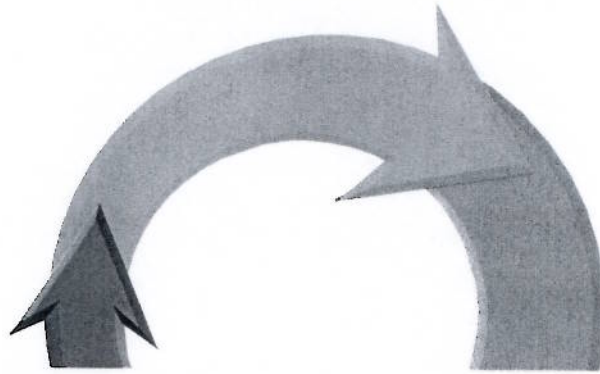


**ARBOUR HILL PRISON
ARBOUR HILL
DUBLIN 7.**



**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE VISITING
COMMITTEE TO ARBOUR HILL
PRISON
FOR YEAR ENDING DECEMBER
2009.**



Arbour Hill Visiting Committee Annual Report For Year Ending December 2009.



**The Minister For Justice, Equality & Law Reform,
72/76 St Stephen's Green,
Dublin 2.**

A Chara,

The Visiting Committee to Arbour Hill Prison have pleasure in submitting herein our Annual Report for year ending December 2009.

The Visiting Committee.

The Committee consists of nine members, two of whom had their terms of office expire in February, however one has since been re-appointed and the other has been replaced by a former member. *The outgoing member Mr James O'Hanrahan had served six years on the Arbour Hill Committee and we would like to sincerely thank him for his commitment and enthusiasm during his tenure of office. His knowledge, willingness and determination was an inspiration to us all.* The Committee met every month and at least two members of the Committee made unannounced visits to the prison in the interim. The Committee continuously visited every area of the prison, availed of every opportunity to speak with prisoners and always made themselves available to meet and hear the concerns of any and every prisoner. The Committee met with the Director General Mr Brian Purcell and Ms Caron McCaffrey: Director Of Corporate Affairs in April of this year; consequent to this meeting it was agreed that a training manual for Visiting Committees would be circulated and appropriate training could then be tailored for committee members. We would like to record our sincere thanks to the afore mentioned officials for taking the time to meet the committee and for their appreciation and support of the committee's work. 2009 has been a challenging year for Arbour Hill Prison, budgetary constraints are evident, however it should be noted that management and staff are doing everything in their power to minimize the impact on the prisoners regime. It is to their credit that to date no regime restrictions

have been deemed necessary. As reported in previous years Arbour Hill Prison is extremely well run, it is kept spotless and in pristine condition. This is a view endorsed by the Inspector of Prisons, CERT and Excellence Ireland Quality Assurance. The staff/prisoner relationship here is excellent, the emphasis is on rehabilitation and every prisoner is assigned a job of work or engaged in further education. Every effort is made to provide an appropriate support framework for each and every prisoner. In the course of this report we have endeavoured to provide an accurate and revealing picture of :-

- 1) The care and safe custody of prisoners.
- 2) The management and operational ethos.
- 3) The prevailing atmosphere.
- 4) Therapeutic regime.
- 5) Education and training programmes.
- 6) Health care.
- 7) The management of custodial care so as to best prepare for a positive reintroduction to society at large.

The Committee are however deeply concerned at the upward spiral of prisoner numbers; from 138 at start the of 2008 to 156 at end of 2009! In a facility as compact as Arbour Hill such increases have a disproportionate and negative impact and when combined with the moratorium on staff *{fifteen have retired this year}* has the potential for permanent damage to an institution that has always had so much to recommend it. It is imperative that numbers return to design capacity as soon as possible and that staff vacancies be filled promptly so that standards and services can be sustained.

In addition to its management and staff Arbour Hill has a variety of support services:-

- 1) Round the clock health care.
- 2) Chaplaincy [Multi denominational].
- 3) Probation service.
- 4) Education Dept.
- 5) Psychology service.
- 6) Psychiatry
- 7) GROW. [*Mental Health Support Group*].
- 8) AA.

