

**Visiting Committee
Arbour Hill Prison
Arbour Hill
Dublin 7**

Arbour Hill Visiting Committee - Annual Report 2015.

A Chara

Herewith is the Annual Report for the Visiting Committee for Arbour Hill Prison for the year ending 31st December 2015.

The Visiting Committee

The Visiting Committee 2015 consisted of the following:

Rita Hayes retired and reappointed on 24/08/15.

Padraig McGarrigle appointed 02/03/15.

Angela O'Connor retired 25/10/15.

Tommy Healy transferred to Shelton Abbey Visiting Committee on 24/03/15.

Dr A Bulbulia retired 28/01/15.

Wilhelmina Daly retired 28/01/15.

Paddy Murray retired 28/03/15.

The following are existing members of Visiting Committee for 01/01/16 onwards. This does not constitute a full quorum and is a cause of concern going forward.

Rita Hayes appointment from 24/08/15 to 23/08/18.

Padraig McGarrigle appointment from 02/03/15 to 01/03/18.

The Visiting Committee for Arbour Hill held Committee meetings as follows during 2015;
21/01/15, 11/02/15, 11/03/15, 13/05/15, 16/09/15, 14/10/15, 18/11/15, 17/12/15.

At least one member of the Committee makes an unannounced visit to the prison each month in addition to the scheduled monthly meeting. The Visiting Committee frequently visited the prison before/during/after the monthly meetings and have had access to every area of the prison.

While visiting the prison the Committee has made it a priority to make themselves available to the prison population in order to address any issues arising at the earliest opportunity. Notices are clearly placed around the jail informing prisoners of the availability of the Committee.

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

Visiting Committee 'Visits'.

At the next monthly meeting each 'Visiting Member' reported to the Committee on their visit during the previous month. In general the reports from the '*visits*' were complementary apropos the very high standard of care provided to those incarcerated at this facility. The standard of hygiene and the cleanliness throughout every part of the prison is exemplary.

Arbour Hill Prison although quite old, is totally refurbished and maintained to a very high standard. *Prisoner welfare* is the primary concern of the management and staff in Arbour Hill Prison and this was evident in every monthly visitor report. The physical environment of the prison is maintained to a very high standard, the cleaning regime is exemplary and one can only describe the prison environs as spotless. The Committee was delighted to note that the Visits area has been renovated in the latter part of 2015. This area was quite old and dated and now provides a more amenable facility for prisoner and friends and family to visit each other.

Visits to Prisoners

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

10-00 ^{AM} to 12 ^{Noon} + 2-00 ^{PM} to 4-00 ^{PM} on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday & Saturdays.

There are no visits on Thursdays or Sundays.

In the visitor's waiting room there are play facilities for children.

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

Prisoner Visits and representations to the Committee

Any prisoner if he so wishes can request to see the Visiting Committee via a request to the Governor.

One prisoner sought formal meetings with the Committee during 2015.

Chaplaincy

Fr Ciaran Enright is the Chaplain in Arbour Hill Prison. Fr Ciaran attends the prison six days per week and is always available to prisoners if needed. Fr Enright continues to deliver extraordinary support and encouragement to all. Additionally the Chaplain continues to provide ongoing assistance with pre-release re-socialisation and general preparation for reintegration which is an ongoing challenge. Mindful that prison, by its very nature has an isolating effect, such additional contact and support is welcomed by the many foreign prisoners, some of whom are serving long sentences.

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

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

Christians	95%	Other Religions *	5%
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Workshops and Training

Print.

Prints material for a number of government departments providing work and training for up to nine prisoners. Printers are trained in the use of modern printing machines which helps them to prepare prisoners for work after remission.

Fabric.

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

Braille.

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

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

Woodwork.

The wood workshop provides furniture for a number of charities and occasionally for the prison itself. This workshop has been upgraded to provide training and work for the prisoners who are assigned here.

- Upgrade cell furniture.
- Supply furniture for Barretstown Castle.
- Environmental awareness support for charitable and public bodies. [Bird Boxes, Bat Boxes etc.].

Waste management.

The Waste Management area is a large area which recycles prison waste (*including electrical waste from other areas in the prisons estate*) and provides valuable training and work for a number of prisoners and in the past enabled a number of prisoners to get employment post release.

Kitchen.

The Catering Department is managed by prison staff, assisted by a number of prisoners, some of whom are undergoing certified training. It provides valuable training opportunities for the participants. The Industrial Manager in conjunction with the educational department co-ordinates and implements professional qualifications and training accredited by

FETAC for participants. The performance of the catering area as acknowledged by afore mentioned EIQA awards is nothing short of extraordinary. The variety, quality and wholesomeness of the food provided are most impressive; not to mention the routine provision of specialist diets to cater for cultural, religious and medical needs. Prisoners also continue to work to provide the prisoner meals to the CCJ which results in a significant saving for the Irish Prison Service.

