

VISITING COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2013

Midlands Prison

The Midlands Prison Visiting Committee have a function of ensuring that all prisoners in the care of the Irish Prison Service at the Midlands Prison are treated fairly and humanely and also with dignity and respect.

The Committee meet in the Prison on the second Thursday of every month whereby we conduct our monthly meetings and meet with any prisoners requesting to see us. Also two members visit on one other visit during that month and if requested by Prison Management on other occasions which are very rare.

On our many visits during the year of 2013 we listened to prisoner complaints, concerns and requests privately and in confidence. We raised all issues with the authorities at Governor Level and sought to bring all issues to a satisfactory conclusion. We wish to say that all Staff and Services working within the Prison and those external services working with Prisoners do so in a professional manner with the interest of the Prisoners welfare a priority.

PRISONERS REQUESTS

In 2013 the Committee met with thirty four prisoners during the course of the year and heard all concerns presented to them by the prisoners. We mention some of the issues raised at our meetings below.

- Visitors Searching
- Inter-Prison Transfers
- Loss of Clothing
- Temporary Release Escorts on Compassionate Grounds
- Health Care Issues

Visitors Searching

Prisoners have complained that the Search Dog indicates on visitors that have no contact with drugs or prohibited articles of any kind. They feel aggrieved that they are offered screened visits on these occasions. Having discussed the matter with Management we the committee are satisfied that the passive drug dog and O.S.G Unit have helped enormously in keeping drugs out of the prison.

Inter Prison Transfers

During 2013 a lot of prisoners we met with had complained that they were being transferred to Midlands from Dublin Prisons and did not request such a transfer. They felt aggrieved as it disrupted contact with family members and put extra pressure on their families to travel to Portlaoise.

Unfortunately due to the large volume of prisoners in the system and operational constraints due to the refurbishment of Mountjoy and other Prisons we are satisfied that Management at the Midlands Prison are obliged to facilitate these transfers until such time as refurbishment has been completed in other prisons.

Loss of Clothing

Due to the high number of inter-prison transfers we had some complaints from prisoners of clothing being misplaced or lost. In our investigations, we found that the Prison, having conducted an inquiry, have compensated prisoners if they find that any clothing was accidentally lost during the course of these transfers taking place.

Temporary Release

During the year prisoners have requested compassionate release to visit graves of loved ones, or family day release for communions or confirmations.

The granting of temporary release for communions and confirmations is not encouraged.

However the Prison facilitates the visits to graves and funeral homes wherever practicable and possible.

Health Care Issues

A small number of prisoner were unhappy with Medical care. They had issues regarding doctors visits, with only one full time Doctor, it was not always possible to get an appointment with him.

The Committee is satisfied that Health care are providing a satisfactory service with the resources presently in place. We are happy to hear that there will be a further full time doctor joining the team shortly. This should alleviate the queuing time for prisoners.

SENTENCE MANAGEMENT

Prisoner applications for temporary release and transfers are considered on an on-going basis. The Midlands Prison conduct a monthly review meeting attended by A Prison Operations Official, Prison Governor and Heads of Functions i.e. Chief, Chaplain, Work & Training and Education in order to access applications and agree suitable prisoners for early release and transfers to open centre's.

PROBATON SERVICE

The Prison Service and the Probation Service have a long history of working in partnership in managing persons convicted of offences who are committed to prison. Child and Community protection continues to be to the forefront of the Probation Services. We the Visiting Committee acknowledge that the Probation continue to engage with community based services both statutory and voluntary and more recently are carrying out assessments and organizing placement work in conjunction with their community based colleagues and prison management for the Community Returns Programme.

The Probation Service in conjunction with the Irish Prison Service have developed 'The Living with Life forum, for Life sentenced prisoners. This focuses on the development of a forum to allow men serving a life sentence equip themselves with adequate information and skills to serve their life sentence in a positive and social manner.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

The committee was delighted to see the Incentivised Regimes Programme being established through out the prison. This programme was initially piloted on C2 and C3 Divisions and following on from the excellent work there the programme has progressed to each wing. We welcome this Programme to the Midlands Prison and see it as natural progression.

