

Visiting Committee

Annual Report 2016

Congratulations to everyone concerned with the movement into the new Cork Prison and especially Governor Dawson who led the smooth transition of prisoners and staff to the wonderful new facility. The Tánaiste and Minister for Justice Frances Fitzgerald officially opened the Prison and a lovely occasion was had for the opening.

An t-Uachtarán Michael D Higgins also visited the New and Old Prison during the year and congratulated everyone on the new building whilst also commenting on the history of the old prison.

We met with a number of prisoners at their request during the year. Some of the issues concerned phone calls, the dog unit and air conditioning in the gym. All issues were discussed with prison personnel and the results were relayed to the people concerned and all that was outstanding is the gym issue which is being investigated at present.

With Cork being a committal and remand prison this leads to a lot of activity for prison personnel. With prisoners being escorted to court, at times to hospital and dealing with committals and discharges this can lead to a lot of time being taken up by staff which leads to a shortage of staff to deal with workshops and other activities for the prisoners. Unfortunately during the past year there has been too many occasions when these workshops were closed due to staff shortages. We feel that every effort should be made to have the workshops open on a regular basis to provide ample opportunities for the prisoners.

The education unit continued very well during the year and we would like to congratulate all those involved in the exhibition in December where the prisoners' work was on display including lovely pieces of Woodwork, Pottery and Art works.

We welcome the appointment of Fr Larry Kelly as Chaplain to the prison and we were delighted to have a very informative meeting with him.

The launch of the information channel last year by the Director General Michael Donnellan was one of the highlights of our deliberations but unfortunately the transition to the new prison has not gone as smoothly as expected. We hope that the teething problems that have occurred will be solved soon and also that the information available on the channel could be translated into other languages for the benefit of non-English speaking prisoners.

As can be seen from the attached reports Cork Prison is a very busy place and probably what is not seen is the amount of work that goes on behind the scenes (as we would imagine in all prisons). This work is invaluable and we would like to complement all those involved.

One aspect which we feel is going to be a major challenge to the prison authorities going forward is the use of modern technology. Technology is changing very quickly and to enable prisoners to keep up with the changes can pose enormous problems on release. What level of education in the usage of modern technology can be given to prisoners in prison without being compromised?

One of the vital areas on prisoner's release is aftercare. Prisoners will have all the facilities of medical, psychological, welfare, education, training etc. in prison, but trying to access these services on release can be extremely difficult for offenders. It is important that all agencies involved work in a coordinated way to ensure that the best possible services are available to offenders on their release.

We believe there has to be a very definite strategy in place between the Irish Prison Service and the relevant statutory agencies, Voluntary and Community organisations.

2016 Industrial Area Cork Prison

Kitchen

The kitchen scored 87% on 5/4/16, in this year's food safety audit.

The kitchen staff are happy to be working in a new state of the art kitchen.

They have cooked for the President recently, and he was very appreciative of "the wonderful food, excellently prepared and served by our trainees."

We now employ 20-22 prisoners in the kitchen, the prisoners can do 3 different shifts, 7am to 2pm, 8am to 2pm or 2pm to 5.40pm. This means the prisoners can attend school and visits etc. and we can train and employ more prisoners with the same resources.

Hurley / Joinery workshop

The new Hurley / Joinery workshop was designed by the staff in the workshop, and the staff from High Tech said they could not have done it so well, and so efficiently, without the expert assistance of Mr. Mc Carthy and Mr. Nason.

We had to have the workshop re registered by City and Guilds, before we could commence our certified training again. This happened in April.

Some of the auditor's comments:

"A new build prison with a strong educational ethos of various occupational opportunities to inmates impressively demonstrated on my introductory tour."

"The machines and portable machine tool range are excellent."

"Tooling continues to be a great credit to the assessment team"

All 6219 C&G preamble documentation in place, so portfolio development is well on track.

"Reference back to my previous report reminded me of excellent best practice."

This workshop still employs / trains up to 20 prisoners daily.

As in previous years, the Hurley / Joinery Workshop continues to do a lot of work for various charities. Here are some examples:

St Gabriel's Special School, Bishopstown, Cork

This is a school that caters for severely autistic children.

We make and supply timber pieces for window/flower boxes that the children then assemble as part of their therapy.