9) NA

[*The care and safe custody of prisoners*]

We have at all times been given unfettered access to all areas and all prisoners. The prison is very well run, is spotlessly clean and has established regimes to sustain the standards that are evident to anyone visiting this facility. The atmosphere is relaxed and a caring ethos prevails, incidents of self injury are practically non existent and there were no suicide attempts during the past year. [*One prisoner did however die in the Mater Hospital having taken ill in his cell - death due to natural causes.*] While visiting the prison we avail of every opportunity to speak with and engage with all or any prisoner who wishes to meet with individual committee members or the committee as a whole. Additionally any prisoner who wishes may see the committee privately at the monthly meeting. There were three such occasions when prisoners saw the Committee formally :-

[A] A prisoner made a wide range of complaints against a variety of senior staff and also claimed there was no provision being made for his specific dietary needs ? The Committee investigated the complaints and following a comprehensive investigation involving the Gardai, it was found that his allegations were completely unfounded.

[*All claims were subsequently withdrawn*]

[B] A prisoner complained that his phone calls were being cut short and asked the Committee to speak to the Governor about greater flexibility vis a vis availability of 'time' ?

The Committee subsequently ascertained that there is an ongoing issue with the prisoner phones system, management are aware of it but it is outside their control and everything possible is being done to address same. New telephone system is expected to be fitted before year end.

[C] A prisoner stated that "gangsters were out to get him" and various staff members were "planning and scheming against him" ? Subject went on to advise the Committee that he is being advised and directed by 'The Lord'. *The Committee understands subject refused to*

accept medication prescribed by the psychiatrist and has since been transferred to the Central Mental Hospital.

** It should be borne in mind that the Committee maintained a high profile on the prison floor and are always available to listen and respond to any prisoners concerns: this would obviously impact on prisoners need to formally seek a meeting with the Committee.*

Special Observation Room.

Used on a total of fourteen occasions during the year by nine different prisoners.

- A) 9 occasions were medical reasons (Special Observation).
- B) 3 occasions were by "own request".
- C) 2 occasions involved protection issues.

Almost all such occurrences were for a few hours and the Medical Officer routinely visits the *Special Obs. Room* every day if its being used.

Integrated Sentence Management {ISM}

Following a pilot project involving twenty prisoners which has now been extended to all committals since 01/01/09 and now involves 65 prisoners or almost half of our total prisoner population. This is a structured multidisciplinary approach to prisoner assessment and involves the use of evidence based, structured assessment procedures, by all the services to assess prisoner risk needs and the adoption of an agreed '*team assessment*' of the prisoner against which future progress can be measured. Each prisoner admitted to ISM has a Personal Development Plan with stated goals for his time in custody and provision for ongoing mentoring / support as well as periodic review. The prisoners selected are actively involved in developing and reviewing their own plan. Personnel from Prisons Regimes, Prisons Operations, Psychology, Education and probation together with dedicated staff from Arbour Hill are now actively involved in the roll out of ISM.

This process is a radical development in the management of prisoners and has the potential to completely revitalize the whole ethos of custodial care. It is particularly noteworthy that ISM makes provision for post release support which is something we have always believed to be an

essential part of risk management and an imperative if reintegration is to society is to be successfully achieved.

With due recognisance of the difficulties facing all services and departments we would urge the authorities to ensure that staff, funding and supports are made available to allow this programme to continue to develop and expand. We sincerely hope that other stakeholders such as the Judiciary and Gardaí will willingly and enthusiastically become involved in the roll-out and development of ISM. Notwithstanding our support for and confidence in above approach, it would be remiss of this committee not to reiterate our previously stated position apropos the need to broaden the sentence tariffs available to the courts. In a small number of cases, fixed tariffs are not appropriate, supervision in the community is not a workable option and consequently there is a need for “*risk assessment*” and options of containment that reflect the “*level of risk*” presented.

Psychiatric Service.

