

Visiting Committee
Arbour Hill Prison
Arbour Hill
Dublin 7

Arbour Hill Prison
Visiting Committee
Annual Report 2019

A Chara,

Herewith is the Annual Report for the Visiting Committee for Arbour Hill Prison for the year ending 31st December 2019.

The Visiting Committee

The following are existing members of the Visiting Committee for 2019.

Rita Hayes
Padraig McGarrigle
Pat Holton
William (Billy) Ireland
Ms. Deirdre Kenneally

The visiting committee appointed Mr. William Ireland as Chairperson.

The Visiting Committee for Arbour Hill held Committee meetings as follows during 2019.

January	15/01/2019
February	13/02/2019
March	13/03/2019
April	10/04/2019
May	08/05/2019
June	12/06/2019 – Shelton Abbey
July	10/07/2019
August	14/08/2019
September	11/09/2019
October	09/10/2019
November	13/11/2019
December	11/12/2019

At least one member of the Committee makes an unannounced visit to the prison each month in addition to the scheduled monthly meeting. The Visiting Committee frequently visited the prison before / during / after the monthly meetings and have had access to every area of the prison. While visiting the prison the Committee has made it a priority to make themselves available to the prison population in order to address any issues arising at the earliest opportunity. Notices are

clearly placed around the jail informing prisoners of the availability of the Committee.

Arbour Hill Prison:

Arbour Hill Prison is a closed, medium security prison for males aged 19 years and over, serving sentences of more than 2 years. It is located in Dublin 7. It opened as a civilian prison on the 4th June 1975.

Visiting Committee “Visits”:

At the regular monthly meeting each “Visiting Member” reported on their visit during the previous month. The reports from the “visits” showed satisfaction and a very high standard of care provided to those serving sentence at this facility. The standard of hygiene and the cleanliness throughout every part of the prison is exemplary.

Prisoner welfare is the primary concern of the management and staff in Arbour Hill Prison and this was evident in every monthly visitor report. The physical environment of the prison is maintained to a very high standard and the cleaning regime is at a high level. Special mention was made of the quality service provided by the prison kitchen, who in addition to serving up high quality meals all year round and also provide up to one hundred and twenty hot meals to the Criminal Court Complex on a daily basis.

Visits to Prisoners:

Visits to prisoners at Arbour Hill are facilitated by appointment as follows.

Monday / Tuesday / Wednesday / Friday and Saturday (1000 – 1200hrs / 1400 - 1600hrs)

There are no visits on Thursdays or Sundays.

In the visitors waiting room there are play facilities for children.

The modern visitor facilities (renovated in 2015) are popular with staff, prisoners & visitors.

Prisoner Visits and representations to the Committee:

Should a prisoner have a complaint he can request to see the Visiting Committee via a request to the Governor.

Every effort has been made to inform the prisoners of this option.

Chaplaincy:

Sr. Mary Hanrahan is the Chaplain in Arbour Hill Prison. Sr. Mary attends the prison six days per week and is always available to prisoners as required. Sr. Mary and the chaplaincy continue to provide invaluable assistance to the prisoners on a wide range of social & personal issues.

Sr. Mary would also interact and communicate with Chaplaincy services in other countries, facilitating non-Irish prisoners to actively link up with Chaplaincy support from their own countries.

Befriender’s volunteering to visit those who have no visits are facilitated through the Chaplaincy also.

Workshops and Training

Woodwork:

The workshop provides furniture for a number of charities and occasionally for the prison itself. The workshop provides training and work for the prisoners who are assigned here. The standard of training and workmanship in Arbour Hill Prison, in the opinion of the committee, remains very high and reflects well on the ethos of the prison as a whole.

Some of the many projects also include the following -

- Upgrade cell furniture
- Supply furniture for Barrettstown Castle charity.
- High Quality Garden Furniture.
- Dolls Houses for Charities.
- Environmental Projects involving various Councils

The workshop also utilises as much as possible, used materials that can be recycled.

Fabric:

The fabric workshop produces the bed linen required for all establishments across the Irish Prison Service Estate. Training is provided to prisoners to assist in developing after prison employment opportunities.

Braille:

The Braille room teaches Braille and manufactures books and periodicals into Braille. This is the only workshop of its type in the country and is also the only place in Ireland that repairs “Braille Machines”. The visiting committee note the expertise and dedication evident here.

Waste Management:

This facility continues to grow and develop and is a highly organised and structured recycling centre that caters for all Dublin Prisons, in addition it takes in electrical waste from many Government Departments. The inmates are trained to a very high standard in conjunction with Health & Safety Laws (WEEE) Dublin and the facility were National award winners in Waste management and continue to expand. The invaluable experience and training provided has enabled a several prisoners to get employment post release.

Print:

This is a very busy workshop that caters for the IPS (Irish Prison Service) in all its requests for printed paper. Training is also provided for up to nine prisoners. Training is on modern printing machines which assist in securing post release employment opportunities for prisoners.