Lavanagh Centre, Ballintemple Cork.

We have made writing boards and special chairs for the children attending this service also the Cork Prison Social Club organises and run an annual Christmas party for the children attending this school,

This party has been run for many years and is a huge success, it is something that both children and staff look forward to for months in advance.

St Paul's Special School, Cope, Montenotte, Cork.

We make timber jig-saw pieces, picture frames as well as other play items for the children attending here.

Marymount hospice: We make photo frames for the hospice, about 30 per year. A lot of Cork Prison staff have had sick relatives in the hospice, so we do like to help this very worthy cause if we can.

Computer/Print workshop

All of the printing for Cork Prison is done in this workshop, class journals, prisoner forms, reception books, health and safety books, posters, signs etc.

Prisoners also make cards here for birthdays, etc.

Prisoners can complete their E.C.D.L. certification here.

This is always a busy spot, and there is a lot done for charities here also.

Industrial Cleaning workshop

This post is now manned by 2 W.T.O's, on a back to back basis. They now have responsibility for training all of the class cleaners on the various prison landings. This has helped to improve cleanliness around the prison.

They now operate a new cleaning chemical system, which is a state of the art auto dilution system. This means that all of the cleaning chemicals used throughout the prison are diluted to exactly the right rate, saving money and helping the environment. It also prepares them for best practise in the industry on their release.

We have also purchased 3 battery operated cleaning machines. This means no cables and no tripping over them or pulling them out of the machines by force, i.e. way less breakages and repairs. They have helped with prison cleanliness and again, are the new best practise in the industry outside.

The Industrial Cleaning workshop was the last room given to us by the builders. It is not yet completed. This is one of the jobs to go on our small jobs list, which is going to be put out to tender this month. We look forward to having a fully functional Industrial Cleaning workshop.

Fabric Workshop

This workshop continues to do all of the uniform alterations around the prison, and a good deal of Charity work, particularly at Christmas time.

St Paul's School and Ballincollig Special Olympics are just two of the charities that have benefited from this workshop.

Light Maintenance

Our new light maintenance workshop has been a big success, doing bits of maintenance, tiling and painting around the prison. Our aim is to keep the prison looking new, clean and fresh.

Laundry

The move to the new prison was a challenge, closing one Laundry and opening another the day after. The laundry had a very good year, with the Laundry being certified again last week, to carry out training under the Guild of Cleaners and Launderers Certificate scheme.

Officers Mess (training kitchen)

This kitchen and dining area is working very well, and has 5-6 prisoners employed every day. This is a new departure from the norm, and is working very well. It is a state of the art facility, and is well used by prison staff.

I.S.M.

The I.S.M. staff are busier than ever, with the Community Returns programme, and the Community Support Scheme.

These are both going very well, and the high success rate of both (the I.P.S. won the civil service award for excellence and innovation this year, for the community returns programme) continues.

Our numbers for C.R. and the C.S.S. are up on last year.

Waste Management

This new workshop has been very successful in reducing our waste, and increasing the amount of recycling here in the prison. This means lower bills, and a saving to the state for waste management expenses. It also helps the environment.

Last month was the first month we went over 50% recycled waste ever. This is going in the right direction, thanks to the dedication of the staff involved.

We have two new workshops here in Cork Prison

Industrial Skills /Craft workshop

This is on the same floor as the other workshops, and will be a picture framing and engraving workshop.

We have the machines, we're just waiting for the staff to be given to us from head office.

Horticulture workshop

This is a wonderful new facility, at the back of the prison. There is a polytunnel, raised beds, a glasshouse, and a work shed / potting shed.

Again, we are waiting to have the staff assigned to this post, to use this excellent facility.

Cork Prison Chaplaincy

We acknowledge the excellent chaplaincy service given over many years by former Chaplains, Fr Michael Kidney and Sr. Mary Jo Sheehy, and we wish them continued good health into the future. And thanks to Fr David Murphy for his availability to visit, and to celebrate mass in the prison.

The IPS appointed a new Chaplain to Cork Prison in December, 2015

The Chaplain meets with the new committals as soon as possible after their arrival to prison, and is available to prisoners and to all who work here, providing pastoral and spiritual care, and offering support to anyone wishing to avail of it.

