

*Loughan House*  
*Visiting Committee*  
*Annual Report 2007*  
*( 01.12.06 - 30.11.07 )*

## ***Loughan House Visiting Committee Annual Report 2007***

***We, the undersigned members of the Loughan House Visiting Committee, have pleasure in presenting this our Annual Report for 2007***

*The committee held a total of 12 meetings during the year all of which were well attended.*

*During the year Mr Clifford Kelly, Mr Eddie Feeley, Mrs Rita Delahunty, Mr Eugene Delaney, Mrs Kathleen Richey, Mr Naul Mc Cole, Mr Declan Connolly, Mr Brendan Hughes, Mr Martin Doonan, Mr Turlough Smith, Mr Padraig O Biadha and Mr Charles Fleming served on the Committee.*

*Two members were newly appointed to the Board in 2007, Mr Padraig O Biadha and Mr Charles Fleming.*

*Mr Clifford Kelly served as Chairperson of the Visiting Committee and Mrs Kathleen Richey as Vice Chairperson.*

*We had a total of 559 committals from other institutions during the year to the end of November 2007. The Temporary Release programme continues to work well with only a very small percentage of inmates failing to comply with their conditions of release.*

*Fifty-five inmates absconded from Loughan House during the year with most inmates being returned to custody shortly afterwards.*

*Ms Catherine Comerford served as Governor in Loughan House and Mr James Reilly as Assistant Governor.*

### ***Visits.***

*During the year the committee members visited the house on their unscheduled visits and found all inmates in a good and contented manner. The house and grounds were always in a neat and tidy condition and likewise the kitchen area that received excellent reports when audited, being in pristine condition on each of our inspections.*

*No annual visit was carried out to any other institution during the year on the instruction of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.*

### ***Education***

*The new building under construction to accommodate the education unit was completed and is now operational. This new building facilitates the broadening of services already offered in the education area and provides a more comfortable learning and ergonomically adaptable environment to facilitate the ongoing upgrading of the services and courses on offer.*

*This education unit continues to offer an excellent range of subjects to the inmates from basic literacy skills to City and Guilds courses, Fetac Courses and courses up to comprehensive third level degree courses. Such diverse subjects and topics as cookery*

*skills, manual handling and abrasive wheel training courses, woodwork and parenting skills are on offer. Inmates continue to attend this unit on an enthusiastic and totally voluntary basis.*

*In addition, inmates attend various courses outside Loughan House whenever the opportunity and demand arise. Such courses as ECDL, Computing, Sculpturing, Organic food production and Personal development are attended. Support for the delivery of certified courses is provided by Fas. A mobile cinema has attended Loughan House in addition to post release advisory services from the Dept of Health and the Department of Social Welfare that were well availed of by the inmates and continue to offer a valuable service in providing vital information to inmates to assist them on their release.*

*A cross border initiative called the "Eighteen to Twenty" project was launched on a pilot basis to offer young people self development training. Loughan House inmates participated in this initiative and hopefully the project will receive more funding to allow it continue with this type of training. The Loughan House Management team will continue to promote it among the inmates*

#### ***The CAIT initiative***

*This continues to be in use seven days of the week and has a high level of participation from the inmates. Inmates have benefited greatly from this facility and it compliments the activities ongoing in the education area by providing out of school hours computer access.*

#### ***Probation and Welfare Service.***

*During the year this service was assigned a full time Probation and Welfare Officer Mr Oliver Fallon. While the Probation and Welfare Officer Colin Halligan provided an excellent service his tenure in Loughan House was temporary until such times as a full time Officer was available. A good service is provided with inmates making good use of the service. A pre-release substance abuse programme is run in the institution by this service in conjunction with the Education unit and the Health Service Executive with inmates very willing to participate.*

*Other programmes run under this service include the Linkage Programme that was in part funded by the Department of Social and Family affairs providing a link between pre release inmates and the various training and employment services in the broader community.*

#### ***Pre-release Programme***

*A formal pre-release programme is run in Loughan House by an Adult Guidance Teacher and this should greatly assist inmates when they are released as it covers all practical aspects of living and working in the community following release. The topics and skills learned include Safe Pass Certification, Forklift training, Driver Theory Tests, Personal Finance Management and Men's Health . Training under this initiative is delivered in Loughan House where practical and is enthusiastically attended by inmates who find it of great practical relevance and assistance in obtaining a job on their release. Again Fas offer great support in this programme whenever feasible*

