

Annual Report for 2020.

To the

Minister for Justice Helen McEntee TD

From

Cloverhill Visiting Committee

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The Visiting Committee of Cloverhill Prison is pleased to present the Annual Report for 2020 to the Minister for Justice.

Due to Covid-19 this has been a very different year for the prison Visiting Committee, prisoners, management, and staff. Committee members have not visited Cloverhill prison itself since February 2020 which has affected our ability to gather much of the information required to assist us in the performance of our duties. The Committee very much miss meeting prisoners face to face, the interaction that normally occurs forms an essential insight into the recommendations in our Annual Report. The Report will reflect this changed situation. In previous years the Committee have visited each area of the prison and have established good contact and working relations with the services within the prison and we have continually drawn upon these relationships throughout Covid-19 and in the writing of this Report.

The Visiting Committee in this Report, will outline our encounters with prisoners during the term, how we operated within the constraints imposed by the pandemic to ensure the presence and work of the Committee remained visible and active, and the support of the Governor and staff in facilitating our online meetings.

Members of the Committee wish to acknowledge and respectfully thank each prisoner who spoke with us regarding their needs and concerns.

The Committee wish to acknowledge the immense challenge to prisoners and staff posed Covid-19 restrictions. For people in custody, the restrictions meant that they were isolated without family visits, and imposed restriction of services such as shower facilities, education and access to the gym and yard.

The measures put in place to help alleviate the effects of the lockdown on prisoners, has been impressive. These include, in cell phones service, TV channels and newsletters, distributed in cell to each prisoner by the Red Cross. Video calls and additional phone contacts with families has helped to maintain family contact. Library service was maintained with the willing assistance of prison officers and the chaplaincy service, who delivered books directly to the cell of each prisoner. The new system of direct lodgement of prisoners' money to a bank or Post Office by a family member not only allowed easy access but also eased concerns particularly in regard to travelling and family safety. It is clear from the introduction of these new measures to see the close collaborative spirit between the services, the high degree of co-operation, support and commitment from the Governor and staff was frequently commented on by the different services.

Many changes in practices implemented during the Covid-19 have been beneficial for the prisoners and some not. There needs to be a continued focus on prisoner's rights to ensure that temporary structures do not become the new norm. In particular we refer to amendments to the statutory amendments to the Prison Rules, 21st July 2020, Prison (Amendment) Rules 2020.

The Visiting Committee wish to credit prisoners for the insight, the adjustment they showed and the recognition of the reality of life with Covid-19, at this difficult time. A sense of common purpose appeared to exist between prisoners and staff in Cloverhill.

The Visiting Committee would like to acknowledge and record their regard for the support, humanity and compassion shown by Governor Harris Assistant Governors Galgey and Treacy, and staff to the men in their care.

The Visiting Committee acknowledge the very good relationship we continue to have with the Governor, Assistant Governors and staff. We thank them for the support in facilitating the online meetings, for the calls with prisoners and for joining the monthly online meetings. Without this support the good functioning of the Committee would not have been possible. In addition we thank the secretary to the Governor for her valued support to us.

Section 1 Visiting Committee

The Visiting Committee has four members.

Nuala Ryan - Chairperson

Laura Jenkins

Fintan Hudson

Alan Nason - Joined March 2020

Committee meetings were held in January and February 2020. These were the last visits made by the Committee to the prison in 2020. Meetings resumed in July, August and September 2020, in the boardroom in Cloverhill. The meeting for October 8th was cancelled in compliance with regulations.

The Committee continued the monthly meetings on line and met in October, November and December 2020. These online calls were facilitated by Cloverhill. The Governors joined each monthly meeting, answered queries, outlined issues, and presented the Complaints Book for inspection.

The Visiting Committee maintained contact with the Governor by telephone. Members of the Committee were updated by email each Friday, figures and updated account of activities in the prison supplied to the Chairperson by the Governor in weekly telephone calls. Issues of concern relating to mental and physical health were raised with the Governor.

From an early stage of the pandemic a core objective of Committee was to ensure that prisoners were aware that the Visiting Committee remained active and available to speak with prisoners and listen to their concerns.

To raise awareness of the presence of the Visiting Committee notices on the role of the Committee were printed and appeared in the newsletters issued by the Irish Prison Service with the Irish Red Cross. A flyer entitled 'Visiting Committee Notice' was created and given to each new prisoner on his committal. This document contained a full page message from the Visiting Committee stating that the Visiting Committee *'continue to be around to hear any concerns and offer appropriate assistance to prisoners by phone or video'* and advising the prisoner to let an officer know and the Governor would arrange for a call to be put through to a member of the Visiting Committee. A similar notice

was posted on the prison video channel. Additionally there are notices relating to the Visiting Committee, generally displayed on the landings of the prison.

After the introduction of visiting restrictions, conversations were held with prisoners by telephone.

Since the introduction of the Covid-19 restrictions advice and communication has taken place between the Director General, Caron McCaffrey, Irish Prison Service, the Governor of Cloverhill Prison, Governor Harris, the Chair and Visiting Committee regarding the implications of the pandemic for people in custody, and on the best possible measures to protect prisoners and staff.

The Chairperson attended the AGM of the National Visiting Committee Chairpersons (NPVC) Group held in the Brian Stack Training Centre, at the Irish Prison Training College in Portlaoise in February 2020. Meetings of the NPVC Group continued on line at regular monthly intervals. Reports of these meetings were presented to members of the Cloverhill Visiting Committee.

In September 2020 the Committee participated in the launch of 'The Inspectors Framework for Prisons in Ireland' presented by Inspector of Prisons Patricia Gilheaney, an online event.

The Chairperson, on behalf of the Visiting Committee, made a personal call and letter to Governor Harris on the sad death of a prisoner in September 2020.

In October 2020 members joined the training session 'Infection Course - Control and Prevention Training - Covid-19, organised by the Irish Prison Service.

Section 2 Visits with Prisoners

In January and February 2020 the Visiting Committee made three visits to Cloverhill Prison, and met with three prisoners, in private, separate rooms, on the prison landing.