While there is not a resident psychiatrist the prison is serviced weekly by a visiting psychiatrist who is supported by a community psychiatric nurse who visits on a number of days per week. In the current year Arbour Hill did not have any major psychiatric issues and those needs that did arise were very well catered for. During the year only two prisoners were transferred to the Central mental Hospital, one has since returned and the other is continuing to receive treatment.

The Probation Service.

Arbour Hill has two full time Probation Service posts in addition to one part time Senior Officer. They perform a range of duties, *committal work, general counseling, sentence planning, family related issues, Lifers Group, Anger Management Group, Alcohol Awareness Group* and in cooperation with the educational services *Group Skills and pre-release work*. Probation Officers also work with the Psychology Service in the delivery of therapeutic programs. The Probation Service also plays an important role in Arbour Hill Prison through individual contact with prisoners and the coordination and delivery of group programs. The service also works with prisoners on an individual basis to confront their offending behavior and to guide them towards greater understanding of their responsibilities to themselves, their families and their communities. The Service endeavors to help prisoners manage their time in custody to enable them to fully utilize all the rehabilitative services in the prison so that they can make the required changes in their lives to ensure that they do not offend again. The Probation Service is also the lead agency in

prisoner family liaison and the facilitation of outside agencies such as AA, AVP, NA, GROW, The Samaritans and other specialist counseling services coming into the prison. The Probation Team at Arbour Hill also provide in-depth reports on prisoners for the Parole Board, supports the prison authorities in the management of prisoners in custody and in assessing the potential risk they may pose to the outside community. They also have a major responsibility in liaising with external Probation Services so as to ensure that Post Release Supervision Orders are activated and complied with.

LIBRARY - The library is opened for at least one period every day throughout the week including weekends and also opens on weekday evenings from 5 PM to 7.30 PM. A wide range of books and other materials are available and prisoners working in the library area are also completing library service courses. The Library has a computerised operational system and books/Tapes/Cd etc. may be ordered or sought via network connection to Dublin City Library Service.

Visits.

Visits to Arbour Hill take place on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays & Saturdays: there are no visit on Thursdays or Sundays. Visits are by prior arrangement only [*dedicated phone number*] and are scheduled between 10-00 AM and 12-00 noon & 2-00 PM and 4-00 PM on the designated days.

VISITOR'S WAITING ROOM - Play facilities for young children have been provided in the visitors waiting area together with tea/coffee making facilities.

INFORMATION TO PRISONERS – A new updated information booklet on prison regimes, rules, entitlements and services is part of the induction 'pack' handed to all prisoners on arrival at Arbour Hill.

GYMNASIUM - The physical well being of prisoners is well catered for with a full complement of trained staff including a PE Teacher on duty to encourage and maximise the use of the facilities. Mindful of the age-specific groups in this facility special courses are run for the over 50's.

DRUG-FREE FACILITY

As in previous years Arbour Hill has maintained its drug-free status. Methadone maintenance is not a requirement in Arbour Hill. On committal prisoners are informed that Arbour Hill is drug free and that policy and procedures are in place to ensure that it stays that way. The constant vigilance of staff and the excellent staff/prisoner relationship helps in maintaining this position. Most of the prisoners here are serving long sentences and this results in staff and prisoners knowing each other well. One benefit is that prisoners who may be experiencing problems are identified at an early stage and dealt with as effectively as possible. Long-term prisoners do not want unnecessary

stricter regimes imposed on their daily routines and therefore they don't get involved in drugs misuse. This also means that if new prisoners are involved in any illegal or dubious activity it very quickly comes to the attention of staff and can be dealt with very swiftly. Visits are also very strictly monitored and routine random urine samples are taken.

Facilities & Services. [Health care.]

- ★ 24 hour Medical Orderly/Nurse cover.
- ★ A G.P. five days a week. (On call at weekends).
- ★ Five resident Psychologists.
- ★ A visiting Psychiatrist.⁺
- ★ A visiting Psychiatric Nurse.
- ★ Dental care provided by Dublin Dental Hospital.
- ★ Visiting Psychotherapist.
- ★ Visiting Chiropodist.
- ★ Optician as required.
- ★ AA.
- ★ NA.
- ★ GROW.
- ★ St Vincent De Paul
- ★ Legion Of Mary.
- ★ Samaritans. ***[Including a LISTENER programme - additional "listeners" trained this year].