### ***New policies and regulations***

*During the year the rules governing the administration of prisons were updated to more accurately reflect the times we live in. Mobile phone possession while in custody was made an offence under the Criminal Justice Act with penalties of up to two years in prison.*

*A new remission rate of 33.33% was introduced to replace the 50 % rate. All inmates would receive the 25% remission on committal with an additional 8.33% for further good conduct by engaging in authorised structured activity and the Minister being satisfied that the inmate is less likely to re-offend and better reintegrate into the community*

### ***External Agencies***

*The needs of the inmates continue to be attended to by members of Alcoholics Anonymous when they have volunteers available. The Samaritans continue to promote their service within the institution through the provision of informative documentation and the help of the various bodies within the institution itself.*

### ***Health Care.***

*The provision of health care continues to be provided by our two visiting doctors and dental surgeon to a very high standard. Psychiatric and Psychology services are provided whenever the need arises. There is a dentistry on site and this helps greatly with the provision of the dental services*

### ***Kitchen***

*The kitchen area is regularly audited during the year to improve on the already high standard achieved in this area and a standard certified by audit from the Food and Safety Authority frequently confirms the high standards set and maintained*

*The Loughan House Kitchen was awarded the Sapphire EIQA Award for the first time in September 2007 and was also awarded the EIQA Excellence Ireland Award in Food Hygiene and Catering for 2007 a credit to all concerned.*

*A wide and varied menu is provided on a daily basis to inmates.*

*During the year an ongoing tutorial is offered to inmates who work in the kitchen area to complete a Primary Course in Food Hygiene. Staff, who work in the kitchen area, have successfully completed a Train the Trainer course to provide training to inmates working in the kitchen on best practices in catering skills.*

### ***Inmates Requests.***

*During the year three inmates requested to meet with the Committee. All inmates are given the opportunity to speak to the Committee in an unhindered manner. Inmate's requests to the committee are dealt with promptly but none complained about their treatment in Loughan House. Inmates expressed a high level of satisfaction with the staff and the facilities provided.*

### ***Chaplaincy***

*The spiritual needs of the inmates are attended to by a visiting chaplain from the local parish. Mass is celebrated on a weekly basis and on all the various feast days during the year.*

*The chaplain is available to attend to any inmate whenever called upon to do so and was greatly assisted by Sister Ellen Wallace who passed away during the year. The Committee would like to acknowledge the dedication and commitment shown by Sr Ellen in her work for the inmates.*

*The requirements of all inmates of whatever religious persuasions are attended to as required.*

### ***Maintenance & New Developments.***

*The members would like to thank the Governor and all her staff for the way they have maintained the buildings and grounds. The general environment of Loughan House was consistent with good residential care and would have greatly contributed to the comfort of its inmates. The new building offering 60 rooms for accommodation purposes along with a number of communal areas was completed and is about to go into service. These new rooms will offer single occupant accommodation in line with the policy of the Irish Prison Service*

*A new all-weather football pitch was constructed and should provide an all weather surface on which inmates can partake in outdoor physical activity on a more frequent basis*

*The new building, to accommodate Administration, Visiting Area, and Workshop completed in 2005 continues to contribute greatly to the comfort of inmates and visitors in addition to the ongoing management of Loughan House.*

### ***Environmental Management System***

*Loughan House's Environmental Management System continues to work well and is contributing greatly to the local environment and raising awareness of environmental matters.*

*This project continues to expand on an annual basis with the objective of educating inmates on the need to be environmentally aware and train them for potential employment in this area.*

*The ongoing renovation and development of the building in Loughan House have made it difficult for this project to achieve all its objectives this year but a good effort is being made under difficult circumstances*

### ***Library***

*The library service continues to be provided by Cavan County Library. It is a valuable and well run service open three times a week under the care of a dedicated part time Librarian. Inmates make great use of this service.*

*When the current phase of construction is complete there are plans to move the library to a more spacious environment that would be more centrally located thus affording the library greater prominence and accessibility.*

*In conclusion, we the Members of the Loughan House Visiting Committee would agree that Loughan House provided a good cost effective service to its residents and continues to review and upgrade the services it provides. We would like to complement the Governor and Staff for the commitment and dedication they give to the well being of the inmates in their care. Finally we would like to thank the Governor and all her Staff for the courtesy and co-operation extended to us on all our visits throughout the year.*

_____ <b>Chairperson</b>	_____ <i>Member</i>
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_____ <b>Vice Chairperson</b>	_____ <i>Member</i>
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