During the year the Visiting Committee spoke by telephone with nineteen (19) prisoners. In total there were twenty-four (24) telephone calls between prisoners and a member of the Committee. Two prisoners made three requests and one prisoner made two requests. Three other requests did not take place for reasons of transfer of prisoner, change of mind, early discharge.

Prisoner's requests to speak with the Visiting Committee went through the Governor to Integrated Service Management (ISM). A date and time was arranged by them with the Chairperson of the Visiting Committee. The prisoner was brought to a soundproof interview room and connected directly by a secure and confidential line to the home of the Chairperson, on the day of the request.

In every case the Committee member conveyed the concerns raised by the prisoner to the Governor and or the Manager, Integrated Service Management. Cases were referred immediately to the appropriate service. In many instances a case conference was convened that included PICLS team and medical team. Progress and development of each case was followed through, regularly, by the member of the Committee. Sometimes there were practical solutions or arrangements, and contacts with appropriate services suggested. The Governor and ISM personally contacted the prisoner; many times this occurred on the day the call took place. The Committee is satisfied that

each case was dealt with sensitively and efficiently, in a timely manner and feedback given directly to the prisoner.

Calls by prisoners to the Visiting Committee were independent of 'out of cell' time.

Speaking with prisoners by telephone is different. As a service for the prisoners, during the pandemic, it is a practical response and serves a purpose. The Committee are pleased that prisoners requested time with us and that prisoners talked openly and it appeared, comfortably, especially given the traumatic time of the pandemic. In spite of there being no previous experience of hearing prisoner complaints by telephone it was initially surprising how easily and openly prisoners talked. The Committee are happy to have been of service to prisoners during this time but are clear that telephone or video calls can never take the place of face-to-face immediacy and personal interaction.

Most calls related to multiple issues, each issue being a matter of urgency for the prisoner

The main concerns raised by prisoners related to:

- Medical issues including requests for treatment - chiropody - eye care - physical health care
- Mental health issues - anxiety, stress - depression - not coping - isolation - fear - of the future and of others - anger - frustration
- Poor sleeping and requests for medication to aid sleep
- Access to prescribed drugs - drugs used by prisoner prior to prison - not prescribed in prison
- Issues related to cell arrangements
- Delays to services - Addiction and Psychology
- Lack of showers
- Boredom - lack of access to facilities
- Sadness and regrets
- Drugs - within the prison and need for addiction counselling and professional care
- Desire to stay 'clean' from drugs - drug free area
- Issues regarding P19 - prisoners who felt the punishment was unfair and unreasonable - requests for reversal of decision
- Scuffles in the yards
- Transfers to other prisons - or between floors within the prison - or to single or non-smoking cells
- Bullying issues - between prisoners and from staff
- Perceived physical threats
- Requests to become enhanced prisoners

In the early months of the pandemic calls from prisoners related to issues of concern around video calls with a degree of frustration around waiting times and or broken video links. These particular grievances ceased as the video link services improved and as time progressed. The Committee welcomes the introduction of the video calling facility for prisoners. It provides a welcome means of contact for people in custody with their families and loved ones, particularly where family members live some distance from the prison. The Visiting Committee would like to see this facility retained for

continued future use. However, these calls cannot ever be considered to be an equivalent replacement for family contact through visits.

A high level of anxiety, poor sleeping, medical issues, mental distress and the issue of drugs were particularly prevalent among prisoners. Boredom, lack of exercise and facilities were regularly raised by prisoners. Quarantine was hard and difficult, described by one prisoner as 'frightful'. The lack of showering facilities was a frequent issue. Many men expressed regret and anger with the reality of their lives and with their confinement. Frequently prisoners spoke of wanting to be 'clean' and 'wanting 'things to go well'. Prisoners when asked explained graphically how they are feeling, mentally and physically. Some prisoners, when asked, seemed unaware of the services available to them or were not users of the services. The Visiting Committee advocate that the available supports and services to prisoners are continually advertised.

Prisoner requests to speak with the Visiting Committee tapered off in the last quarter of the year. It may be that the prisoners reflected life outside the prison and had come to an understanding of life with Covid-19. The reason is not clear. It is vitally important, even more so, while Covid-19 restrictions remain in place, that prisons are subject to independent oversight, and that people in custody can raise their concerns with an impartial body. The Committee will continue to raise awareness of their role within Cloverhill prison and for people in custody.

The Committee would again like to thank and acknowledge each prisoner who asked to speak with us during the year. Each prisoner has his own private problems, anxieties and stress. The Visiting Committee is mindful that each prisoner deserves respectful and careful attention to whatever his concerns may be and the knowledge that these are noted, will be taken seriously and attended to. The welfare and successful rehabilitation of the prisoner to society remains our fundamental priority.

Section 3 Effects of Covid-19 on those in custody during 2020

Public health measures in response to the pandemic and the introduction of Covid-19 restrictions had a profound effect on the daily lives of those in custody in prison.

The Visiting Committee had limited phone call contact with a small number of prisoners in 2020; however it is clear from these conversations that many measures brought great hardship to prisoners. In an earlier section we highlighted these concerns.

Cocooning, in the first months of 2020, long lengths of time in cell, the absence of social contact; worry about close family members were consistently raised; the lack of showering facilities had a most profound impact. Almost every prisoner highlighted mental and physical health issues. It would appear that Covid-19 restrictions exacerbated pre-existing mental and general health issues of the prisoners. The Visiting Committee would strongly recommend a comprehensive, high level investigative analysis of the immediate and long term effects brought about by the constraints and restrictions imposed during the Covid-19 crises. The Committee recommend IPS and inter-governmental level post Covid-19 review of the effects of these measures on the physical and mental health of prisoners.

The Covid-19 pandemic also brought an opportunity for reform. The reduction in prison population, the greater use of early and temporary release is welcomed as is the reductions in cell overcrowding. The reduction of drugs in the prison was an enormous influence in keeping order and alleviating stress during 2020. The Committee welcomed the development and use of technology and recommend that in cell telephone access installed to provide direct lines to Psychology, Addiction and Chaplaincy service be maintained and expanded to include other areas that may arise.