*** The willing participation of prisoners in this initiative is laudable
And we are all indebted to the "Samaritans" whose efforts and
training made this very worthwhile support possible.

Treatment Programmes.

- 📁 Building Better Lives.
- 📁 Thinking Skills Programme.
- 📁 Group Skills Programme.
- 📁 'Lifers' Programme.
- 📁 Pre Release Programme [Preparation for independent Living].
- 📁 Alternatives To Violence Programme.
- 📁 Anger Management.
- 📁 Successful living.

The launch of the Building Better Lives (BBL) programme is a significant development in the course of 2009. Based on a much lauded Canadian model this 'module' based therapeutic intervention was launched in early 2009, completely replaces the 'Sex Offender Treatment Programme' and makes Arbour Hill the national center of excellence for the treatment of sex offenders. It is hoped that Wheatfield and Midlands may be able to deliver some modules but ultimately the programme is centered here in Arbour Hill.

During the year our psychology contingent has been strengthened from three to five to facilitate the launch of BBL and the Committee met with Dr. Esther Lonergan {*Lead Psychologist*} in July, who was kind enough to provide a briefing on the origin, content, direction and operation of BBL. It is not an exaggeration to say that BBL is an imaginative, expansive and progressive programme that we sincerely believe will make a substantial contribution to:-

- A) *The treatment of sex offenders.*
 - B) *A reduction in recidivism.*
 - C) *The management of risk - post release.*
-

Education in 2009!

The Education Unit is a very busy place providing a huge range of courses including literacy, computer studies, languages, science, social studies, road transport management, business studies and law, history, mathematics and applied mathematics, English and civil, social and political education. A number of prisoners successfully completed the Junior and Leaving Certificate examinations and increasing numbers are undertaking FETAC modules **and** Open University Exams. The commitment of the staff in this unit is to be highly commended and this is borne out by the fact that 86% of prisoners now take part in some form of course from basic literacy right up to FETAC and degree courses. The Education Unit makes an enormous contribution to the positive atmosphere that pervades here, it not only educates, it entertains, it develops and sustains a sense that positive development is always an option! In co-operation with the other services the education unit also plays a major role in the preparation and readiness of prisoners for release.

Workshops, Training and the Industrial Area.

Arbour Hill's industrial area consists of six separate work areas: print, fabric, woodwork, braille, waste management and catering and provides work/training for almost 120 prisoners. They produce wonderful work for charities such as Barrettstown, Durrow Castle and the Irish Para-Olympic Committee. During the year (*as a special project*) an old dilapidated boat (*small sailing cruiser*) was completely rebuilt and subsequently presented (*By Director General Brian Purcell*) to the Garda Juvenile Liaison Team in Limerick. The expertise and enthusiasm invested in the project can only be described as inspirational. The transfer of skills is a key part of workshop activity and can be so important post release. Additionally it is very important that prisoners are occupied throughout the day as idleness can be soul destroying in its own way. The enthusiasm and skills of staff working in the overall industrial area is something that needs to be seen to be believed. In cooperation with the Head Teacher the Industrial Manager continuously seeks to broaden the range of certifiable courses, including FETAC Awards etc.

Waste management!

In Waste management a major ongoing operation continues, building on the momentous achievements of previous years. Arbour Hill has an excellent all-weather recycling area in which eleven prisoners are engaged full-time, together with supervising officers. It has won a number of municipal awards in the past for the management of waste and the prison has made a DVD of the entire process of waste management. This facility not only handles waste from within Arbour Hill but also throughout the whole Prison Service. It is worth noting that a number of prisoners have been able to secure employment, post release as a direct result of their involvement in the waste management operation. The development and expansion of this award winning project, over a relatively short period of time is quite extraordinary and is a credit to the industrial staff and prisoners whose labour and enthusiasm have made it possible. We note with disappointment that the financial gain (which is considerable) is not allocated for the use of Arbour Hill, rather it is viewed as an exchequer saving. The Committee is of the view that such savings should be used as an encouragement and consequently should be available to the 'saver'.