MEDICAL SERVICES

The Midlands Prison Medical Services is a full time Doctor and a staffing of qualified nurses to care for the diverse needs of the prisoners. They also provide Dental Care, Chiropody, Drug Counsellors, Psychiatric Care and Optical Clinics on an ongoing basis. The level of care shown to all prisoners in their care is second to none and we commend the Medical team in doing so.

EDUCATION

The Education Centre is committed to working with prison management to extend the length of time which students can access classes on a daily basis. There are increased demands on their service due to the increase in prison population at the Midlands They are looking forward to fulfilling their commitments to maintain access to education for students.

Education provision in the Midlands continues to develop according to the learning needs of prisoners. In line with the vocational focus of the education programme, there is a strong emphasis on personal development, literacy and basic skills and the acquisition of appropriate certification. The Education Centre continues to support learners in meeting their personal learning goals and to achieve skills and accreditation which assists them to progress upon release from prison.

PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE

The Psychology team in the Midlands Prison aim to respond to the mental health and offence related needs of those detained in the Prison. A defining characteristic of the population is the number of men serving long or indeterminate sentences. The service find this presents both challenges and opportunities to the team in meeting the services dual mandate of mental health and offence work. The Visiting Committee would like to commend the Psychology team in the Midlands for their continued commitment in working with the increasing numbers in the Midlands Prison.

CHAPLAINCY

The Committee found that the chaplaincy formed a vital part of the prison communities every day lives. They offer weekly masses, confessions and pastoral care to all divisions of the prison. Choirs and Readers are trained and prepared for the liturgies. Chaplains visit the Landings on a daily basis and are available to all prisoners who wish to speak to them privately or in a group. Chaplains maintain contact with family members especially during times of bereavement or serious sickness. Officers frequently direct chaplains to prisoners who are vulnerable or who are in particularly difficult circumstances. The chaplaincy also facilitates Bereavement Groups for those who

experience bereavement while in prison. The chaplains are strongly supported in their work.

KITCHEN/CATERING

The Committee commends the Catering Staff in the prison on the quality of food and hygiene standards maintained on an ongoing basis. Since the opening of the New Kitchen in 2012 it has afforded the opportunity for employment and training for higher numbers of prisoners. We congratulate the team on their exceptionally high scores on their annual food audits as more demands are made on the delivery of high quality service due to the increasing prisoner population. Prisoners working in this area receive training and accreditation/certificates in City and Guilds.

INDUSTRIAL AREA/WORKSHOPS

The Midlands Prison provides a number of workshops which provide meaningful employment and training for a number of inmates during their time in prison. The Carpentry, Metalwork, and Print Shops employ a number of prisoners on a daily basis and the committee is delighted to report that the quantity and quality of work produced in these workshops is exceptional. The Laundry facility looks after the laundry needs of the entire prison and employ up to thirty prisoners on a daily basis. We commend the Industrial Manager and his staff in each of these workshops for their continued hard work in working with reduced resources and increasing prison numbers in the current climate.

HORTICULTURE

The Committee commends the Horticulture staff and prisoners for keeping the complex beautifully maintained during all seasons. On all of our visits to the prison the gardens, flower beds, hanging baskets both externally and internally were immaculate and all areas are well kept.

Visiting Committee Members

The Committee would like to express a sincere thanks to the members who finished their work with the Visiting Committee in 2013.

A warm welcome is extended to Margaret O'Dwyer and Ted Laffey who were appointed to the Committee in November.

CONCLUSION

We the Midlands Visiting Committee would like to thank Governor Mullen and Governor Malone who addressed us at our monthly meetings and kept us up to date and informed during the year and facilitated us at all times. We thank all the Management and Staff whom we met with during 2013 and who made themselves available and dealt with any issues we presented to them throughout the year.

Finally, the Committee wish to commend all the Staff and Services attached to the Midlands Prison for their continued work, commitment and dedication and their professional approach despite the ever increasing lack of resources during the current

economic climate in their everyday work in the Prison. The air of teamwork helps to enhance the image of the Prison Service as a whole, and greatly contributes to a healthy environment and good general atmosphere throughout the Prison.

All are a credit to the Midlands Prison.

We look forward to again working alongside all in 2014.