One significant change to the regime during 2020 was the suspension of visits to people in custody from March 2020 to July 2020 and from October 2020 to December 2020. Prison visits are vitally important for maintaining relationships and for prisoner’s well-being. A statutory amendment to Prison Rules on 21st July 2020, S.I. No. 250/2020, Prison (Amendment) Rules 2020, Rule 36(a) granted prison Governors the ability to suspend prisoners’ entitlement to visits in adherence to advice provided by the Department of Health or the Health Service Executive - the Committee recognise the profound impact of this change for people in custody.

Another significant change to the regime concerned access to fresh air exercise. The statutory amendment to Prison (Amendment) Rules, Rule 32 (a) which took effect on July 21st also granted prison Governors the ability to restrict or suspend the entitlement to physical recreation and exercise with respect to public health advice. In addition to this, the pandemic restrictions have seen physical restrictions to the school in Cloverhill. These changes in regime have meant that people in custody have experienced significant periods of time in cell during 2020. The Visiting Committee urge the Prison Service to review and reverse these restrictions as soon as is practicable, in adherence with the advice of the Department of Health and the Health Service Executive.

Section 4 Accommodation

The Visiting Committee remain seriously concerned at prisoner cell occupancy and at the number of prisoners required to use toilet facilities in the presence of others.

Although the prison population in Cloverhill has decreased in 2020 to below 400, the number of prisoners without toileting privacy remains relatively high.

Table 1. Form 1 overview on 20th October 2020 show the number of prisoners still sharing triple cells and the smaller number of prisoners four plus (4+) cells.

Prison	Number In Custody On 20th October 2020	Number of Prisoners in Single Cell	Number of Prisoners in Double cell	Number of Prisoners in Triple cell	Number of prisoners in a 4+ cell	Toilet Presence of others	24 hr access to toilet facilities in Private
Cloverhill	377	74	68	219	16	303	74

Extracted from Irish Prison Service – Census Prison Population October 2020 – Cell Occupancy – In Cell Sanitation

These conditions remain a transgression of the dignity of the human person, are contrary to the Mandela Rules which specify that 'sanitary installations shall be adequate to enable every prisoner to comply with the needs of nature in a clean and decent manner' (Rule 15).

The decrease in the number of immigrant people travelling into the country has eased the disruption which contributes to the overcrowding and sleeping on mattresses on the floor that have been a regular occurrence in Cloverhill,

The Committee repeat that immigration detainees should not be housed in prison and again recommend that F Block be used as an interim solution for immigrant detainees, pending the building of an appropriate building, adjacent to the airport, for that specific purpose.

The Committee remain concerned that remand and sentenced prisoners mix together on the same landings. This is again contrary to Mandela Rules that clearly call for the separation of different categories of prisoner and explicitly state that young prisoners should be separated from older prisoners (Rule 11).

Section 5 Death in Custody

It is with much regret that we learnt of the death of a prisoner while in custody

The Visiting Committee would like to express our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of the deceased.

Section 6 D2 Landing

The High Support Unit at D2 wing in Cloverhill Prison contains mainly people with severe and enduring mental illness, many acutely unwell and in need of hospital admission. Psychiatric care for patients on D2 landing and elsewhere in Cloverhill is delivered by the Prison Inreach and Court Liaison Service (PICLS), part of National Forensic Mental Health Service (NFMHS). PICLS also provides court liaison/diversion services to District Courts remanding prisoners to Cloverhill.

The size of the landing, Irelands first High Support Wing was approximately doubled in 2017 (from 15 to 29 places) due to overcrowding at a time when a number of people with severe mental illness were sleeping on the floor. For some months during 2020, three cells were converted for infection control purposes, reducing the number of places available.

During 2020 the majority of men on D2 landing were there because of severe mental illness, mainly schizophrenia and related conditions. The number of men on D2 requiring admission varies usually between ten (10) and fifteen (15). Many of the men are from poorer backgrounds and over half the men are homeless. Prison is the least suitable place for them.

Some men require admission to the Central Mental Hospital (CMH). Given the bed crises there since 2014, these men may have to wait for admission and may be left untreated. Prolonged periods of untreated psychosis, we understand, are associated with poorer outcomes and these delays may lead to real and lasting harm and serious consequences for their recovery and rehabilitation.

In 2020 a total of thirteen (13) prisoners were admitted to CMH with two (2) admissions from Cloverhill.

A larger number of men in 2020 needed admission for care but not to the CMH. These are mainly people unfit to be tried by the Courts, many charged with relatively minor offences. These men are generally homeless. There are also a number of remand prisoners charged with serious violent offences who are not suitable for community hospitals

There are frequently long delays in obtaining decisions from the HSE regarding catchment area responsibility. The response to the needs of these homeless men should be based on need not on area. The barrier of homelessness is even more alarming when mentally ill and homeless persons, who courts are willing to grant bail to, are left in a limbo situation in D2 landing.

The Commission on the Prevention of Torture (CPT) in their 2020 report pointed out particular difficulties in effecting transfers of homeless psychotic people because of delays by HSE in determining catchment area responsibility. They further commented that ...*"Prison must not become a solution for managing mentally ill homeless persons"*

Despite the large numbers of severely mentally ill people on remand in Cloverhill, the prison has not had a formal inspection by the Mental Health Commission or Inspector of Mental Health Services.

Since 2016 PICLS Cloverhill has been part of the Quality Network for Prison Mental Health Services (QNPMHS) which represents 48 prisons in Ireland and the UK. Because of the Covid crises the QNPMHS 2020 review did not take place. This review we understand is scheduled to take place in February 2021.

The Visiting Committee are pleased to report that there were many positive initiatives undertaken by Cloverhill Prison Management which were of benefit to the men in D2 landing. The wing has been repainted in bright tones and we understand that new colourful 'Pineapple' furniture installed in the area and yard. Rates of self-harm in Cloverhill reduced further during the Covid crises in 2020.