Mass is celebrated on Sundays, Holy Days and other occasions for members of the Catholic community, and all who wish to attend. The Chaplain also attends to the religious needs of prisoners of all faiths, where required. He facilitates a weekly bible reflection group for two groups on alternate Sundays.

The Chaplain participates in the weekly the multi-disciplinary team meeting, and liaises with the staff, the school and the services on other occasions, concerning prisoners' needs.

The Chaplain is available to the prisoners' family members where necessary, and liaises with the Saint Vincent de Paul group around their fortnightly visits to the prison. He also links in with the visiting area, run by the St Nicholas Trust, to meet the volunteers and some family members of the prisoners. The Chaplain is the contact with local religious leaders to arrange Neutral Visits for prisoners. Their support and hospitality is invaluable.

The chaplaincy in Cork is one part of the IPS Chaplaincy service, and the network of National Chaplains is an important support to the chaplaincy here in Cork.

The Chaplaincy, of necessity, functions as one element in a network of management, staff, teachers and services, who work together for the good of the men in our care. This networking here in Cork Prison, along with the mutual support of all those involved in the care of our prisoners, is vital to the service which the Chaplaincy offers.

POST RELEASE PROJECT 2016

The project continues to deliver a comprehensive and integrated approach to meet the needs of prisoners on release from Cork Prison. It maintains secure links between the Post Release Service and the Housing Dept. in the City Council to ensure that no prisoners fall off the housing list due to their committal to prison. It also ensures the co-ordination of services with statutory and voluntary providers i.e. Homeless Persons Unit, Homeless Officers in all local authorities, Cork City Council housing, Focus Ireland, Access Housing Unit, Cork Simon Community and St Vincent's Hostel to ensure a realistic & achievable plan was put in place prior to a prisoner's release.

It also ensures that the barriers of literacy and poor social or coping skills did not impede on prisoners claiming their social welfare payments. The project maintains strong links with residential/community day addiction and mental health services to ensure access for prisoners to addiction assessment and counselling in/day patient care.

The project commenced a pilot project with the Medical Card Unit to ensure prisoners have to access medical cards for prisoners on their release dates to ensure that the continuum of medical care on release.

All efforts continue to ensure that prisoners are not homeless on release from prison. As part of the Case Management Protocols for the Cork & Kerry Homeless Services, Initial and Housing Needs Assessments are carried out or updated on homeless prisoners serving over a 12- week sentence. Access to emergency beds were also secured for prisoners serving less than 12 weeks. The project also sits on monthly meetings with the Homeless Action Team to refer and discuss specific supports for prisoners leaving prison with complex needs. Assistance and support was also given to prisoners who were released to an address which breaks down within the first few days of release.

The provision of the Safe Pass Qualification continued to be delivered to enable prisoner's access employment on release. It met their educational needs by referring them to programmes been offered in the Education Unit in Cork Prison and by offering practical & financial assistance in enabling them access community education courses and post leaving cert colleges.

Irish Association for the Social Integration of Offenders (IASIO)

IASIO works with clients of the Criminal Justice System in the community and prisons across Ireland. Three separate programmes work to assist clients to progress their lives by providing a professional support system. The work of this service is primarily built on desistance, a belief that people can and do stop committing crime. The services are The Resettlement Service, The Linkage Service, both of which work in Cork Prison, The Gate Service is the third service and this service is available in other prisons in Ireland but currently not in Cork Prison.

Resettlement Service:

The Resettlement Service is a prison based service, the resettlement coordinator offers the opportunity to clients to make a resettlement plan for their release i.e. help with welfare, medical cards, community supports, training etc., whatever supports stabilise their resettlement. This service is funded through the Irish Prison service. The Linkage Service is a Guidance and Placement Service with qualified Guidance professionals that offer a weekly clinic to prisoners in Cork Prison through referrals from the Probation Service; it is fully funded by the Probation Service.

Clients are referred to these services and are met to support them during their sentence to look at future plans for their lives and with Resettlement specifically to consider what is required to stabilise clients on release and support reintegration into their communities and families. Towards the end of

a sentence referrals are beneficial to the client so that a plan can be formulated with supports put in place for the client. Supporting clients on release is an easier process for the client if a professional relationship is formed with the client during the course of their sentence. It is hoped that on release the work will continue in the community to explore progression options with the client and support them with their choices.