Education

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

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

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

Library

The prison library is operated by a prisoner who has taken to the task with pride. The library is available for prisoners to study and read for leisure. The Library is operated by Prisoners and is very impressive. The prisoners involved clearly take great pride in their work.

Capital Works

The Committee acknowledge the Prisons much needed staff toilets were built in late 2015.

The renovation of the Visits area is noted and the Committee acknowledge the excellent changes to this area.

Building Better Lives

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

There are currently one Psychologists and one Senior Psychologist involved in the implementation of this therapeutic programme. Two psychologists left the Prison Service to take up posts in alternative departments. There continues to be an ongoing waiting list for prisoners to engage in the Psychology services. The reduction in Psychology staff this year has resulted in additional pressures for the department. The Visiting Committee note concerns in this regard. The BBL Programme concludes with a three way meeting where a handover to the Probation Service takes place with

a view towards a supported and in many cases, a supervised release, that will hopefully offer the best chance for a seamless integration back in to the community.

Other Treatment Programmes and Services Provided

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

External In-reach Services Arbour Hill Prison

2015

Samaritans	Narcotics Anonymous
AA	Relate
HSE CWO	GROW
Trail Housing Services	Psychotherapist
Chiropodist	Bereavement Support group
Church of Ireland Ministry	(Dentist)
Crosscare (Housing)	Vision Express
Gambling Anonymous	HSE Community Occupational therapist.
Prayer Group	HSE Community Speech therapist
St Vincent de Paul	CMH In reach.
Linkage (Production services)	FCPN / CMH.
Agency Nurses.	

Listeners Programme.

This is an important service provided by willing and trained prisoners to their peers. 'The listeners' are trained to listen to concerns, issues, and fears in a confidential setting. Training is provided by the Samaritans; this service

provides an important emotional support for fellow prisoners and may well be a contributing factor in the low level of self-injury at this facility.

Medical & Services

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

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

Special Observation Room

Part of the function of the Visiting Committee is to monitor the use of the Special Observation Room. It was used on one occasion during the year.

Death in Custody.

There was one death in custody during 2015. The prisoner died of natural causes in the Mater Hospital. The Committee commend the medical staff and Officers on duty for their prompt and professional management of the situation and arranging for the prisoner to be admitted to hospital.

The Committee is pleased to note that there were no suicide attempts this year.

Complaints Procedure.

Any prisoner can request a complaint form from any member of staff at any time. All complaint forms are numbered and recorded; consequently once a form has been drawn down the '*complaint*' has to be pursued to a conclusion and retained for inspection by the *Inspector of Prisons* or other prison authority who might seek to have sight of same. A new complaints procedure and forms were introduced during 2014 where complaints are categorised from A-F.

Probation Service

This prison is very fortunate to have the service of a very active and dedicated probation team, consisting of four Probation Officers and one Senior Probation Officer. They work with prisoners both individually and collectively in addressing a broad range of issues.

All new committals are interviewed within 3 working days of arrival.

Individual offence work with (voluntary) prisoners.

Facilitate group work, Anger Management, Group Thinking Skills.

Complete Parole Board and repatriation / transfer and prisoner reports.

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

Co - ordination of AA and GROW meetings.

Liaise with family where relationships are strained or dysfunctional.

Key participants in the delivery of Integrated *Sentence Management*.

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

Integrated Sentence Management. (ISM).

Arbour Hill is making good progress with ISM . All prisoners are actively engaged in the process with the exception of one prisoner who declined ISM.

First case waiting list is cleared all the time and first case assessment interviews are conducted within 24 hrs of committal. Consent form is signed and retained on file in ISM office. Referrals are created and Probation, Psychology, Education, Work Training (Industrial Manager) Medical are using database to update assessments.

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

Drug Free Prison

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

There has been no incident of drug use in Arbour Hill during 2015.

Summary.

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

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

Case Conferences are scheduled well in advance of all prisoner releases. All relevant parties are invited to participate and provide their input and recommendations.

It is to the credit of all at Arbour Hill that they have managed to locate accommodation and initiate contact with Community Welfare in every case; in many cases they have continued to source a range of supports varying across a broad spectrum of needs; e.g. Therapeutic, Psychological, Psychiatric and General Medical.

In a small number of cases former prisoners are availing of "*Voluntary Supervision*" provided by the Probation Service.

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

Appreciation.

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

The Committee also wish noted their attendance at the Arbour Hill Prison 40th anniversary celebration which took part during 2015. Minister Frances Fitzgerald also attended the event, organised by Governor Dowling. The Committee wish to thank Governor Dowling for a most enjoyable evening.