Collette Fennelly (Chair Person)

Ted Laffey

Margaret O Dwyer

TUARASCÁIL BHLIANTÚIL AN CHOISTE
CUAIRTE 2013

Príosún an Láir
Tíre

Tá feidhm ag Coiste Cuairte Phríosún an Láir Tíre chun a chinntiú go gcaitear go cothrom agus go daonnachtúil le gach príosúnach faoi chúram Sheirbhís Príosún na hÉireann ag Príosún an Láir Tíre agus go dtugtar dínit agus meas dóibh freisin.

Tagann an Coiste le chéile sa Phríosún ar an dara Déardaoin de gach mí trína ndéanaimid ár gcruinnithe míosúla agus trína mbuailimid le haon phríosúnaigh a iarrann bualadh linn. Chomh maith leis sin, tugann beirt chomhaltaí cuairt ar ócáid amháin eile le linn na míosa sin agus ar ócáidí eile i gcás ina n-iarrann Lucht Bainistíochta an Phríosúin orthu cuairt a thabhairt, ach is an-annamh a dhéantar é.

Ar an iomaí cuairt a thugamar le linn na bliana 2013, d'éisteamar le gearáin, le buarthaí agus le hiarratais ó phríosúnaigh go príobháideach agus go rúnda. D'ardaíomar gach saincheist leis na húdaráis ag Leibhéal Gobharnóra agus d'fhéachamar leis na saincheisteanna go léir a thabhairt chun críche go sásúil. Is mian linn a rá go n-oibríonn gach Foireann agus Seirbhís atá ag obair laistigh den Phríosún agus na seirbhísí seachtracha sin atá ag obair le Príosúnaigh ar bhealach gairmiúil ina bhfuil cúrsa leas na bPríosúnach ina thosaíocht.

IARRATAIS Ó PHRÍOSÚNAIGH

In 2013, bhuaill an Coiste le ceithre phríosúnach is tríocha le linn na bliana agus d'éist sé leis na buarthaí go léir a chuir na príosúnaigh in iúl dó. Luaimid cuid de na saincheisteanna a ardaíodh ag ár gcruinnithe thíos.

- Cuardach Cuairteoirí
- Aistrithe Idirphríosúin
- Caillteanas Éadaigh
- Coimhdirí Scaoilte Shealadaigh ar Fhorais Atruacha
- Saincheisteanna Cúram Sláinte

Cuardach Cuairteoirí

Rinne príosúnaigh gearáin go ndéanann an Madra Cuardaigh tasc ar chuairoteoirí nach bhfuil tadhall ar bith acu le drugaí ná le hearraí coiscthe de chineál ar bith. Tá míshásamh orthu go dtairgtear cuairteanna sciata dóibh ar na hócáidí sin. Tar éis dúinn an tsaincheist a phlé leis an Lucht Bainistíochta, tá an coiste sásta gur imir an madra drugaí éighníomhacha agus an tAonad GTO páirt ollmhór i ndrugaí a choinneáil amach ón bpríosún.

Aistrithe Idirphríosúin

Le linn 2013, rinne cuid mhór príosúnach ar bhuaileamar leo gearán go rabhadar á n-aistriú go Príosún an Láir Tíre ó Phríosúin Bhaile Átha Cliath agus nár iarradar an t-aistriú sin. Bhí míshásamh orthu toisc gur chuir sé isteach ar theagmháil le baill teaghlaigh agus gur chuir sé tuilleadh brú ar a dteaghlach taisteal go Port Laoise. Ar an drochuair, mar gheall ar an líon mór príosúnach sa chóras agus ar chonstaicí oibriúcháin de dheasca athchóiriú Phríosún Mhuinseo agus Príosún eile, táimid sásta gurb éigean don Lucht Bainistíochta ag Príosún an Láir Tíre na haistrithe sin a éascú go dtí go gcuirfeadh athchóiriú i gcrích i bpríosúin eile.

Cailteanas Éadaigh

Mar gheall ar an líon ard aistrithe idirphríosúin, fuaireamar roinnt gearán ó phríosúnaigh faoi éadach a cuireadh as áit nó a cailleadh. Inár n-imscrúduithe, d'aimsíomar gur thug an Príosún, tar éis dó fiosrú a dhéanamh, cúiteamh do phríosúnaigh má d'aimsigh sé gur cailleadh aon éadach de thaisme le linn na n-aistrithe sin.