The Kitchen!

Arbour Hill Prison has a 'Q' Mark Kitchen which is operated to the highest standards. We would like to congratulate the catering staff and prisoners working in the kitchen area for their ongoing dedication to maintaining the highest possible standards. Hygiene and cleanliness are paramount in the preparation and presentation of food. A 28 day rotating menu is used in addition to specific diets for Muslims, Jews and some other non-national prisoners. Rice is routinely offered as an alternative to potatoes. Operating standards are such that it's no surprise that Arbour Hill was the national winner of the E.I.Q.A. Sapphire Award for food safety and food hygiene; that is, in addition to maintaining its "Q" mark status in 2008.

In 2009 it surpassed that and was the overall winner of the EMERALD AWARD which is the highest available in the E.I.Q.A. awards.

The standards in Arbour Hill's kitchen are equal to or surpass the highest standards available anywhere in this country and are a credit to the staff and prisoners alike.

Chairman's summary.

2009 was, I suspect, a challenging year for all institutions and Arbour Hill was no exception. However having carried out our duties to the best of our ability we are happy to report that Arbour Hill Prison has been managed with propriety and humanity at all times. The well being of prisoners, their personal development and ultimately their rehabilitation is always in focus. It may not always work but that is never used as an excuse not to try. The roll-out of *Integrated Sentence Management* and the *Building Better Lives Programme* reflect the positive, optimistic, creative and developmental mindset evident in Arbour Hill. It is so encouraging to be surrounded by an atmosphere of

positivity and can-do. Integrated Sentence Management is a quite extraordinary development that allows for the management of a custodial sentence, based on an in-depth risk assessment of the offender, throughout the whole currency of the sentence and to include appropriate post release support for sufficient time to enable released prisoners to have a chance to establish themselves in new surroundings and independent living! Such a system obviously requires the involvement and support of a multi-domination team consisting of Prison Personnel, Education, Probation, Psychology, Psychiatry in addition to targeted support from Community Probation, Prisoner Welfare, The Gardai and a number of voluntary organizations. We would urge that every possible resource and support be provided to ensure the implementation, consolidation and ultimate success of ISM. We are equally enthused by the development of Building Better Lives, (BBL) this is a major development in the treatment of sex offenders and offers the potential to deliver a cutting edge approach to tackling a difficult and problematic area which is unfortunately becoming an ever increasing issue in today's world.

In 2009 Arbour Hill has maintained its relaxed atmosphere and caring ethos. Governor Dowling and his staff are to be complimented on the regime they deliver and sustain, in keeping with the constitutional and legal obligations placed upon them. The service delivered daily, to the highest professional and caring standard, by management, staff, teachers, probation service, psychology, chaplaincy etc. is to be complimented and we sincerely thank them for their assistance and cooperation during 2009. It would be remiss of this Committee not to reflect that we look forward to 2010 in the confidence and sincere belief that considerable progress and ground breaking initiatives are underway and will be delivered at Arbour Hill!

Appreciation.

This committee is very fortunate to have a secretary of the calibre and knowledge of P.J. McAndrew who provides a tremendous secretarial service, keeps us fully briefed on all developments and is meticulous in his arrangements for all of our meetings etc. He deserves particular mention and thanks in our report.

This concludes the Arbour Hill Visiting Committee Annual Report for 2009.

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Ms Rita Hayes

Rita Hayes.

[Chairman].

Ms Angela O'Connor.

Angela O'Connor

[V/Chair].

Ms Ita Greene.

Ms Eithne Killeen.

Ms Martina Coombes.

Martina Coombes.

Ms Wilhelmina Daly.

Wilhelmina Daly

Mr Philip Cantwell.

Philip Cantwell

Mr Cathal Finucane.

Mr Charles O'Connor.

Charles O'Connor.