There are a number of changes which would greatly benefit the men on D2 landing. The Visiting Committee would welcome and recommend enhanced access to activities, particularly school and gym and the development of a recreation room/library as in other landings. Providing Occupational Therapy support for the PICLS Team may assist this. Legislation to provide for more rapid diversion might also help reduce numbers of the severely mentally ill on D2 landing.

The Visiting Committee did not visit D2 landing in 2020. However the Governor with responsibility for the landing spoke on line and by telephone, several times, to outline, update and to answer questions concerning prisoners and their conditions. The Committee have always been impressed by the care and humanity shown by the Governor and the staff to the vulnerable men on D2 landing. In this most difficult year and in the most trying circumstances we understand and acknowledge the commitment to the wellbeing and safety of the men in their care. The Committee are mindful of the

demands working on this landing place on staff and welcome the collaborative effort undertaken by combined services in Cloverhill to deliver specialised training for the officers working on D2 landing with support from the Cloverhill Governors and staff from Irish Prison Service College.

The lack of secure beds for prisoners assessed to have severe mental illness requiring treatment in a secure forensic treatment unit, remain an area of considerable concern for the Visiting Committee and we ask the Minister to take urgent measures to address this ongoing serious situation without delay.

The proposed Task Force on Mental Health and Addiction established by the Minister for Justice in December 2020, understood to be at an advanced stage, is a commitment by government, and a multi-agency approach, to address the needs of critically mental health needs of people in prison and is welcomed with great hope and anticipation by the Visiting Committee.

Section 7 Medical Centre

The Medical Centre reported that the staff load dramatically increased in 2020 with additional work in areas that included the screening, swabbing, quarantining, isolating of prisoners and the attendant administrative work involved in these processes.

The average daily number of prisoners using methadone during 2020 has been 110. This lower number of users for 2020 reflects the lower numbers of prisoners in custody and committal prisoners being referred by the courts. Nevertheless the numbers of prisoners in Cloverhill on methadone treatment remain high in the table percentages of the prison population.

Staff shortages remain a constant issue. Two nurses are on long term sick leave and the two half job sharing nursing posts, reported in the Annual Report of the Visiting Committee, 2019, remain vacant. There is great difficulty in filling these vacant posts and this has been exacerbated by the restrictions on transfer of staff during Covid19.

The Visiting Committee appreciates these difficulties reported by the Medical Centre but underlines the vital need that nursing levels in this busy Medical Centre are maintained.

Most committals continue to come to Cloverhill in the evening and during the night. Most have complicated health and personal problems, some with limited English, and are described as being in a 'chaotic' state. Each person is individually assessed and checked on his arrival in the medical centre by the single night nurse on duty. Given that Cloverhill is a remand prison with numbers presenting during the evening and night, the Visiting Committee once again recommend that the appointment of second night nurse be considered a matter of urgency.

All prisoners committed to Cloverhill during 2020 were assessed medically at the point of entry and as appropriate, placed into quarantine or isolation depending on the travel history of the person.

The Medical Centre is a busy and efficiently operated centre and staff acknowledge the easier working environment brought by the renovations to the Centre in 2019.

Section 8 Addiction Counselling Service

Despite the challenges of operating within the pandemic restrictions the Addiction Counselling Service report that the service provision 2020 has been successful. The Service adjusted to the restrictions, offering sessions through the year. There was a slight increase of client engagement, with an average of six more sessions per month in 2020. The Service advises that both clients and counsellors adapted well to video calls, reflecting the deep commitment of counsellors in keeping the service operative.

The Adduction Counselling Service credit the commitment of the Governor and staff with keeping the service to prisoners operative with no loss of client sessions.

The Visiting Committee is aware of the high number of prisoners who arrive in Cloverhill in a chaotic state, suffer with addiction and mental health issues. They are often referred to Addiction Counselling by the Probation service, Psychiatry service, or Psychology service. Referrals are often on receipt of a court order. People are at their most vulnerable at that time. Remand prisoners are considered particularly vulnerable; it may be their first time in prison, adrift, with no positive plan for future life or rehabilitation. In the case of Cloverhill prison, the Service requires great flexibility in that counsellors are working with prisoners who may go on to be released or who may be sentenced. The average monthly waiting list for Addiction service in Cloverhill, we are advised, has increased to an average of thirty nine (39) prisoners.

The Visiting Committee is aware of the high level of work that continues to be done by addiction counsellors. However, the Committee note that despite the high demand for these services, staff resources remain unchanged. The service urgently needs an additional full time counsellor. This would allow firstly, for a greater number of sessions for clients, and secondly, that a comprehensive care plan can be prepared. The Committee recommend that additional supports are put in place to facilitate the provision of this important service.

Section 9 Psychology Service

The Psychology Service adapted well to the pandemic and continued to provide services and practical help to support the wellbeing of men in custody, particularly those in isolation.

In addition members of the Cloverhill Psychology Service conducted cell-checks to men in isolation, (wearing PPE equipment). The Service reported they were able to continue to offer individual physiological intervention by adopting a 'blended model' of telephone, video or face- to- face engagement with men, in accordance with ERPT guidance. The Service especially acknowledged the invaluable support of Cloverhill Governors and of the staff.

Average wait times for initial assessment by the Cloverhill Psychology Service in 2020 was 61.3 days. These wait times pose a significant concern for the Visiting Committee. Regularly services refer to the 'chaotic' state of prisoners on arrival at Cloverhill. Because of the nature of Cloverhill as a remand prison and the sometimes short stay of men on remand, the Committee would like to see the earliest possible access being available for men who have been referred to or indicate an

interest in the Service. The Visiting Committee is fully supportive of the call for an increase of additional staff that to enable the Psychology Service to shorten the waiting time ratio.

The Psychology Service is pleased that the Service in Cloverhill has progressed in the last five years to having a Senior Psychologist, Staff Grade Physiologist and Assistant Psychologist (unqualified grade). The Service would like to see additional staff resources to enable them to have additional input to those men with psychiatric illness on D2 landing, an increase of support to staff on D2 landing and an outreach clinic to support those men who come in and out of Cloverhill Prison on a fairly regular basis. The Service would hope to see a ratio of one (qualified) Psychologist to 150 people in custody

During the year the Cloverhill Psychiatry Service offered 462 individual appointments to men in custody. The majority of referrals the Service report were self-referrals. Chaplaincy, Integrated Service Management, Healthcare, Psychiatry, Probation and other prison staff provided the remaining referrals. The Service report that the primary presenting issues were: trauma, depression, anxiety, emotional and anger management, a history of self-harm and violent offending.