Kitchen:

The Catering Department is managed by the prison staff, assisted by a number of prisoners, some of whom are undergoing certified training. The kitchen provides in excess of 450 meals daily and has attained the “Q” mark. The kitchen provides intensive prisoner training accredited in FETAC.

The performance of the catering area has been recognised by EIQA awards and the visiting committee note that the variety, quality and wholesomeness of the food provided continues to improve and note that satisfaction levels among prisoners remains very high. Arbour Hill kitchen received a Certificate of Excellence in Food Safety Award 2019 by Cater Care Ltd.

Laundry:

This facility provides laundry of personal and bed clothing of inmates and the handling of inmates property.

Education:

The provision of education is one of the rehabilitation tools available within Arbour Hill Prison. The aim of all of the teaching staff is to provide education which is quality assured, student centred and which facilitates lifelong learning. The Education Department is managed by Dublin City VEC. It provides learning opportunities from Basic Literacy to Degree level and beyond. The courses available are accredited by the Dept. of Education and included both the Junior and Leaving Certificates.

Classes available in the Education Centre 2019 –

Adult Basic Education:- Literacy, Numeracy, Interactive Literacy.

Cookery, Art, Pottery, Drama, Maths, Career Guidance and Open Learning Centre, French, History, Open University Support, Street Law (a six week course on general legal issues facilitated by 2 students from the Law Society of Ireland)

The Visiting Committee were impressed with the focus on Arts & Crafts as part of a holistic approach to personal development within the QQI education framework. Painting, Pottery & Stained Glass are just some of the options for the prisoners to engage in.

QQI (Quality and Qualifications Ireland) assessments were carried out in February 2019 and June 2019. In total 54 students had 117 folders of work assessed. The main results show:

36 students undertook QQI level 2 modules

23 students completed at least one QQI module at level 3

5 students completed the QQI Level 3 Soft Skills five modules course.

12 students completed a QQI module at Level 4.

6 students were successful at Level 5.

The Education Unit produced a Brendan Behan play, 'The Quare Fellow' and showed it to selected invitees on 28th May 2019 including President Michael D Higgins together with Mrs Sabina Higgins. The play was a huge success and raised a significant amount of money for Brother Kevin at The Capuchin Centre. The Education Unit also produced a History of Arbour Hill book which was launched on 25th September 2019.

Library:

The library is available for prisoners to study and read for leisure. The library is operated by the prisoners and offers a wide range of reading & study materials.

The visiting committee note the pride that the prisoners have in maintaining this facility to the highest standards possible.

Capital Works:

The visiting committee acknowledge the high standards achieved through recent improvements to a wide range of facilities such as the staff toilets, visiting area, ventilation system and refurbishment of two cells to cater for wheelchair accessibility.

Building Better Lives:

The Build Better Lives programme was launched in 2009 and replaces the original Sex Offender Treatment Programme previously available in the prison. The programme is based on a Canadian Model and is empirically proven to be an effective intervention for the profile of the sex offender prisoner. Arbour Hill Prison is currently the centre of excellence for the treatment and rehabilitation of sex offenders. The programme is delivered by the Psychology Department.

The BBL programme comprises three components:

Exploring Better Lives (EBL)
Practising Better Lives (PBL)
Maintaining Better Lives (MBL)

There continues to be an ongoing waiting list for prisoners to engage in the Psychology services, the visiting committee would like to see every effort made to reduce this waiting list and all prisoners would have access to vital services.

Other Treatment Programmes and Services Provided:

In addition to the BBL programme, Arbour Hill prison provides other treatment modules to assist in developing important life and social skills.

Pre-Release programme
Anger Management programme
One of One anger management
Psychology Service
Probation Service
Psychiatric Service
Alcoholics Anon.
Gambler Anon.
G.R.O.W.
Listeners Programme
Pre Release Case Conference
Integrated Sentence Management

External in-reach Services Arbour Hill Prison
2019

Samaritans	Toe to Toe
AA	Relate
HSE CWO	GROW
Trail Housing Services	Psychotherapist
Chiropodist	Bereavement Support Group
Church of Ireland Ministry	Dentist
Crosscare (Housing)	Vision Express
Gambling Anonymous	HSE Comm. Occupational Therapist
Prayer Group	HSE Comm. Speech Therapist
St. Vincent de Paul	CMH in Reach
Linkage (Production Services)	FCPN / CMH
Agency Nurses	

Listeners Programme

The popular programme provides a valuable service, where trained prisoners (listeners) listen to concerns, issues and fears in a confidential setting. Training is provided by the Samaritans. The service provides an important emotional support for fellow prisoners. The committee feel this service is a contributory factor in the low level of self-injury at the prison. The programme is of excellent benefit to those in receipt of the service.

