extraction system and make up air, one week per month, done 18/3/05
- 8.16 The trades staff attached to the prison carry out the following checks weekly or monthly, or daily if damaged:
- 8.17 B.A equipment and cylinders done monthly as well as hydrants and dry risers.
- 8.18 Hose reels and fittings, emergency exit doors, emergency lighting, break glass units, alarms, faults, smoke extraction tests, extinguishers, all checked weekly. They also run the dry risers twice yearly as well as being checked weekly.
- 8.19 Regarding fire evacuation fire drill exercises taking place, only one was carried out in 2001 in the "C" division and none has taken place since. The management state that they intend carrying out two in the next six months.
- 8.20 The instructors in C & R (six) plus B.A. (seven) received refresher training during the year but no refresher training was given to staff in the area of control and restraint phase 1, 2, or 3 or the B.A.,. No familiarisation training was given to staff in the use of hose reels, stan pipe connections,

fire extinguishers or evacuation procedures. Management state that all new staff to the prison received an introductory course which included fire/emergency procedure and were made familiar with the firefighting, fittings, etc plus their location. Prisoners on committal receive a general explanation re their cell smoke detection system. Management stated that they left a leaflet in their cells re fire precaution/prevention but that the prisoners kept destroying them as soon as they were placed there. So the prisoners now receive no written instructions regarding fire prevention, fire drill evacuations procedures or instructions to follow in the case of an emergency. This is something which should be looked into as a matter of urgency. The lack of staff training is a major problem which should be rectified as soon as possible. (Familiarisation in the use of emergency equipment plus fire drill exercises is another matter needing urgent attention.)

8.21 They state that the fire and emergency plan book is being revised and some sections are being reduced to pocket size so that each member of staff can be issued with one and familiarise themselves with what it contains and the steps to follow in an emergency.

8.22 The local fire brigade personnel have been in the prison on familiarisation tours on several occasions, the last one being in November 2004. They generally make two visits per year. They bring the fire tender with them to familiarise themselves with the hydrant locations. The water pressure is seven bar which is compatible with the brigade's engines. The prison

management and the fire brigade personnel have plans in place, if called in an emergency, re drawings of prison, facilities, entry and exit, evacuation procedures, hose pipe connections, hose reel locations, etc.

8.23 Prisoners are allowed to smoke in their cells, exercise yards and recreation rooms but are not supposed to smoke anywhere else. There are designated areas where staff are not allowed to smoke. Prisoners can have matches and cigarette lighters in their cells. The stores department have a purchasing policy that all cell furnishings including the bedding/duvets, etc conform to flammable standards. The duvets are changed yearly as the flammable resistant requirements become ineffective after 54 washes. The same applies to the spl clothing in the strip and padded cells which were changed last February. None of the paint purchased for use in the prison is oil-based, therefore the storage of paint does not require a separate store. Fire retardancy checks have been carried out on the slips of board in the cell windows which prisoners place there to prevent the light from getting into their cells.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 That a second surgery be provided so that both doctors can hold surgery at the same time. (Paragraph 6.1.1 pg 28)

- 9.2 That computerisation of medical records in the doctors' surgery be undertaken. (Paragraph 6.1.1 pg 28)

9. 3 That an O.P.G. (X-ray machine) be installed in the dental surgery area of either the Midlands or Portlaoise Prison for prisoners' use from both prisons which would avoid having to send prisoners to Dublin for this service. (Paragraph 6.3.1 pg 31)
9. 4 That the contract for the maintenance of the equipment in the dental surgery be reviewed in view of the difficulties being encountered with it at present. (Paragraph 6.3.2 pg 31)
9. 5 That the prison staff responsible for escorting prisoners to and from the dental surgery be made available for the full duration of the session. (Paragraph 6.3.1 pg 30)
9. 6 That the Medical Director and the local prison G.P. arrange for the dentists to be brought up to date re latest treatment in the area of hepatitis, H.I.V. and needle-stick injuries. (Paragraph 6.3.2 pg 31)
9. 7 That a nursing promotional structure be set up for the entire service so that nurses would have a promotional line and also provide a better supervisory nursing service on the floor. (Matter for the Medical Director, Nurse Co-ordinator, HQ staff, Governors and Prison Doctors.) (Paragraph 6.4.2 pg 32)

9. 8 That the role/responsibilities and duties of nurses in the prisons be clearly outlined by the Prisons Medical Director in conjunction with the Governors/Prison Doctors/Nurse Co-ordinator. (Paragraph 6.4.2 pg 32)
9. 9 That the small laundry rooms on A wing be fitted with a fan or vents in order to allow some fresh air into them as when the machines are operating, it is extremely hot within them. (Paragraph 7.12.3.2 pg 64) and (7.22.3.3 pg 79,80)
- 9.10 That the work/training work shops be examined with a view of expanding their working area into the open space at the back of the workshops. (Paragraph 7.22.2.3 pg 78)
9. 11 That the instructors in the metal shop receive further training in the area of stainless steel/sheet metal work to enable them to give instructions (especially in welding and pot riviting) to prisoners and that they receive further training in the use of the lathe which was purchased but never used in the workshop. (Paragraph 7.22.4.3 pg 80,81)
- 9.12 That a showering facility be provided in the area where the recycling operation is taking place for those who work there. (Paragraph 7.25.1 pg 83)