From speaking with prisoners this year the Visiting Committee can report that prisoners have spoken of deep anxiety, stress, a need of immediate and urgent psychological support. We urgently request additional staff be allocated to the service to enable an immediate response to the person in need, with the minimum wait time.

With support from staff in Operations and Care and Rehabilitation the Service was able to offer Psychological First Aid (PFA) - a process of offering supportive and practical help to those suffering from serious crises events, via a Psychological Helpline, to those in confinement in Cloverhill. The service was a valuable resource in supporting men in isolation and maintaining a form of connection during this time.

The Service reported on the contribution made in relation to fulfilling the Irish Prison Service (IPT) Psychology Service's five strategic goals. These included the implementation of a range of evidence-informed interventions to identify and treat specific risk factors for violence and reduce the risk for future offending.

During the year the Service paid particular attention to the needs of the mental health of those in custody and were responsible for the on-going implementation of a 'stepped-care' model of evidence-based mental health service in Cloverhill. The Service maintained consistent collaboration with various members of the multi-disciplinary team, in particular with the PICLS team and Addiction Service in Cloverhill, as well as attending weekly multi-agency meetings in the prison. The Service pro-actively encouraged all Cloverhill staff to make referrals to the Cloverhill Psychiatric Service to ensure the men in custody who are struggling with mental health concerns have the opportunity to obtain the necessary support to meet their individual needs.

In addition to working with colleagues in the different agencies the Cloverhill Psychology team, with the full support of the Cloverhill Governors and staff, collaborated with Healthcare, Psychiatry and various members of staff from the Irish Prison Service College to deliver specialised training for officers working on D2 landing. Seven of the ten modules of the programme have been completed. Members of the Visiting Committee welcome this initiative, the close collaboration and good will that exist between the services, and staff of Cloverhill Prison.

Staff from the Cloverhill Psychiatry team actively participated in the Red Cross programme during 2020. The close collaborative work with other services continued with 'Staff Wellbeing Month', February 2020 and later work with teachers from the Education Centre delivered 'Christmas Wellbeing' workshops, December 2020, to support men during the difficult time at Christmas time. Several men, we understand, directly from this Covid 19 restricted work shop, self-referred to the service for individual support. There is no doubt that the interaction between services is a great influence in raising awareness and encouraging men to begin to seek support for their wellbeing. We believe that it is by increasing the presence of the service in areas like the Education Centre that many more men will be encouraged to confidently seek support and learn of practices for life that will be invaluable to them on their return to their community.

The Visiting Committee understands that Cloverhill Psychology Service is keen to increase the established collaboration with the Education Centre and would welcome the possibility of delivering mental health workshops every 4-6 weeks. The subjects for the workshops are decided following consultations involving Red Cross Volunteers and prisoners, Chaplaincy and usually centre on a theme, for example Wellbeing, The Committee fully support this initiative and are excited at the possibilities such a positive collaborative effort and structured programme could deliver for the wellbeing of prisoners.

Section 10 Integrated Service Management

Integrated Service Management (ISM) report that both the general area of ISM and the In-Reach service area of Cloverhill, which falls under the remit of ISM office, experienced increased strain in 2020 from the Covid-19 related restrictions in the prison.

This was mainly caused by the increase use of video links firstly, to facilitate clients when services such as Probation Service, Association for Social Inclusion Opportunities (IASIO) were not permitted to enter the prison. Secondly the introduction of video links to the court service, calls for the prisoners to attend court, used extensively during 2020, always took precedence. These services are essential to prisoners both in the progression of their sentence and in preparation for upcoming court cases.

Interview/therapy rooms on the E2 corridor were fitted with additional video link units. Services had access to technology which allowed access to clients. At the end of 2020 most services engaged with their clients via technology links. ISM report that in their opinion, service providers such as the Probation Service, Merchants Quay (MQI), PICLS team, Psychology, (IASIO) and Chaplaincy, have commented satisfactorily on the operation of this system. Through telephone calls with the people in custody we spoke with, it seemed that prisoners had adjusted reasonably well to the services provided. There were some comments on delay's and waiting lists for Addiction and Psychology services. For some prisoners video calls were considerably better than a service provided by telephone but it was 'not the same as face to face contact'. The Committee recommend that in-person services are resumed as soon as public health advice allows.

ISMS reported however that a lack of staff had been a major issue for them in the smooth, continuous provision of this facility to service providers. The logistics of bringing prisoners to the various services, including to the professional boxes used in calls to the courts, considerably stretched staff resources.

The ISM office in Cloverhill has two training officers. One of these officers is currently on long term sick leave (in excess of three years). There is just one officer in the In-Reach section. This causes huge difficulties when, as frequently occurs, three service providers wish to see prisoners at the same time. This necessitates the redeployment of the ISM officer. A second In-Reach officer is urgently required to ensure the efficient and smooth function of this service. In previous reports the Committee have emphasised the key role of ISM in all aspects of the time the prisoner spends in custody and recommend that a review of ISM service and the ratio of ISM staff to the prison population be addressed with immediate effect. The Visiting Committee again recommend that the provision for this second officer or a replacement second ISM officer be undertaken with immediate effect.

The pivotal role of ISM Management in the provision of multi- disciplinary services for a distressed, highly anxious person was evidenced by the Visiting Committee in 2020. The man spoke on three separate occasions with a member of the Committee, who remained concerned for his wellbeing. The provision of care and resources, including psychiatry, medical care, and probation service, were co-ordinated by ISM and, assisted by the Chaplaincy, with the support of the Criminal Justice Specific Housing First Project without delay. The man was released from custody before Christmas 2020. The Visiting Committee strongly and urgently recommend that staffing levels are increased in this vital area to allow for the best possible support for the prisoner at every stage of his time in prison.