Scaoileadh Sealadach

Le linn na bliana, d'iarr príosúnaigh saoire atruach chun cuairt a thabhairt ar uaigheanna a gclann, nó scaoileadh lae teaghlaigh le haghaidh comaoineach nó cóineartuithe. Ní spreagtar an deonú scaoilte shealadaigh le haghaidh comaoineach nó cóineartuithe.

Mar sin féin, éascaíonn an Príosún na cuairteanna ar uaigheanna agus ar thithe tórraimh nuair is infheidhmithe agus is féidir.

Saincheisteanna Cúram Sláinte

Bhí líon beag príosúnach míshásta le cúram Míochaine. Bhí saincheisteanna acu maidir le cuairteanna dochtúirí. Ós rud é nach raibh ach Dochtúir lánaimseartha amháin ann, níorbh fhéidir i gcónaí coinne a fháil leis.

Tá an Coiste sásta go bhfuil seirbhís shásúil á cur ar fáil ag Cúram Sláinte leis na hacmhainní atá i bhfeidhm faoi láthair. Táimid sásta le cloisteáil go rachaidh dochtúir lánaimseartha breise isteach san fhoireann ar ball. Ba cheart go gcabhródh sé seo leis an aga ciúála do phríosúnaigh a laghdú.

BAINISTÍOCHT PIANBHREITHE

Breithnítear iarratais scaoilte shealadaigh agus aistrithe ó phríosúnaigh ar bhonn leanúnach. Déanann Príosún an Láir Tíre cruinniú míosúil athbhreithnithe ar a bhfreastalaíonn Oifigeach Oibríochtaí Príosúin, Gobharnóir Príosúin agus Cinn Feidhmeanna i.e. Príomhfheidhmeannaigh, Feidhmeanna Séiplínigh, Feidhmeanna Oibre agus Oiliúna agus Feidhmeanna Oideachais d'fhonn measúnú a dhéanamh ar iarratais agus comhaontú a dhéanamh ar phríosúnaigh atá oiriúnach do luathscaoileadh agus d'aistrithe go hionaid oscailte.

AN tSEIRBHÍS PROMHAIDH

AN tSEIRBHÍS SÍCEOLAÍOCHTA

Is é is aidhm don fhoireann Síceolaíochta i bPríosún an Láir Tíre freagairt do na riachtanais a bhaineann le meabhairshláinte agus le cion atá acu siúd a choimeádtar sa Phríosún. Saintréith shainithe den phobal is ea líon na bhfear a chaitheann pianbheitheanna fada nó neamhchinntithe. Aimsíonn an tseirbhís go dtugann sé sin dúshlán agus deiseanna araon don fhoireann chun dé-shainordú na seirbhíse um obair mheabhairshláinte agus chiona a chomhlíonadh. Ba mhaith leis an gCoiste Cuairte an fhoireann Síceolaíochta i bPríosún an Láir Tíre a mholadh as a tiomantas leantach d'obair leis an líon daoine atá ag méadú i bPríosún an Láir Tíre.

SÉIPLÍNEACHT

D'aimsigh an Coiste go raibh an tséiplíneacht ina cuid ríthábhachtach de shaol laethúil phobail an phríosúin. Tairgeann sí Aifrinn, faoistiní agus tréadchúram gach seachtain do gach rannóg den phríosún. Déantar Cóir agus Léitheoirí a oiliúint agus a ullmhú do na liotúirgí. Tugann séiplínigh cuairt ar na Cinn Staighre ar bhonn laethúil agus tá siad ar fáil do gach príosúnach ar mian leis labhairt leo go príobháideach nó i ngrúpa. Coinníonn séiplínigh teagmháil le baill teaghlaigh, go háirithe in amanna méala nó tinnis throim. Go minic, cuireann oifigigh séiplínigh chuig príosúnaigh atá leochaileach nó a bhfuil toska deacra ar leith orthu. Chomh maith leis sin, éascaíonn an tséiplíneacht Grúpaí Méala dóibh siúd a fhuilíonn méala agus iad i bpríosún. Tacaítear go mór leis na séiplínigh ina gcuid oibre.