Medical & Services:

Arbour Hill currently has seven nurses (including Chief Nurse Officer) and also a locum Doctor who attends the prison three days per week. It remains a concern to the visiting committee that if a prisoner requires medical attention at the weekend, they have to be brought to the local hospital Accident & Emergency department.

Medical services include a visiting Psychiatrist and Psychiatric Nurse. Psychotherapist, Psychologists, Chiropodist and optical services as required. The committee notes that the age profile of a quantity of the inmates requires that they require a high level of medical supervision and support.

Arbour Hill prison implements the legislation with regard the smoking policy

Where it is only permitted in either the prisoners own cell or the external recreation area. Smoking is not permitted in common areas , every effort is made to assist those offenders who wish to give up smoking.

Special Observation Room:

Part of the function of the Visiting Committee is to monitor the use of the Special Observation Room. It was used very sparingly during the year 2019 but each case was as a voluntary admission of very short term duration.

The Committee is pleased to report that in 2019 there were no suicides or attempts at self-harm.

Complaints Procedure:

Any prisoner can request a complain form from any staff member at any time.

All complaint forms are numbered and recorded, consequently once a form has been drawn down, the “complaint” has to be pursued to a conclusion and retained for inspection by the *Inspector of Prisons* or other prison authority who might seek to have access. The complaints procedure and forms introduced in 2014 that introduced categories A – F appear to continue to work well.

Probation Services:

All new committals are interviewed within 3 working days of arrival to Arbour Hill Prison. The Probation Service facilities group work, anger management and group thinking services. The service complete Parole Board, Repatriation, Court and prisoner reports.

The prison is very fortunate to have the service of a very active and dedicated probation team consisting of two equivalent full time Probation Officers and one Senior Probation Officer. They work with the prisoners both individually and collectively in addressing a broad range of issues.

The Probation services actively encourage prisoners to participate in education and rehabilitation programmes and provides support in reintegrating then back into the community. They also assess the potential risk that individual prisoners may pose to society and are also involved in court imposed supervision, sometimes for many years post release.

Integrated Sentence Management (ISM):

All prisoners are actively engaged in the process. First case waiting list is cleared all the time and first case assessment interviews are conducted within 24hrs of committal. Consent form is signed and retained on file in ISM office. Referrals are created and Probation, Psychology, Education, Work Training (Industrial Manager) Medical are using database assessments.

All services are co-operating well with ISM in Arbour Hill.

Drug Free Prison:

Arbour Hill prison remains fully committed to ensuring that the prison remains “drug free”. All prisoners are fully aware that they are expected to be 100% drug free and access to the prisons facilities and services are dependent on this. Random drug testing is part of the day to day routine at the prison.

The visiting committee note that incidents relating to drugs within the prison remain exceptionally low and compliment the prison management and staff on this matter.

SUMMARY:

Arbour Hill prison remains fully committed to promote an ethos of constructive support in a calm and caring atmosphere. The relationship between staff and prisoners is at a very professional but humane level.

The ongoing implementation of the full range of programmes like ‘Building Better Lives’ and ‘Sentencing Management’ provide important initiatives not just within Arbour Hill Prison but the Irish Prison service

Service generally and for the wider community at large, as they positively contribute to reintegration and risk management in the post release scenario.

Case Conferences are scheduled well in advance of all prisoners releases. All relevant parties are invited to participate and provide their input and recommendations. It is to the credit of all at Arbour Hill that they have managed to locate accommodation and initiate contact with the Community Welfare in every case, in many cases they have continued to source a range of supports varying across a broad spectrum of needs: eg. Therapeutic, Psychological, Psychiatric and General Medical.

In a small number of cases former prisoners are availing of “Voluntary Supervision” provided by the Probation Service.

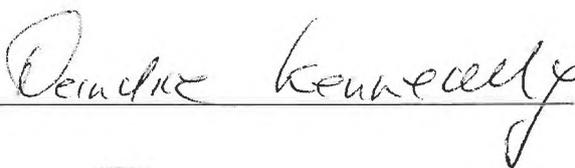
Appreciation:

We wish to thank the Governor Liam Dowling who retired from Arbour Hill Prison on 4th October 2019 and wish him well in his retirement. We would also wish to thank the Assistant Governor Joseph Heron, the Secretary to the committee and all the staff for their co-operation and assistance and for their willingness and commitment to create and sustain a humane and caring regime within the prison.

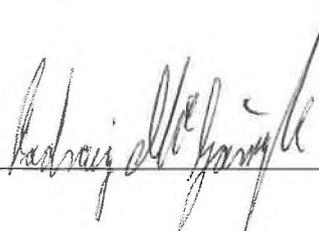
The concludes the Arbour Hill Visiting Committee Annual Report for 2019

Signed:  William (Billy) Ireland – Chairperson

Signed:  Rita Hayes

Signed:  Deirdre Kenneally

Signed:  Pat Holton

Signed:  Padraig McGarrigle