The withdrawal of the Community Welfare Officer, by the Department of Social Protection, has been an incalculable loss to the service and impacted on the preparation of a pre-release plan for the prisoner and his smooth integration into his community. This particularly impacts the areas involving practical arrangements concerning his release. For example, where previously the prisoner on leaving Cloverhill was given a cheque, cashed by prison authorities, the prisoner now must present himself at a specific Social Welfare office in Dublin to obtain his allowance, at office that closes at 12.30pm. This places men from areas outside of Dublin at a greater disadvantage. The smooth transition of the prisoner to his community, any assistance to his peace of mind and to his rehabilitation at this time must be a priority.

Section 11 School - The Education Centre

The school adapted to the pandemic and with great imagination and undertook many innovative projects and activities during Covid-19. In spite of the challenges from the pandemic restrictions the school remained an active and vibrant teaching unit completing examinations, achieving certification awards that included its first Gaisce award - a Bronze Gaisce Medal.

The Committee have not visited the school in 2020. In conversation with the Head of school and teachers we are happy to learn of the many innovative projects initiated to support and encourage students to become interested and involved in the school. The school spoke of the general spirit of good will and co-operation that extended across all levels, including Governor, staff, services, with particular reference to the contribution of the Red Cross and the vital role played by the Red Cross Volunteers, particularly the support of the Chief School Officer and Staff Chief Officer. The Committee is pleased to know that ventilation in the school has been attended to.

While school numbers were curtailed by school closures and social distancing requirements during the year the total number of prisoners who attended in 2020 was 427. The average school weekly attendance was 58 from an average of 85 in 2019 that included students from the gym. The school closed on March 12th and did not reopen until August 27th. During this period the teachers produced and distributed 2-3 packs per week for every week of the closure, including holidays, to every person in custody. Teachers shared their materials with other Prison Education Centres in Dublin. The substantial amount of printing and distribution was carried out by the School Officer and a Red Cross Volunteer. In addition teachers produced lessons in video format and accompanying booklets for use on an in a cell TV system, under development by IPS and due to become operative early 2021.

When the school reopened in late August, to December 2020 social distancing meant that school sizes to be reduced to 19 persons at any one time. National public health guidelines meant it was not possible to mix wings in the school or landings.

The Committee understand that the closure of the gym, B and C wings for the morning sessions impacted on the numbers in the school.

Access to education by prisoners who work in the prison remains an ongoing issue. It can be difficult for these students to access education due to the number of their work hours. The Committee recommends that measures are put in place to allow improved access to education classes by these prisoners, many of whom are sentenced prisoners.

The school is constrained by its size. As the only structured activity in Cloverhill the school would be greatly enhanced by the extension of the school building to include a room for home economics room and practical essential life skills. A general class room to accommodate multiple subjects including literacy, numeracy and digital literacy and a third room for crafts would be an invaluable addition to the school curriculum and greatly advantageous in advancing the skills of students

The Visiting Committee recommend consideration be given to the vision of the Education Centre outlined above and believe the additional, expanded school curriculum would provide essential skills for the positive integration of the person into society on his release

Section 12 Red Cross

The Red Cross view Red Cross Volunteers as ‘the voice of the community and we listen to that voice, our project work in Red Cross is reflective of that voice’.

Despite the difficult restrictions imposed during the pandemic the Red Cross continued to maintain links with the prison community and adapted to the changing circumstances in a creative and practical manner.

The Red Cross report that in January 2020 they began working with Infection Control in IPS, and began the education of volunteers in guidelines and preventative measures for themselves and for their peers. Practical work that included information leaflets, information groups, hand washing station at the school, continued in February. There was little access to volunteers in March. The publication of a Covid-19 Newsletter, a collaborative effort that included IPS, City of Dublin Educational and Training Board (CDETb), Red Cross and the majority of services, distributed to each prisoner by Red Cross Volunteers, helped maintain involvement and links with prisoners.

Unfortunately the people in custody undertaking Red Cross Volunteer training were unable to complete the usual six month training, missing three months and some classes. The Red Cross report that seven volunteers graduated in May 2020. The Red Cross acknowledge the support of IPS staff and in particular Chief Mulligan and the School Chief Officer. Fifteen volunteers were selected in September 2020 to take part in the 2020- 2021 Red Cross Programme. Three existing volunteers acted as mentors for this new group. The Red Cross speak of the ‘colossal effort’ involved in getting this course going and acknowledge the practical support of the chaplaincy in the use of their space to ensure social distancing. The new group has worked from September to December 2020 covering a range of topics that include mental health, communication, behaviour change, and charity events.

The Red Cross report that restrictions and changes in the prison, directly as a result of Covid-19, have greatly affected the mental health of prisoners. Through the Community Assessment (module 5), pre Covid-19, the Red Cross advise that mental health as an issue was already identified by them. This has, they believe, become exacerbated during 2020. The lack of family visits, school, library and other services, the loss of routine, the more time in cells, with no activity, they feel ‘doing nothing has become the norm’, has had a negative effect on mental health of the men. The Red Cross report a lack of motivation among people in custody at Cloverhill and report that it took time for numbers to return to the school and to the gym. The need for effort, to be clean shaven, for the wearing of masks, was perhaps, one of the reasons they feel that may have contributed to this general feeling described as ‘subdued ‘in 2020.

The volunteer group weekly meeting, joined by the assistant psychologist, teachers developed a workshop about men’s issues, held on International Men’s Day. This successful event led to the ‘Mind Your Mind’ project. Three forty minute workshops on mental health, craft and film were designed by the team and opened up conversations around mental health issues. Landings B and E attended the workshops on separate occasions.

The Red Cross observed that everyone in the prison had to work together, were reliant on each other, the experience made the Red Cross team stronger, everyone ‘stepped up’ in an effort to alleviate hardship experienced by prisoners due to Covid-19 restrictions in 2020.