CISTIN/LÓNADÓIREACHT

Molann an Coiste an Fhoireann Lónadóireachta sa phríosún as caighdeán an bhia agus an tsláinteachais a choinnítear ar bhonn leanúnach. Ó osclaíodh an Chistin Nua sa bhliain 2012, thug sí deis fostaíochta agus oiliúna do líon níos airde príosúnach. Déanaimid comhghairdeas leis an bhfoireann mar gheall ar a gcuid scór rí-ard sna hiniúchtaí bliantúla bia ós rud é go leagtar tuilleadh éileamh ar an soláthar seirbhíse ardchaighdeán mar gheall ar an bpobal príosúnach atá ag méadú. Faigheann príosúnaigh atá ag obair sa réimse seo oiliúint agus creidiúnú/teastais in City and Guilds.

AN RÉIMSE TIONSCAIL/CEARDLANNA

Soláthraíonn Príosún an Láir Tíre roinnt ceardlann a chuireann fostaíocht agus oiliúint bhríoch ar fáil do roinnt príosúnach le linn a dtréimhse i bpríosún. Fostaíonn na Siopaí Gearpantóireachta, Miotalóireachta agus Priontála roinnt príosúnach ar bhonn laethúil agus tá ríméad ar an gcoiste a thuirisciú gur fóirmhaith atá méid agus caighdeán na hoibre a dhéantar sna ceardlanna seo. Déileálann an áis Níocháin le riachtanais níocháin an phríosúin ar fad agus fostaíonn sí suas go dtí tríocha príosúnach ar bhonn laethúil. Molaimid an Bainisteoir Tionscail agus a fhoireann i ngach ceann de na ceardlanna seo as a n-obair dhícheallach leantach agus iad ag obair le hacmhainní laghdaithe agus líon daoine atá ag méadú sa phríosún sna cúinsí reatha.

Tá stair fhada ag an tSeirbhís Príosún agus ag an tSeirbhís Promhaidh maidir le hoibriú i gcomhpháirtíocht chun daoine a chiontaítear as cionta a chuirtear chun príosúin a láimhseáil. Leanann cosaint Leanaí agus Pobail uirthi bheith i bhfíorthosach na Seirbhísí Promhaidh. Aithnímid, an Coiste Cuairte, go leanann an tSeirbhís Promhaidh uirthi teagmháil a dhéanamh le seirbhísí pobalbhunaithe reachtúla agus deonacha araon agus, níos déanaí ná sin, tá measúnuithe á ndéanamh agus socrúcháin oibre á n-eagrú aici i gcomhar lena comhghleacaithe pobalbhunaithe agus le lucht bainistíochta an phríosúin le haghaidh an Chláir um Fhilleadh ar an bPobal.

D'fhorbair an tSeirbhís Promhaidh, i gcomhar le Seirbhís Príosún na hÉireann an fóram 'Living with Life' ('Maireachtáil le Pianbhreith Shaoil') do phríosúnaigh ar tugadh pianbhreith Shaoil dóibh. Díríonn sé sin ar an bhforbairt fóraim chun ligean d'fhir a chaitheann pianbhreith shaoil faisnéis agus scileanna iomchuí a ghnóthú chun a bpianbhreith shaoil a chaitheamh ar bhealach dearfach agus sóisialta.

FORBAIRTÍ NUA

Bhí ríméad ar an gCoiste a fheiceáil go raibh an Clár Réime Dreasaithe á bhunú ar fud an phríosúin. Rinneadh an clár nua seo a thriail ar Rannóg C2 agus Rannóg C3 agus, ag teacht as an obair shármhaith ansin, tá dul chun cinn déanta ar an gclár sa dá sciathán. Fáiltímid roimh an gClár seo chuig Príosún an Láir Tíre agus measaimid gur dul chun cinn nádúrtha é.

