

Limerick Prison Visiting Committee Annual Report encompassing 15-12-2004 to 06-12-2005

We the members of Limerick Prison Visiting Committee are pleased to present our **annual report** .

The committee held monthly meetings in conjunction with interim meetings and other visits to the prison on occasions. We met with individual prisoners at various locations throughout the Prison with on average three to four prisoners presenting themselves to the committee per month. Areas identified as problematic for prisoners are categorised as follows:

1. Transfers to other places of detention,
2. Loss of privileges,
3. Restoration of lost remission,
4. Family visits,
5. Medical treatment,
6. General complaints .

Education Service

The committee is happy to see the ongoing progress been made in the new Education Unit and Health Care Centre. It is envisaged that this capital project will be completed on time. The committee has found that the education staff within Limerick Prison continue to provide a high quality programme of education for prisoners, this despite the current limitations encountered due to infrastructural constraints. The Education Unit currently offers a number of programmes which underpin Positive Sentence Management as espoused by this committee.

These programmes facilitate inmates to: -

1. Cope with their sentence,
2. Achieve personal development goals,
3. Reintegration into society post release,
4. The establishment of an appetite and an appreciation of the Life Long Learning concept .

Students where appropriate, are encouraged and facilitated to work with the transdisciplinary team within the prison environment. It is noted by the committee that every effort is made to broaden access and participation in education within the prison. The committee congratulates all students who completed exams in the education unit over the last twelve months. Current analysis shows a participation rate between 55- 60% . Pre-release programmes continue to be based on a multi - disciplinary ethos . The committee also notes that students within the Education Unit continue to offer their work to charitable causes within Limerick City and the surrounding areas. Charitable contributions include: -

- Items of furniture
- Craft and Art work,
- Fabric shop projects.

Benefactors include CARI, Adapt House, Milford Hospice, St Gabriel`s School and Centre, The Alzheimer`s Society, Crumlins Childrens Hospital and Bedford Row Project.

Infrastructural areas

The committee recommends that in - cell sanitation currently in C, D and E wings be extended to the two remaining wings, which are without same at present i.e. A Wing and B Wing . **The committee recommends this as a matter of priority and urgency.**

Catering

The highest standards of industry best practice in catering have been applied to the catering department of Limerick Prison. Throughout the year the committee has visited the catering department and have found it to be of the highest standard of cleanliness and hygiene. All food items were sampled at points of production and service to prisoners and were found to be of the highest quality both in presentation and make - up. The committee would like to complement the catering team, both staff and trainees on gaining the Treble Excellence Ireland Hygiene award for the fourth year in a row . We are happy to see that the introduction of the 28 day cycle menu in Limerick Prison has been successful. This has resulted in the expansion and broadening of the food types available to all prisoners .

The committee recommends that the ceiling in the Catering Department be replaced by a stainless steel fixture akin to what the committee observed in the Midlands Prison.

Substance Abuse

We the committee, note the continued efforts of the Governor and his staff in the curtailment of the illegal use of drugs within Limerick Prison. This is an ongoing battle and the committee have noted the continued work of prison staff at all levels especially in the control room through electronic monitoring via internal and external cameras, visitors reception, committal reception and visiting box in an effort to curb the entry of drugs .

To curtail the supply of drugs into the prison the committee notes the installation of

additional cameras throughout the prison as a whole.

The committee is particularly happy with the service being provided by Aljeff, where three counsellors are providing a service three morning's a week.

Healthcare

The committee is glad to see that there are three new Nurse Officers appointed to the Prison. The committee is particularly pleased to see that two of these nurses are female and perform part of their assigned duties in the Female Prison and have expanded the healthcare services to include educational programmes in the area of women's health.

The Committee is concerned that the Prison Medical Officer is not fulfilling the patient contact hours as provided for in his contract.

Psychiatric Service

The committee is of the view that the current position regarding the delivery of a psychiatric service is not meeting the needs of prisoners. The provision of one clinic per week is not sufficient and needs to be increased to two clinics per week. The court service is requesting more and more psychiatric reports for defendants before the court and consequently this means a decreased service to prisoners in the prison. The committee would strongly recommend that the proposed forensic psychiatric service being established by the Health Service Executive be implemented as a matter of urgency.

Forward Planning

Limerick Prison was opened in 1821 and while some welcome upgrades have taken place, the committee is of the view that continual improvements need to take place. In this context we are happy that a **forward planning committee** is working on a ten year plan for Limerick Prison.

Employment

The committee would like to see a wider range of employments available to offenders in order to prepare them for their eventual release into society. The current situation is that there are not enough places for prisoners who are seeking employment. We look forward to this matter being addressed in forward planning.

Business Plan

The committee has noted that the Prison Business plan is progressing and targets are constantly kept under review and expanded.

Connect

The committee is disappointed that the **connect project** was suspended due to resource restrictions but are heartened to hear that it will form part of the new Organisational Change Process being implemented on 21-01-06.

Psychology Service

The committee urgently recommends that a replacement psychologist be assigned to the prison as a matter of priority . This matter is outstanding from last years recommendations.

Visitation

We visited the Midlands Prison in September this year within the guidelines of all current circulars and regulations. We feel that this was a valuable learning experience for the committee as a whole .

Farewell

We the committee would like to express our thanks to Mr Ger Connolly, Colette Flynn-Scanlon, Anne O Keeffe, Tom O Keeffe, Michael Fahy for their commitment and hard work during their tenure on the committee. We wish them every health and happiness in further pursuits .

Welcome

We welcome the appointment to the committee of Tony Lane, Thomas Harrington, Seamus Quinn, Michael Hctor, Liam Sadlier, John Hodnett and Edward Creighton.

Condolences

We the committee wish to pass on our condolences to our former Chairperson Teresa Lynch on the death of her sister and also to Noreen Mitchell on the death of her brother. May they rest in peace .

In conclusion we wish to express our thanks to:

- The Governor,
- The Deputy Governor,
- The Assistant Governor,
- The secretary and assistant secretary,
- All prison staff .

We would also like to thank all those who gave advice and assistance to the committee throughout the year, which enabled us to fulfil our duties . This help, co - operation and assistance is very much appreciated by all members of the Visiting Committee of Limerick Prison .

Tony Lane

Tony Lane Chairperson

Tom Harrington

Tom Harrington

Teresa Lynch

Teresa Lynch

Seamus Quinn

Seamus Quinn

Micheal Hctor

Eileen O'Brien

Eileen O'Brien

Noreen Mitchell

Liam Sadler

Liam Sadler

Pat Driscoll

Pat Driscoll

Michael O'Shea

Michael O'Shea

John Hodnett

John Hodnett

Eddie Creighton

Eddie Creighton

_____ Tony Lane Chairperson

_____ Tom Harrington

_____ Teresa Lynch

_____ Seamus Quinn

_____ Micheal Hootor

_____ Eileen O'Brien

X Noreen Mitchell _____ Noreen Mitchell *X*

_____ Liam Sadler

_____ Pat Driscoll

_____ Michael O'Shea

_____ John Hodnett

_____ Eddie Creighton

_____ Tony Lane Chairperson

_____ Tom Harrington

_____ Teresa Lynch

_____ Seamus Quinn

x Michael Hootor _____ Micheal Hootor *x*

_____ Eileen O'Brien

_____ Noreen Mitchell

_____ Liam Sadler

_____ Pat Driscoll

_____ Michael O'Shea

_____ John Hodnett

_____ Eddie Creighton