Section 13 the Kitchen

During 2020 the kitchen continued to operate at very high standards and in spite of the many challenges faced, provided an effective, efficient catering service for prisoners and staff in Cloverhill. This year the Committee members missed visiting the kitchen and meeting with staff and workers there. In previous years the Committee had observed the congenial atmosphere, the good working relationship between staff and men, busy workers in a good work place, clear in their work routine and with satisfaction. To maintain these positive high standards the Committee emphasise the necessity for these areas of concern for the staff and workers be addressed. Once again we are happy to report that no prisoner complaints regarding any of the food produced in the kitchen in Cloverhill has ever been reported to the Committee.

The refurbishment and up grading of the kitchen, the provision of new equipment, new ovens and fridges, enabled staff and workers to operate at their usual highly efficient level and contributed enormously to the smooth operation of the service at this time. In particular the new, large capacity dishwasher has seen the 'two plate' system now in operation replace the disposable bio-degradable craft boxes initially in use in the early months of the year. The prisoner now can return his used plate at a collection point and collect a fresh plate for his next meal in an orderly way and so further reduce the risk of cross contamination. Staff personnel in the area have expressed their satisfaction with the work and upgrading of the area which they considered essential.

The Visiting Committee is happy to know of this upgrading work carried out in the kitchen that the floor tiling is almost completed and know that this will contribute greatly to the continued high standard of catering service in Cloverhill.

The toilet, shower and locker facilities are unchanged and the area situation is now considered dilapidated and in need of urgent replacement. In the prisoners area there is one toilet cubicle, one urinal, one wash hand basin and two shower cubicles. On any day there can be an average of 16 prisoners sharing these facilities. The Committee is concerned at this lack of proper toilet facilities and does not consider the situation to be hygienic, particularly at this time, and considers the upgrading of this area a matter of urgency.

The area for staff, male locker room and female locker room, are equally sparse and inadequate for proper hygienic needs of a busy working staff. The locker area is small and cramped, with lockers attached to the wall in area for prisoners.

The Visiting Committee has regularly viewed this area in the last number of years, is familiar with the situation and grievance of the staff and would like to see this urgently addressed.

Training in the kitchen has been organised into two phases. Phase one concentrates on training remand, short term prisoners in basic skills. Enhanced prisoners and long term remand prisoners advance to Phase Two where they learn higher skills that include handling food, machinery, food safety, quality standards, invaluable skills for their rehabilitation and return to the outside community.

Because Cloverhill is a remand prison we understand that it not realistically possible at this time, for a prisoner to obtain a diploma or certified acknowledgement of the standard of work, of skills level reached. The Committee suggest that this should be addressed and a more detailed record of the experience and standards achieved be made available for those men leaving Cloverhill who may wish to train further and develop skills in this area for productive use within the community.

Section 14 Gym

The maintenance and standard of the Gym has always been a priority area for the Visiting Committee. In a remand prison where there are no work shop facilities to occupy prisoners, the gym and the school are the only units of activity that a prisoner can avail of to bring structure, learning and improvement to the health and wellbeing of his life during his time in Cloverhill. The Committee believe the importance of the practise of discipline, of regular physical regime, of engagement in the social aspect of gym remain significant, as part of a valuable foundation for the future life of the prisoner in his life after prison.

Previous Annual Reports have highlighted what the Committee regarded as the dilapidated condition of the gym equipment the lack of maintenance, the need to have broken equipment repaired and replaced. The maintenance regime remains poor. No maintenance was carried out in 2020, we understand, with the exception of an inspection of missing parts, in February 2020. Two pieces of weight lifting equipment remain broken for some considerable time now. Three treadmills are no longer in use. A large proportion of the equipment is now more than twenty (20) years in use and urgently needs replacement with new machines. An overall investment in the Gym is urgently needed.

The random closure of the gym is a regular concern. The Gym in A and B division remain closed until 2pm. The Gym in C and E closes more frequently and in a more random manner. The implications for the limited access to the gym facilities the Committee believe, have implications for the health and wellbeing of prisoners, in particular for those prisoners on C and E division whose out of cell time is already curtailed. The lack of access to the Gym is regularly referred to by prisoners as a cause of frustration.

It is a priority for the Visiting Committee that the gym be equipped and maintained to the highest standards and be regularly accessible to all prisoners.

Section 15 Laundry Service

The laundry Service was especially busy during 2020. Because of the pandemic the service agreement with Wheatfield ended. The Visiting Committee is pleased to report that the laundry facilities are now fully utilised and Cloverhill Laundry Service have provided full laundering service for all the prison.

There has been a huge increase in the work load and in the amount of potentially infected materials washed in the laundry.

The laundry have credited prisoners working in the laundry with a willingness to deal with the changes in practice brought by the pandemic, to learn new skills, to deal with infected materials and ensure each item of clothing is returned clean and disinfected.

The Laundry service reported the new machines greatly assisted the work efficiency but some very old washing machines still remain in service.

The support of Prison management during this time was acknowledged by the service, the adequate supply of personal protection equipment (PPE), and other resources put in place to ensure the efficiency of the laundry was maintained. The help of management and staff was also acknowledged in relation to some issues around the supply of bedding and towelling, from other prisons, affected by Covid-19.

Problems with the roster are still outstanding. There is, for example, no back to back roster which the service claim is now badly needed. With the present system in a remand prison, we understand that it is impossible to train prisoner skills to a required level.

The lack of qualification for prisoners has been referred to in previous Annual Reports. There is still, in 2020, no recognised qualification available to prison workers in the laundry.

The Visiting Committee hold the view that the introduction of a system of standard certification/ recognised qualification would be of great advantage to a prisoner seeking gainful employment and aid his future successful rehabilitation in society and recommend that this be

The laundry Service reported no Covid-19 infections during the year and advised that in their opinion this was due to the measures taken by management and staff and the full co-operation of prisoners in the laundry, in a spirit of good will and common purpose.

The Visiting Committee visited the laundry early in the year and again observed that this busy service retained the good atmosphere and the good relations between all those working in the laundry. It continued to remain a highly efficient service in what must have been a very busy, difficult and trying time for all concerned.