SEIRBHÍSÍ MÍOCHAINÉ

Is é atá i Seirbhísí Míochaine Phríosún an Láir Tíre ná Dochtúir lánaimseartha agus foireann d'altraí cáilithe Seirbhísí a thugann cúram do riachtanais éagsúla na bpríosúnach. Cuireann siad Cúram Fiacla, Cosliacht, Comhairleoirí Drugaí, Cúram Síciatrach agus Clinicí Optúla ar fáil freisin ar bhonn leanúnach.

Is den chéad scoth atá leibhéal an chúraim a thugtar do phríosúnaigh ina gcúram agus molaimid an fhoireann Míochaine as an méid sin a dhéanamh.

OIDEACHAS

Tá an tlonad Oideachais tiomanta do bheith ag obair le lucht bainistíochta an phríosúin chun an fad ama a fhéadann daltaí ranganna a rochtain ar bhonn laethúil a mhéadú. Tá éilimh mhéadaithe ar a seirbhís mar gheall ar an méadú ar an bpobal príosúin ag Príosún an Láir Tíre. Tá siad ag súil le comhlíonadh a dhéanamh ar a gcuid tiomantas chun rochtain ar oideachas a choinneáil do dhaltaí.

Leanann soláthar an oideachais i bPríosún an Láir Tíre air forbairt i gcomhréir le riachtanais foghlama na bpríosúnach. Ar an dul le fócas gairme an chláir oideachais, tá béim láidir ar fhorbairt phearsanta, ar litearthacht agus ar scileanna bunúsacha agus ar theastasú iomchuí a ghnóthú. Leanann an tlonad Oideachais air tacú le foghlaimoirí chun a spriocanna pearsanta foghlama a bhaint amach agus chun scileanna agus creidiúnú a chabhraíonn leo dul chun cinn a dhéanamh i ndiaidh iad a scaoileadh ó phríosún a bhaint amach.

GAIRNEOIREACTH

Molann an Coiste an fhoireann Ghairneoireachta agus príosúnaigh as an gcoimpléacs a choinneáil dea-chothabháilte le linn na séasúr go léir. Ar na cuairteanna go léir a thugamar ar an bpríosún, bhí na gairdíní, na ceapacha bláthanna agus na bláthchiseáin ar crochadh ar an taobh amuigh agus ar an taobh istigh ríghlan agus tá na limistéir go léir dea-chothabháilte.

Comhaltaí an Choiste Cuairte

Ba mhaith leis an gCoiste buíochas ó chroí a chur in iúl do na comhaltaí a chuir a gcuid oibre leis an gCoiste Cuairte i gcrích in 2013. Cuirimid fearadh na fáilte roimh Margaret O'Dwyer agus Ted Laffey a ceapadh chuig an gCoiste i mí na Samhna.

CONCLÚID

Ba mhaith linne, Coiste Cuairte Phríosún an Láir Tíre, buíochas a ghabháil leis an nGobharnóir Mullen agus leis an nGobharnóir Malone a thug aitheasc dúinn ag ár gcruinnithe míosúla agus a choinnigh ar an eolas sinn le linn na bliana agus a d'éascaigh sinn i gcónaí. Gabhaimid buíochas leis an Lucht Bainistíochta agus leis an bhFoireann ar fad ar bhuaileamar leo le linn 2013 agus a chuir iad féin ar fáil agus a dhéileáil le haon saincheisteanna a chuireamar chucu ar fud na bliana.

Mar chríoch, is mian leis an gCoiste an Fhoireann ar fad agus na Seirbhísí go léir a bhfuil baint acu le Príosún an Láir Tíre a mholadh as a n-obair, a dtiomantas agus a ndílseacht leantach agus as a gcur chuige gairmiúil, in ainneoin na heaspa síormhéadaithe acmhainní i rith na gcúinsí eacnamaíochta reatha ina gcuid oibre laethúil sa Phríosún. Cabhraíonn timpeallacht na hoibre buíne le híomhá na Seirbhíse Príosún ina hiomláine a fheabhsú, agus cuireann sí go mór le timpeallacht fholláine agus le dea-atmaisféar ginearálta ar fud an Phríosúin.

Is mór an clú do Phríosún an Láir Tíre iad go léir.

Táimid ag súil le hobair leo siúd go léir arís in 2014.

Collette Fennelly (Cathaoirleach)

Ted Laffey

Margaret O'Dwyer