Changing Course Programme:

The Changing Course group-work programme is run over ten two hour sessions and involves a total of twenty hours of learning in total. This programme goes through individual set modules as well as using the combined knowledge from the participants in the group to explore future possibilities for their lives. This programme is facilitated by the Resettlement and Linkage personnel in Cork prison, Colm Carey and Maria Walsh.

In 2016 three Changing Course programmes ran in Cork prison and had a total of 48 successful participants that completed the course and the feedback from all the participants was extremely positive. The uptake of the programme is excellent and the retention and completion rates for participants is currently over 95% with a lengthy waiting list for the next programme that will commence in January 2017.

Community Coaching Programme:

This year saw the introduction of the Community Coaching Programme in conjunction with the IPS, CETB and The Cork Sports Partnership and supported by the FAI, Basketball Ireland, Cork GAA and Munster Rugby. The programme ran over twelve weeks and aims to assist and support the participants to achieve certified coaching and educational qualifications whilst in prison that will benefit them post release in the community in areas like personal training, coaching, volunteering and progression to continuing education.

As part of the course all twelve participants attended the sports hall for one full day a week for the coaching element and also the education unit in order to complete the QQI Level 3 award in general learning. All the coaching and educational modules were certified by the various organisations at the completion of the course and an awards ceremony took place in the sports hall on December 12 for the participants and their family members which also included members of the winning FAI Senior Cup team from Cork City FC. Feedback from all the participants, staff and tutors was extremely positive and we hope to run another programme in 2017.

IASIO staff continues to explore new options for the benefit of clients both during their sentence and post release in their communities and would like to thank the Governor and staff of Cork Prison for their continued support shown throughout the year and look forward to working in partnership with them all again in 2017.

**By: Colm Carey
Resettlement Coordinator
The Resettlement Service
Rathmore Road
Cork Prison**

2016 Report from the Education Unit, Cork Prison

2016 was certainly a busy year for the Education Unit, Cork Prison!

Teachers and students spent from January 11th to January 15th packing boxes after decades in our old school. From Monday, January 18th – Friday, January 22nd students and teachers loaded all these boxes into vans. These were then moved to our new location where teachers unpacked them and organised their work areas. On Monday, 15th February 2016, the first classes were delivered in our new, brighter, larger, and infinitely more modern school.



Certification and Achievements

Despite all the upheaval involved this year

- Forty-two learners completed QQI (quality and qualifications Ireland) modules. These certificates ranged from levels two - five
- One student completed Junior Cert history and got an A
- One student is currently enrolled for Open University (OU).
- April 12th Peadar King presented a documentary Prisons in El Salvador from a series titled 'What in the World' which aims to highlight global economic inequalities and human rights violations.
- The Dillon's Cross Project hosted an adult education quiz as part of the Lifetime Learning Festival
- Tom Vaughan Lawlor aka 'Nidge' in 'Love Hate' visited the Education Unit April 26th and was met with a great welcome from all students. We also had visits from Pat Kenny and John Delaney during the year.
- In April we had the Listeners graduation ceremony.
- Seven students graduated with the Red Cross on the 14th June.
- In October students presented Pieta House with a cheque for €750. This was the proceeds from a fundraising unorganised in conjunction with Gym officers.
- Teachers organised a Traveller Pride week in the Education Unit from May 30th – June 3rd. This was the first year this event was run in Cork Prison and it met with great success.
- James Horan worked on an Artist in Prison workshop in July and worked with students in the Education Unit to produce the birdbath (photo above), unveiled during the Presidential visit.



- The prison was officially opened by the Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality, Frances Fitzgerald on the 18th of July
- Thirty-two students completed the Safe Pass course organised each year by Frances Russell
- PE teachers from the Education Unit were delighted to have the use of the new Sports hall in our new location.
- 12 students are working towards graduating from the Sport Coaching Programme December 12th. Each of these students will also receive an overall award at QQI level 3.
- The Art and Pottery department and their students opened the third successful art exhibition on Spike Island in June. (Photo on left below)



- Work by two students from the art department was chosen for the 'Project 16 Art Exhibition' in Arbour Hill- photo on right above.
- President Higgins and his wife Sabina were welcomed to the prison and the Education Unit on the 16th September.