Section 16 Chaplaincy

The Covid-19 pandemic highlighted the vital role the Chaplains have in Cloverhill. Chaplains maintained a full presence on the landings throughout the year 2020, always adhering to health and safety guidelines. Chaplains are available at all times of crises, bereavement, illness and many other difficult times the prisoner may experience during their time in prison, providing a supportive pastoral and spiritual service for those who wish to engage.

The chaplaincy telephone line introduced by the IPS, for those men in quarantine and isolation during the pandemic, has proven to be very successful. Chaplaincy reports that the line was 'highly utilised'.

The presence and the support work of the Chaplaincy, along with the facility of the telephone service, has been positively and often warmly acknowledged by men in conversation with the Visiting Committee in 2020.

The Chaplaincy service in Cloverhill provides a seven day cover and also provides out of hours call cover. Currently there are 2.5 chaplains in Cloverhill. This falls short of the three full time chaplaincy posts previously assigned to Cloverhill. The Chaplaincy now report that because of the high demands on the Chaplaincy team, and to provide a constant and meaningful Chaplaincy presence in Cloverhill prison, an extra .5 post is urgently required. The Visiting Committee support the Chaplaincy request for three (3) full time permanent chaplaincy posts in Cloverhill to ensure that there is always a sufficient allocation of Chaplains to continue the invaluable and significant service to the prison population and staff in Cloverhill.

Section 17 Conclusion

The Visiting Committee is unable to fully comment on the prison environment at Cloverhill in 2020. We are severely limited in our observations to visits conducted in January and February 2020. At that time we observed the well-kept prison area, the clean and well maintained areas and service area visited. In our later visits to the boardroom we again observed the gardens; the planting and surrounding areas were at their usual high standard. The Committee again commends the quality of the maintenance work of the prisoners in the reflective garden of remembrance for deceased staff and the excellence of the garden work. Cloverhill has always maintained a clean, bright, and cared for appearance and we are pleased with the upgrading, improvements and painting that have been reported to us. We look forward to seeing these in the near future.

The Committee understand that improvement and plans have been initiated by Governor Harris to make Cloverhill a safer, drug free prison. These measures include a side netting to prevent drugs being thrown into the exercise yards, local engagement with Garda and the building of a new purpose built committal unit. The side netting, any measures taken to prevent drugs coming into the prison is welcomed as a vital and badly needed undertaking and seen by the Committee as a priority.

The amount of drugs circulating in the prison was considerably reduced during the peak time of the pandemic. This was partly due to the difficulties in landing drugs from the perimeter into the yard, the reduced and manageable prison population, reduction in committal prisoners and also from the practice of quarantine or isolation of new prisoner on presentation in Cloverhill. The smooth order in the prison at this difficult time, limiting the source of drugs, could be explored at a later time but always mindful of the need to focus on the rights of the prisoner and an awareness of the effects of isolation on prisoners.

It is envisaged that this new unit would be a safe and appropriate place for all new committals to undergo an induction and operational risk assessment, a medically risk assessment, an assessment for referrals to addiction and psychology service, and induction to the prison. There would be major positive effects for prisoners if these measures were to come into force. The committal unit would, for example, reduce pressure on families of prisoners and would have a major effect on the number of prisoners requesting and requiring protection under Rule 62 and on assaults in the prison.

The Visiting Committee pay tribute to the dedication, hard work and commitment by Governor Harris and all staff in keeping the prisoners and staff in their care safe and well during the most difficult months of Covid-19. It is to the credit of all involved the rate of infection was kept so low, the testing and tracing were so effective and in spite of the constraints and stresses on the prison. We acknowledge the rapid response by the IPS to the pandemic and the measures introduced to safeguard the health, safety and wellbeing of prisoners and staff in the prison population.

The Committee thank Governor Harris, Assistant Governors, Galgey and Treacy and staff for their continued courtesy to us and for the ready access we have to them at all times.

Members of the Committee look forward to the continuation of this positive and productive working relationship, to the renewal of visits to the prison, and to personal meetings with people in custody.

Section 18 Recommendations

- The Visiting Committee recommend that the provision of single cell accommodation be given top priority and be addressed as a matter of urgency
- The issue of cell occupancy and the continued lack of toilet privacy remain need to be urgently resolved
- The Committee recommend that a full enquiry by the relevant bodies, be conducted into the effects of restrictions and lockdown time during Covid-19 on prisoners - to include all areas
- Mental health issues, in particular D2 landing, the lack of access to secure beds for prisoners assessed to have severe mental illness requiring treatment in a secure forensic treatment unit, remain an area of considerable concern for the Visiting Committee, referred to in this report.
- The Committee recommend the provision of a library or quiet room on D2 landing
- Enhanced access to activities for people on D2 landing particularly to the school and gym
- Urgent measures now need to be taken to prevent the supply of drugs thrown over the perimeter wall and into the netting in place over the yards. We understand that the Governor has initiated plans to ensure Cloverhill becomes a safer, drug free prison but would consider that this issue should be addressed at an inter-agency level
- The Committee again proposes that F block be used as a temporary measure for immigrant persons

- The Committee recommends consideration be given to the provision of a drug free area
- The addition of a night nurse for Cloverhill remains of urgent concern for the Visiting Committee
- The Committee consider the payment by direct lodgement to have been a successful initiative and would recommend this arrangement be continued
- The Committee recommend consideration be given to the proposals for extension of the services of the Education Centre
- The Committee view improvements and updating of the gym as an urgent priority
- The committee consider the gym and the education centre, the only structured activities in Cloverhill, as vital and interlinked to the physical and mental wellbeing of the prisoner, whatever his time spent in the prison
- Concern of prisoners regarding their circumstances following their release, particularly fear of homelessness, needs to be urgently addressed.
- The Committee remain deeply concerned at the lack of a Community Welfare Officer, withdrawn by the Department of Social Protection, and ask that this position be reinstated as a matter of urgency
- Remand and sentenced prisoners to be kept separate
- Provision of additional toilet facilities in the kitchen area
- In-cell access for certain services to be retained and expanded
- Video call to prisoner's families to be retained, as an option.
- A replacement second officer for ISM or an additional officer for the In-reach service