- 9.13 That local management and trades staff examine the possibility of installing a cooling/air system in the upstairs section of the factory workshops area. (Paragraph 7.27.3 pg 84)
- 9.14 That a sex offenders' programme be introduced into the prison and led by the Psychology staff with inputs from the Probation and Welfare officers and Prison staff. (Paragraph 6.7.9 pg 39)
- 9.15 That a large room with a moveable screen across the altar section should be provided for use by the educational staff for theatre purposes and for the chaplain's use as a church for services. (Paragraph 6.12.2 pg 50)

10. Conclusions

- 10.1 This 5-year-old prison is very impressive with all of its modern facilities and fresh decor. It is very bright with natural light entering from the end of the wings as well as from the windows in the roof. It is clean and tidy and there are flower baskets, flower containers and flowerbeds very prominently displayed all around the entrance/administration areas. The grassed areas are neatly cut and trimmed. There is also a good feeling of space around the various wings and buildings. There are a number of exercise yards some small, some-medium size with one large all-purpose yard with a four-lane running track around it. It is a pity that the small and medium sized yards were not made bigger in view of the space available. The cells all have sanitary facilities which is a great comfort for both prisoners and staff but again why a shower facility in the cell was not provided is

questionable. In fact, the prison has very few showering facilities with only four on each landing. The exercise yards and one of the gyms have no showers while the sports hall has only four. The cells are bright and cheerful with a lot of natural light entering via a window that extends almost from the ceiling to two thirds down the wall and an air vent from bottom of the window to the floor. The prisoner can control the air flow as it is a grid-sliding panel design.

10.2 The medical needs of the prisoners are well catered for with two full-time doctors plus part-time psychiatrists, dentists, optician and full-time psychologist. There are 18 sanctioned nursing posts but there is a total of 23 nurses, three of whom are on temporary duty from the Curragh Prison when that prison closed. However, there were a number of complaints from prisoners that they had difficulties seeing the doctor and also waited a long time to get to see the dentist. When both the doctor and the dentist were individually meeting the inspector they both denied the alleged delay. The doctor suggested that if another surgery was made available, then the two doctors could hold surgery at the same time.

10.3 The staffing levels of the probation and welfare service for the prison were brought up to its full complement of five only recently. They ran two rehabilitation courses i.e. lifers course and drug awareness. They were also involved in pre-release courses in the past 12 months. There is no Connect project operating within the prison. They liaise with the various organisation/agencies/health boards, etc re placing prisoners on

programmes/training schemes as well as accommodation for prisoners on release. A lot of their time appears to be taken up in finding accommodation for sex offenders due to be released as well as accommodation for homeless prisoners. There is a reluctance within the community to accept sex offenders living within their neighbourhood. Hopefully, with the additional staffing, the probation and welfare will get involved in a wider range of rehabilitation programmes within the prison.

10.4 The educational section of the prison is catered for by 28 full-time and 12 part-time teachers who deliver 78 teaching hours in the a.m, 42 teaching hours in the p.m and 12 teaching hours between 5.15p.m-7.00p.m. In 2004 the number who sat examinations were as follows:- Leaving Certificate 14, Junior Certificate 22, Open University 14, others such as City & Guilds, FETAC, etc 83. The average daily number of prisoners attending educational classes is 75 while another 15 are involved in P.E. with a teacher. Five teachers per day are involved in remedial teaching while 25 hours of those teachers' time are engaged in literacy work. The prison management and prisoners were full of praise for the educational staff. The teachers feel that there is an need for a large room where drama and music productions could be performed. There were complaints from prisoners regarding not being escorted to classrooms at the allocated time for their particular class. They said that if they attend at the regular starting times i.e. 9.15am and 2.15pm it was reasonably good, but if they had to go to the doctor, on visit, etc, on returning they would be left waiting on the

landing or just sent to the exercise yard, even though that time was allocated for their classroom.

- 10.5 There are three full-time chaplains attached to the prison (one priest and two lay R.C chaplains). Clergy of other denominations are invited and attend the prison when required. There was great praise for the services provided by the chaplains, above and beyond the requirements, by all concerned, both staff and prisoners.
- 10.6 There were no prisoner escapes from the prison, while under escort, or being accompanied on temporary release during the past year.
- 10.7 There were 38 foreign nationals in custody on the days of inspection.
- 10.8 In the previous six months 225 prisoners were on misconduct reports (P.19's) of which 71 forfeited remission and 17 of them were deprived of evening recreation for longer than one month. There were seven prisoners on report (P.19) for assaults on staff while 101 were reported for assault on other prisoners in the previous 12 months. In the previous six months, 25 prisoners were on report for smuggling or attempting to smuggle illegal drugs into the prison, while thirty prisoners were placed on "screen" visits in the previous six months. There were 32 prisoners placed in the strip cells for security reasons in the last six months while one was placed there for medical observations on orders from the medical staff. The longest time a prisoner spent in the strip cells in the past 12 months was seven days. The

number of disciplinary reports, approximately 51% of the population, appears very high and the Inspector is also concerned about the severity of the punishment imposed on those prisoners held in the punishment area (C1) without any radio, TV, etc. The Inspector raised this matter with the governor who undertook to look into same.