Post Release Service:

The work of the post release service in Cork Prison under the management of Frances Russell was recognised at a national level this year, when it won an award from the HSE for the 'Successful application of a cross-sectoral integrated care approach to addiction and homeless services.' Well done Frances!

Frances and the post release service works with prisoners who would otherwise be homeless on release and prisoners who require support in the community in terms of addiction, tenancy skills, social welfare/medical care needs, further education, and training. Through Frances' work a very solid network of contacts has been established over many years with the homeless and other

agencies in Cork, Kerry and Waterford. This is a vital service which supports the prisoner on release and assists with his reintegration into society.

In 2016 a system was put in place for the first time to allow prisoners access medical cards on release. This meant that there would be no break in the provision of necessary medical care for the prisoner on release from prison.

Dillon's Cross Project:

We have fourteen participants currently enrolled in the Dillon's Cross Project. These participants (all female) are all related to prison/ex-prisoners. These students are working towards completing an overall award at QQI level 3 and will then complete additional component modules at QQI level 4. Two of last year's graduates are now in full time employment, one with a customer service centre and a second in a solicitor's office. A third (who had spent time in Limerick prison) is currently enrolled in the first year of a hairdressing course (QQI level 5) in City North College. Overall, this group included five ex-offenders as well as two traveller participants.

Multi-disciplinary activities:

To achieve the best outcome for the prisoner it is vital that all services in the prison work together. To this end the Education Unit takes part in weekly multidisciplinary meetings and monthly review meetings. Teachers from the Education Unit are on many different prison working committees such as the Prison Library, Red Cross training and the Health and Safety group. Staff in the Education Unit continue to work and liaise with Addiction, Probation, Medical and Psychology services in the prison

I would like to thank the Governor and his management team for their help and encouragement through-out the year.

I would like to especially thank Miss Coleman and her team of school officers for their continuous support and assistance over the last 12 months.

I would like to sincerely thank all the teachers in the Education Unit and in the Dillon's Cross Project for their continued hard work, professionalism and team spirit throughout what has been an extremely busy year. We look forward to another busy and productive year in 2017.

Edel Cunningham

Supervising Teacher, Education Unit, Cork Prison 2016

The Cork Alliance Centre

The Cork Alliance Centre was established in 2003 with the support of the Probation Service. The Centre works with both men and women on release from prison. It seeks to facilitate the process of personal recovery and empowerment with the overarching view of desistance from crime. As people seek to become better equipped to manage their lives more positively. Our service is based in the community with in-reach work in the prisons. In 2016, the Centre's core funding is from the Department of Justice and Equality through the Probation Service and the Irish Prison Service. The choice for change and the associated choice for desistance is not a once off decision, but rather a complex process of continuous choices to desist from crime. Together with a support mechanism to sustain the life changing choices and the motivation and belief in oneself and society that such change is achievable, valuable and tangible, are inherent for desistance from crime to be sustained. Intrinsic in this is the need for inclusion and acceptance within society.

The work of the Cork Alliance Centre relates to activities directed towards facilitating service users to become generally better equipped to manage their lives positively. *'To desist from crime, ex-offenders need to develop a coherent, pro-social identity for themselves*, therein importance of self-esteem, self-efficacy, self-respect and self-determination cannot be underestimated. Facilitating service users as they restore their positive 'connections' with their family, friends, community, society and most importantly with themselves is fundamental to the work of the Cork Alliance Centre.

In 2016, past and present service users joined the staff and board of the Cork Alliance Centre for the second conference hosted by the Centre **'Narrowing the Disconnect – the Ethics of Supporting Desistance from Crime'**. Over 250 guests attended the two day conference at which President of Ireland Michael D. Higgins made the conference keynote address. Central to the conference was the lived experience of past and present Cork Alliance Centre service users. Together with the premier showing of a new documentary made with our service users, five people who have accessed the Cork Alliance Centre services presented at the conference. We are delighted that these experiences were shared at the conference. Our international speakers namely, Dr Deirdre Healy, Professor Shadd Maruna, Professor Joanna Shapland completed the programme and all strongly valued the opportunity to present alongside our past and present service users. Also joining the Cork Alliance Centre, to present at the conference were Vivian Geiran of the Probation Service and Michael Donnellan of the Irish Prison Service. The opening address was made by David Stanton, TD Minister of State at the Department of Justice and Equality.

The Cork Alliance Centre manages two programmes with both the Probation Service and the Prison Service.

1. The **Desistance and Integration Support Programme** is open to all people from Cork who have been in prison. Together with supporting people to address their offending behaviour, the team work to support people as they seek to build a constructive and connected life. The support is offered on a one to one basis, as personal plans are developed, realised and built upon. As the Centre works with a service user on all aspects of their life, a better 'wrap around' service is provided, linking in where appropriate with other agencies and departments in a more joined up service. The services offered include

- Support and motivation work where among other areas offending behaviours, thinking skills, coping mechanisms, socialisation skills etc. can be addressed
- Linking and supporting access to voluntary and state organisation as assistance to source and secure accommodation
- Linking and supporting access to secure financial supports
- Linking and supporting access to source, secure and sustain trainings, education and literacy supports
- Linking and supporting access to source, secure and sustain employment schemes and employers
- Linking and supporting access to addiction treatment programmes and services

- Supporting access to professional counselling and acupuncture
 - Linking and supporting access to parenting and family programmes
 - Highlighting emerging trends and developments among our service users and wider community
- The foundations of the Cork Alliance Centre are based in a shared-caring approach, where with the agreement of the service users, support and assistance is garnered from state, semi-state and voluntary organisations and their representatives.

2. The **Community Support Scheme** is run in conjunction with the Irish Prison Service, and offers prisoners serving sentences between 3-12 months the opportunity to serve part of their sentence in the community rather than in the prison. This constructive community based alternative to imprisonment is a means of positive sentence management offering a chance for change for the prisoner in an effort to break the cycle of repeated short-term imprisonments. The opportunity to serve a sentence in the community rather than in prison is a short-term practical intervention linking those availing of this early (temporary) release programme to services and service providers within their home locality, as a means to improve the individual's chances of sustaining life outside of prison. The Cork Alliance Centre operates the programme in Cork, Portlaoise and the Midlands prison.

Since 2003, in excess of 1,800 people have chosen to seek support from the Cork Alliance Centre on their release from prison. On average 100 service users at any time access the supports of the service. Some service users have been through university, and many more are at, or have been to college. Many have found recovery from addictions, and while others are struggling with their recovery, they are seeking support to change. Those who access the service of the Cork Alliance Centre choose to do so voluntarily.

St. Nicholas Trust

In 2016 St. Nicholas Trust were instrumental in setting up the visiting area in the new Cork prison. This included a children's corner where children can play with the toys provided and create pictures to display. The refreshment area is more spacious in the new prison and allows conversations to take place where visitors with particular queries can get information. This area is facilitated by a wonderful group of volunteers who give their time generously every month. Without them and their co-ordinator any of the services we provide would not be possible. To progress this further we are taking over a small room off the visitor's area to use for support meetings. These will be held on the first and third Tuesdays of every month from 5.30 to 7pm. When established visitors can meet in this room with a facilitator or a member of a family who has previously had a member in prison. Information and support will be available at these sessions.

St. Nicholas Trust's AGM will be held in mid-January. After this, new initiatives will be considered. A permanent employee will be taken on to progress many areas of the services we provide and strengthen our connections within the prison. The main aim of this initiative will be to create a situation where fathers in the prison can be prepared in a realistic way for returning to families where many things have changed, including their children having grown up in their absence. If we can work with parents on the outside and services within the prison create similar programmes for fathers within the prison, returning home may be less traumatic for all the family. From our interactions with families we know that this can be very difficult for everyone involved. Ultimately connected services may help to prevent a return to prison.

Mairead Carmody

Conclusion

In Conclusion I would like to thank Governor Dawson and all his staff for their co-operation any visit that we as a committee made during the year, and especially thank Caroline O'Connor and Louise Healy for their assistance .To my fellow committee members Dermot O Connell, Tony Donnelly, Jerry O Sullivan, Diarmuid Drennan and Tomas Ryan thank you for your invaluable contributions during the year.

Robin Murray

Chairman

Cork Prison Visiting Committee