- 10.9 The prisoners' laundry requirements are met within the prison and they can have a change of underwear twice weekly, bed clothing including duvet once weekly, towels twice weekly and a minimum of two showers per week. They are supplied with soap, toothpaste, etc plus cleaning requirements for toilet and w.h.b. within their cells.
- 10.10 There is an excellent library and approximately 150 prisoners per week avail of this service. It is open six days per week. There is no dedicated telephone or telephone line to the Samaritans and no direct written communication except through the governor. Prisoners are allowed to make one telephone calls per day at state expense to family or friends. They must nominate the names of the three different people beforehand. The phone calls can be monitored. They can write and receive letters. There were complaints regarding the delay in the prisoners' post and on checking this complaint it was established that there are delays which are attributed to staff shortage.
- 10.11 There are about 175 prisoners engaged daily in work/work training, 75 attending education and a further 120 attending the gyms. The balance of

approx 100 prisoners are idle and generally spend most of their time in the exercise yards or recreation areas. The fact that almost a quarter of the prison's population is unoccupied is not a good situation. The sooner they are all fully engaged, at whatever, the better.

10.12 The prison was provided with a new bakery and equipment at the time of building. It was intended that this bakery would provide the bread, scones, etc for the Midlands, Portlaoise and Curragh Prison. It has never been used. It is a pity that such a good facility was not brought into operation as it would have provided work for prisoners as well as training in this area which might have helped them secure employment in this field on release. The cost of providing the bakery and its equipment and its never having been used does not seem justified.

10.13 There appears to be good relationships between staff and management . There is a certain amount of disquiet regarding the outcome of the staff's ballot re proposed new working arrangements which were rejected in the first ballot. A considerable number of the Curragh staff were transferred to here temporarily on the temporary closure of the Curragh Prison. Arising from the result of the vote, the Minister closed the Curragh Prison permanently, consequently the staff from that prison working here are either being transferred permanently here or to some other prison. So there was an air of discontent about this situation.

10.14 There is an average of 20 staff per day on sick leave with six of those on continuous sick leave for the past six months or more. An average of 2730 hours overtime per week is worked, with 30% of the staff not working any overtime. The turnover of staff for the past year was 103 with 76 new staff (57 from the Curragh Prison) 10 resigned/retired and 17 transferred. There are 68 staff seeking a transfer out of the prison at present. There were no staff on disciplinary reports (oral hearings) before the Governor in the past 12 months.

10.15 Staff refresher training was undertaken by instructors only in C & R and B.A. Training courses/refresher training was also undertaken in manual handling, horticulture, P.E instructors, safepass, chef's workshop, technical equipment, hostage negotiations, train the trainers, C.P.R. nursing training, food hygiene, health and safety managers, P.M.D.S, communications, workshops instructors, prison computers and the new "Oracle" finance IT systems, etc. While it is good that such training/courses are taking place, it is a very small percentage of the staff overall that receive same. The fact that no B.A./C & R/ fire drill/evacuation training has taken place for the staff "on the floor" is alarming and needs urgent attention. Developmental training is also required and needs to be provided for, if the new working rosters are agreed and implemented.

10.16 Overall it is a new well kept prison. It appears that a considerable amount of extra building work had to be done after the prison was built and opened, which raises the question of good planning and extra costs. The prison is

functioning well on a day-to-day basis but there appears to be a lack of direction from the prisoners' viewpoint. Prisoners have no sentence plan therefore they have no goal to aim for and feel they are just "doing time". There is no Connect project and there is a scarcity of rehabilitation programmes. The sex offender prisoners feel that they don't get equal facilities with the other prisoners in education, workshop work, use of big exercise yard, use of sports hall etc. Perhaps this could be looked at with a view to "rostering" the use of these facilities more equally if what they claim is correct. The delay that prisoners encounter in being escorted to visits, to education and to other professional services is a cause for concern. The value in having these professionals within the prison is undermined if prisoners' access to them is inhibited by the lack of staff to escort them to and from or the unwillingness of staff to do so. The delay in prisoners' post is another concern which is attributed to staff shortage. The lack of staff training is another area needing attention.

10.17 The Inspectorate team were made very welcome in the prison and received full co-operation throughout the inspection. The staff were most helpful and pleasant, and dealt with our different requests most willingly. They also ensured that we did not go hungry!! So a very sincere thanks to the Governor, staff and others who made our inspection run so smoothly. It is much appreciated.